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Wartime Rescue of Jews by the Polish Catholic Clergy

The Testimony of Survivors

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Rescue activities on behalf of Jews were carried out by priests, nuns and monks in more than one thousand Roman Catholic Church institutions throughout Poland during World War II. The number of priests and religious involved in these activities was many times higher.

This effort is all the more remarkable since Poland was the only country under Nazi Germany occupation where any form of assistance to Jews was routinely punishable by death. Several dozen members of the Polish clergy were executed for this reason.

It must also be borne in mind that the Polish Catholic clergy were the only Christian clergy who were systematically surveilled, persecuted, murdered and imprisoned by the thousands as a result of Nazi genocidal policies.

*This selection of accounts of rescue is far from comprehensive, with several hundred additional cases yet to be entered. It has been compiled by **The Polish Educational Foundation in North America** (Toronto) and is posted on the Internet at:*

http://www.savingjews.org/docs/clergy_rescue.pdf

http://www.kpk-toronto.org/archives/clergy_rescue_saving_jews.pdf

http://www.glaukopis.pl/pdf/czytelnia/WartimeRescueOfJewsByThePolishCatholicClergy_MarkPaul.pdf

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An Overview of the German Occupation, 1939–1945

Holocaust historian Philip Friedman describes various forms of assistance provided by the Catholic clergy throughout Poland in his pioneering work on rescuers of Jews, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), at pages 125–26 and 140.

Emanuel Ringelblum notes in his diaries dated December 31, 1940, that priests in all of Warsaw's churches exhorted their parishioners to bury their prejudice against Jews and beware of the poison of Jew-hatred preached by the common enemy, the Germans. In an entry of June, 1941, Ringelblum tells of a priest in Kampinos who called on his flock to aid Jewish inmates of the forced-labor camps in the vicinity. A priest in Grajewo [Rev. Aleksander Pęza] similarly enjoined his parishioners to help Jews.

During the early days of the German occupation, in October, 1939, eleven Jews were seized in Szczepieszyń. Aid was sought from the local priest, Cieslicki [Józef Cieśliski]. He promptly formed a committee of Christians to plead with the German authorities. ...

Several Jews of Siedlce survived in a bunker in the woods near Miedzyrzec [Międzyrzec], thanks to a monk who, having discovered their hiding place by accident, brought them food every day.

In July, 1941, the Germans imposed a staggering fine on the Jews of Żółkiew [Żółkiew]; a Roman Catholic priest contributed a large sum of money to help the Jews.

Andreas [Andrzej] Gdowski, priest of the famous Ostra Brama Church in Vilna, saved the lives of several Jews by concealing them in the house of worship. According to Hermann Adler, a Jewish poet who survived the Vilna ghetto, Father Gdowski, in addition to saving the lives of Jews, also took care of their spiritual needs by setting aside a well-camouflaged room in his church to be used by his "guests" as a synagogue.

In Szczecin, on the Day of Atonement, 1939, the Germans staged a raid on all the synagogues. They harassed and beat worshipers, ridiculed and spat upon them; they tore the garments off young Jewish females and drove them naked through the market place. At noon, the vicar of the local Catholic church appeared in the market place in his sacerdotal vestments and implored the Germans to cease torturing the Jews and permit them to return to their prayers. The SS men, however, were not to be denied their afternoon of fun and frolic; they burned down the synagogues.

A number of priests in the neighborhood of the death camp at Treblinka gave food and shelter to Jews escaping from transports on the way to the camp.

Father [Jan] Urbanowicz of Brześć-on-Bug [Brześć nad Bugiem] was shot by the Germans in June, 1943, for aiding Jews. For the same crime Canon Roman Archutowski, Rector of the Clerical Academy in Warsaw, was sent to the Majdanek concentration camp, where he died of torture in October, 1943. Similarly, the Deacon [Dean] of Grodno parish and the Prior of the Franciscan Order were sent to Łomża [Łomża] in the autumn of 1943, and were shot.

In 1942, during the massive German raids on the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto, the three remaining rabbis received an offer of asylum from members of the Catholic clergy. The rabbis graciously declined the proffered chance of escape and perished with their congregations. ...

Several priests in Vilna [Wilno] delivered sermons admonishing their parishioners to refrain from taking Jewish property or shedding blood; eventually those clerics disappeared.

A priest who baptized a seventeen-year-old Jewish girl and aided her in other ways was tried in public, flogged by the Gestapo, and sentenced to forced labor for life.

Historian Władysław Bartoszewski, a prominent member of Żegota, the wartime Council for Aid to Jews, provides the following overview in *The Blood Shed Unites Us: Pages from the History of Help to the Jews in Occupied Poland* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1970), at pages 189–94.

There was hardly a monastic congregation in Poland during the occupation that did not come in contact with the problem of help to the hiding Jews, chiefly to women and children—despite strong pressure from the Gestapo and constant surveillance of the monasteries, and the forced resettlement of congregations, arrests and deportations to concentration camps, thus rendering underground work more difficult. Some orders carried on work on a particularly large scale: the Congregation of Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary who concealed several hundred Jewish children in their homes throughout Poland; the figure of Mother [Matylda] Getter, Provincial Superior of that Congregation, has already gone

down in history. The Ursuline Sisters [of the Roman Union] played a similar role in Warsaw, Lublin, Cracow [Kraków] and Cracow Voivodship, Lvov [Lwów], Stanisławów and Kołomyja; the nuns of the Order of the Immaculate Conception did the same in their convents; the Discalced Carmelites gave shelter to the especially endangered leaders of Jewish underground organizations. In their home at 27 Wolska Street in Warsaw, situated near the ghetto walls, help was given to refugees in various forms; this was one of the places where false documents were delivered to Jews; there, too, liaison men of the Jewish underground on the “Aryan” side—Arie Wilner, Tuwie Szejngut, and others—had their secret premises. In 1942 and 1943, the seventeen sisters lived under permanent danger of [death] but never declined their cooperation even in the most hazardous undertakings. The Benedictine Samaritan Order of the Holy Cross concealed children and adults at Pruszków, Henryków and Samaria in the voivodship of Warsaw; Sisters of the Order of the Resurrection [of Our Lord Jesus Christ] hid Jews in all their convents throughout Poland; the Franciscan Sisters [Servants of the Cross] in Łaski near Warsaw many a time gave refuge and help to a great number of these persecuted when all other efforts had failed; the Sacré-Coeur Congregation took care of Jews in Lvov [Lwów] at the time of most intensified Nazi terror there. ...

Equally splendid was the record of many orders of monks, and in particular the St Vincent [de Paul] Congregation of Missionary Fathers, the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, the Salesian Society, the Catholic Apostleship Association, the Congregation of Marist Fathers, the Franciscans, the Capuchins and the Dominicans.

Well known is the protective role played towards the Jews by Archbishop Romuald Jałbrzykowski, at the time metropolitan bishop in Vilna [Wilno], and by Dr Ignacy Świrski, professor of moral theology at Stefan Batory University in Vilna, after the war Ordinary of Siedlce Diocese (died in 1968); it was of their will and with their knowledge that a great many refugees from the ghettos were hiding in ecclesiastical institutions and convents. Also well known are the activities of the distinguished writer and preacher, the late Father Jacek Woroniecki of the Dominican Order. In Warsaw, an especially beneficent role was played among others by Father Władysław Kornilowicz, Father Jan Zieja, Father Zygmunt Trószczyński, and in the ghetto itself, up to 1942, by Father Marceł Godlewski, rector of the Roman Catholic parish of All Saints, by Father Antoni Czarnecki and Father Tadeusz Nowotko. In Cracow [Kraków], broad social work was displayed—with the knowledge and of the will of the Archbishop-Metropolitan Adam Sapieha, by Father Ferdynand Machay, well-known civic leader, writer and preacher. It was also to the priests throughout the country that the dangerous task fell *ex officio* to issue to people in hiding birth and baptism certificates necessary for the obtaining of “Aryan” documents. A number of priests, like Father Julian Chróścicki [Chruścicki] from Warsaw, paid for it with deportation to a concentration camp. ...

In all their efforts aimed at helping Jews, the clergy and the convents collaborated as a rule with Catholic laymen in their region. Thus, for example, rectors would place some of those hiding in the homes of their parishioners, and convents often kept in contact with lay institutions of Polish social welfare; the personnel of the latter included a great many persons dedicated to the idea of bringing help.

The Treatment of the Polish Catholic Clergy

Already in the first months of the occupation, the Catholic Church in Poland, and especially its clergy in the western territories incorporated into the Reich, was subjected to systematic persecution of massive proportions—something unheard of in any other German-occupied country. These measures were well-documented and reports from 1939 and 1940 were published in *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in German-Occupied Poland: Reports Presented by H.E. Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, to Pope Pius XII, Vatican Broadcasts and Other Reliable Evidence* (London: Burns Oates, 1941; New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1941). Those reports provide vivid descriptions of the cruel treatment meted out to hundreds of members of the Polish clergy including bishops. Although these crimes were committed in the open and seen by the population at large, including the Jews, there are no known reports of how Jews, especially rabbis, reacted to them.

In the archdiocese of Gniezno:

The Archdiocesan Curia was closed by the Gestapo. ... Likewise, the Metropolitan Tribunal of the first and second instance has been closed and taken over by the Gestapo. The keys of the Curia and the Tribunal are in the hands of the Gestapo.

The Metropolitan Chapter has been dispersed. The Vicar-General and Mgr.[Stanisław] Krzeszkiewicz remain in their houses. The others were ejected from their homes, and Canon [Aleksy] Brasse has been deported to Central Poland [the General Government]. ...

The archiepiscopal seminary of philosophy at Gniezno was taken over by the soldiers. A German general has taken the archiepiscopal palace as his quarters. The homes of the expelled Canons, as likewise the dwelling-places of the lower clergy of the Basilica, have been occupied by the Germans. ... The Conventual Fathers of Gniezno were thrust out of their parish and convent, the latter being used as a place of detention for Jews. The principal parish church, that of the Holy Trinity, was profaned, the parish house invaded, and the entire belongings were stolen.

The German authorities, especially the Gestapo, rage against the Catholic clergy, who live under a rule of terror, constantly harassed by provocations, with no possibility of recourse or legitimate defence.

The following priests were shot by the Germans:

Rev. Anthony [Antoni] Lewicki, rural dean and parish priest of Goscieszyn [Gościeszyn].

Rev. Michael [Michał] Rolski, rural dean and parish priest of Szczepanowo.

Rev. Matthew Zablocki [Mateusz Zabłocki], rural dean and parish priest of Gniezno.

Rev. Wenceslaus [Wacław] Janke, parish priest of Jaktorowo.

Rev. Zeno Niziołkiewicz [Zenon Niziołkiewicz], parish priest of Ślaboszewo [Ślaboszewo].

Rev. John [Jan] Jakubowski, curate of Bydgoszcz.

Rev. Casimir [Kazimierz] Nowicki, curate of Janowiec.

Rev. Ladislaus [Władysław] Nowicki, curate of Szczepanowo.

Rev. Peter [Piotr] Szarek, a Lazarist Father, curate of Bydgoszcz.

Rev. [Stanisław] Wiorek, a Lazarist [Vincentian] Father, curate of Bydgoszcz.

With blows of their rifle-butts, German soldiers killed:

Rev. Marian Skrzypczak, curate of Płonkowo [Płonkowo].

Due to forced labour:

Rev. Joseph [Józef] Domeracki, rural dean and parish priest of Gromadno.

Died in prison:

Rev. Canon Boleslaus [Bolesław] Jaskowski, parish priest of Inowrocław [Inowrocław].

Rev. Romoald Soltysinski [Romuald Soltysiński], parish priest of Rządwin.

Killed by a German bomb:

Rev. Leo [Leon] Breczewski, parish priest of Sosnica [Sośnica].

Many priests are imprisoned, suffering humiliations, blows, maltreatment. A certain number were deported to Germany, and of those there is no news. Others have been detained in concentration camps. Already there has begun the expulsion of priests into Central Poland, whence it is impossible and forbidden to return. ... It is not rare to see a priest in the midst of labour gangs working in the fields, repairing roads and bridges, drawing wagons of coal, at work in the sugar factories, and even engaged in demolishing the synagogues. Some of them have been shut up for the night in pigsties, barbarously beaten and subjected to other tortures. As illustrations, we cite these facts.

At Bydgoszcz, in September [1939], about 5,000 men were imprisoned in a stable, in which there was not even room to sit on the ground. A corner of the stable had been designated as the place for the necessities of nature. The Canon Casimir Stepczynski [Kazimierz Stepczyński], rural dean and parish priest of the place, was obliged, in company with a Jew, to carry away in his hands the human excrement, a nauseating task, considering the great number of prisoners. The curate, Adam Musiał [Musiał], who wished to take the place of the venerable priest, was brutally beaten with a rifle-butt. ...

From an authoritative source it is stated: "Between Bydgoszcz (Bromberg) and Gniezno the churches have been closed, with very few exceptions." ... This situation (in the total 261 parishes almost half are without any priest) is growing worse

... Those churches which still have the ministrations of priests are permitted to be open only on Sunday, and then only from nine to eleven o'clock in the morning. ... Sermons are allowed to be preached only in German ... Church hymns in Polish have been forbidden. ...

The crucifixes were removed from the schools. No religious instruction is being imparted. It is forbidden to collect offerings in the churches for the purposes of worship. ...

In such conditions pious and religious associations are not functioning. ...

From the time of the entrance of the German troops into those regions, numerous crucifixes, busts, and statues of Our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints that adorned the streets were battered to the ground. ...

The oppression being exerted against the houses and apostolate of Religious houses has as its purpose and end their total extinction. ... The Minorites were expelled from their new and large college at Jarocin. The same fate fell to the lot of the Congregation at the Holy Ghost at Bydgoszcz, to the novitiate of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family at Górka Klasztorna, to the novitiate of the Pallottine Fathers of Suchary, to the novitiate of the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception of Markowice, and to the Mother-House along with the novitiate of the Society of Christ for Emigrants at Potulice.

Much more serious were the losses suffered by the religious institutes of women. The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul lost fourteen houses, among these hospitals, orphanages, asylums. The Congregation of the Sacred Heart witnessed the occupation of its new High School and College and Boarding-School at Polska Wies [Wieś]. The Sisters of St. Elizabeth [Grey Sisters] were expelled from nineteen houses. The Daughters of the Immaculata, whose mother-house is at Pleszew, were forced to close their house for aspirants to the congregation, their novitiate, and in addition lost seventeen other houses. Two houses were taken from the Congregation of St. Dominic of the Third Order, and likewise from the Daughters of the Mother of Sorrows.

*A repugnant scene took place at the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of Bydgoszcz. The Gestapo invaded the papal cloister, and summoned the nuns to the chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. One of the police ascended the pulpit and cried that the nuns were wasting their time praying, because "God does not exist, for if there were a God, we would not be here." The nuns, with the exception of the Mother Superior, who was gravely ill, were conducted outside the cloister, and shut up for twenty-four hours in the cellars of the Passtelle (passport office). Meanwhile the Gestapo searched the convent, and one of the policemen carried to the Mother Superior, confined to bed in her cell, the ciborium that had been taken out of the tabernacle. He commanded her to consume the consecrated hosts, crying: *Auffressen!* (Eat them up.) The unfortunate nun carried out the command, but at one point asked for water, which was refused. With an effort the nun managed to consume all the sacred element, and thus save them from further profanation.*

The Church is in the hands of the Gestapo also with regard to its possessions. The funds of the archdiocesan Curia have been sequestrated. ... Funds for the maintenance of the churches have begun to fail, and the priests are living solely on the charity of the faithful. If this state of affairs continues for any length of time, a complete spoliation of the Church will be the consequence ...

In the archdiocese of Poznań:

The Vicar-General, His Excellency Mgr. Valentine [Walenty] Dymek, an able prelate, pious, generous and very active, has been interned in his own house since October 1st [1939]. The Curia and the Metropolitan Court, whether of first or second instance for, Cracow [Kraków], Lwow [Lwów] and Włocławek [Włocławek] are closed and in the hands of the Gestapo,

who are making a study of the records. The archiepiscopal palace was invaded by soldiers who have remained there for weeks ruining its fittings. The records of the Primatial Chancellory have been and still are being carefully examined by the Gestapo, who also raided the important archiepiscopal archives.

Of the Metropolitan Chapter the Canons [Franciszek] Rucinski [Ruciński], [Henryk] Zborowski and [Kazimierz] Szrejbrowski have been imprisoned. Mgr. [Józef] Pradzynski [Prądzyński], who is seriously ill, is under military guard in his home. ...

The Cathedral of Poznan, which is at the same time a parish church for 14,000 souls, was closed by the police ... The Vicar Forane and the pastors of the city, with the exception of a few from the suburbs, are in prison. A good number of the assistants, too, were deported, so that just about 25 per cent. Of the parish clergy of twenty-one parishes are at their posts.

The Theological Seminary, which numbered 120 students in the four-year course, was closed by the German authorities in October [1939] and the buildings given over to a school for policemen.

The clergy is subjected to the same treatment as the priests of the archdiocese of Gniezno. They are maltreated, arrested, held in prison or concentration camps, deported to Germany, expelled to Central Poland. At present about fifty are in prison and in concentration camps.

The pastors Rev. John Jadrzyk [Jan Jądrzyk] of Lechlin, Rev. Anthony Kozłowicz [Antoni Kozłowiec], Rev. Adam Schmidt of Roznowo [Różnowo], and Rev. Anthony [Antoni] Rządki, professor of religion at Srem [Śrem], have been shot.

...

The Polish Episcopate had made Poznan the national centre for organization and direction of religious activity and especially of the Catholic Action for the entire Republic. Unfortunately, all these centres of tremendous activity, charitable works, organizations, and publications, have been destroyed by German authorities. ...

Besides these organizations and publications of national scope, all the organizations and publications in Poznan belonging to the archdiocese of Gniezno and Poznan were suppressed. ...

The losses suffered by Religious Institutes are likewise very painful. ... The Jesuits of Poznan are in prison and their church has been closed by the police. ... The Mother-House of the Ursulines of the lately deceased Mother Ledochowska [Ledóchowska] at Pniewy is in the hands of a German Treuhaenderin, who makes the Sisters work like servants. The Vincentian Sisters were removed from their large hospital of the Transfiguration in Poznan, lost four other important hospitals and about twenty of their prosperous centres of activity. The Sisters of St. Elisabeth (Grey Sisters) have lost about twenty houses ...

Other Religious Institutes, both those for men as well as those for women, are meeting with the same fate ...

Conditions in the diocese of Chełmno in Pomerania were even worse:

The episcopal Curia at Pelplin was closed and its archives confiscated; the ecclesiastical court suffered the same fate. All the members of the Curia without exception were deported.

The Cathedral Canons, with the exception of H.E. Mgr. [Konstanty] Dominik and Mgr. [Franciszek] Sawicki, were thrown into prison, and some were sent to forced labour. The others likewise had much to suffer. The head of the Chapter, Mgr. [Juliusz] Bartkowski, apostolic protonotary, despite his advanced age and precarious health, was forced to perform hard labour.

The ancient Cathedral, a veritable jewel of Gothic art, was first closed and then made into a garage, and it is now proposed to turn it into a market-hall. ...

The bishop's palace was entered and despoiled of all its treasures, works of art and furniture. The valuable library, containing about twenty thousand volumes, was pillaged. ...

Of the 650 priests devoted to the cure of souls in the schools and in the Catholic Action, only some twenty have been left. The others were imprisoned or deported, or forced to perform exhausting and humiliating labour, at which time some died of fatigue. ...

It is not known where the majority of the clergy are detained, as the German authorities keep it a secret. It seems likely, however, that a large number are imprisoned in the concentration camp at Gorna [Górna] Grupa, and the rest in that of Kazimierz Biskupi, or at Stuthof [Stutthof] near Danzig, if not in other concentration camps in Germany ...

It is stated that a large number of priests have been shot [this was later confirmed to be true—Ed.], but neither the number nor the details are as yet known, as the occupation authorities maintain an obstinate silence on the subject.

In any case it seems certain that nine priests ... have been executed. ...

Religious institutions have been ruthlessly suppressed. ...

All the crosses and sacred emblems by the roadsides have been destroyed. ...

It goes without saying that the Nazi aim is to dechristianize as rapidly as possible these countries which are attached to the Catholic faith, and the results are as follows: 95 per cent. Of the priests have been imprisoned, expelled, or humiliated

before the eyes of the faithful. The Curia no longer exists; the Cathedral has been made into a garage ... Hundreds of churches have been closed. The whole patrimony of the Church has been confiscated, and the most eminent Catholics executed. ...

In the diocese of Katowice in Silesia:

The treatment inflicted on certain priests has been outrageous. For example, Fr. [Franciszek] Kupilas, parish priest of Ledziny [Łędziny], was shut up for three days in the confessional at the church in Bierun [Bieruń], where 300 men and women were imprisoned at the same time without anything to eat and without being allowed to go out to satisfy their natural needs. Fr. [Franciszek] Wycislik [Wycislik], vicar of Zyglin [Żyglin], was arrested and beaten in the streets of Tarnowskie Gory [Góry] until the blood ran, and kicked and even trampled until he lost consciousness. Curate Budny had his sides pierced by numerous bayonet stabs, because the German authorities had ordered him to hold his hands up, and after a certain time he was unable through fatigue to do so any longer.

The terrorism to which the clergy and the 500 civilians interned in the concentration camp at Opava (Troppau) in the Sudeten were exposed during September and October, 1939, was particularly frightful. On their arrival they were received with a hail of blows from sticks. Priests were deliberately confined together with Jews in wooden huts, without chairs or tables. Their bedding consisted of rotten and verminous straw. The Germans forced the priests to take off their cassocks, and their breviaries and rosaries were taken from them. They were set to the most degrading labours. For any infraction of the regulations, even involuntary, the prisoners were beaten; sometimes, merely in order to terrorize them or perhaps from caprice, they were beaten until the blood ran. Many died, among them Fr. Kukla ... and it seems, also, Fr. Galuszka [Galuszka], curate of Jablonkow [Jablonków], of whom no news has been received since it was learned that he was suffering harsh treatment in the camp in question.

In the diocese of Włocławek:

H.E. Mgr. [Michał] Kozal, suffragan bishop and Vicar-General, devoted himself most zealously to the service of the people of Włocławek during the hostilities. On the arrival of the Gestapo he was arrested and subject to painful examinations; and after two months passed in the prison at Włocławek he was interned in the concentration camp at Lad [Łódź] ...

Of the forty-two clergy resident at Włocławek, either as members of the Chapter, or attached to the Curia or the Catholic Action, or engaged in the cure of souls, only one sick canon and one young priest were left; the rest were imprisoned and sent to concentration camps. ...

The clergy are suffering the same fate as those of the other dioceses incorporated in the Reich. Both secular and regular priests are maltreated, injured, and beaten. Half of the clergy have been arrested. After weeks in various prisons where they suffered as has been described, these priests were collected, together with those of the contiguous dioceses, in three concentration camps: at Gorna [Górna] Grupa, at Kazimierz Biskupi, and at Lad. In the last camp Mgr. Kozal and about eighty priests are detained ...

At Kalisz Fr. [Roman] Pawlowski [Pawlowski], vicar of Chocz, was publicly shot. He was led to the place of execution barefoot and without his cassock. The police compelled the Jews to fasten him to the execution post, to unbind him after he had been shot, to kiss his feet, and to bury him in their ritual cemetery.

In the diocese of Lublin, in the so-called General Government (*Generalgouvernement*, i.e. the central part of Poland administered by Germany),

In the middle of October [1939], on the anniversary of the consecration of Bishop [Marian Leon] Fulman, when the local clergy was gathered in the bishop's residence to give their pastor their good wishes, agents of the Gestapo made their way in and arrested the bishop, his suffragan, Bishop [Władysław] Goral, and all the assembled clergy ... After some weeks' detention in Lublin, Bishop Fulman and his companions were in November [1939] brought before a court-martial (Sondergericht), and at a secret hearing at which they had no defending lawyer were sentenced to death. The Governor-General exercised his prerogative of mercy by commuting the death sentence to one of imprisonment for life.

After sentence Bishops Fulman and Goral and a number of other clerics were taken to Berlin, and thence to the [concentration] camp situated near Oranienburg ... After their arrival their clerical dress was taken from them, their heads were shaved, and they were led under a shower-bath, where streams of cold, almost icy water were discharged upon them, after which, shivering with cold, they were filmed from all sides before the eyes of the warders and of Hitler youth. ...

Since October [1939] about 150 priests have been held in prison in the diocese of Lublin—that is to say, more than half

the clergy—and many others have to live in hiding, among them Fr. Surdecki [Zygmunt Surdacki], the administrator of the diocese.

The chronicle continues:

Besides Bishops Fulman, Goral and [Leon] Wetmanski [Wetmański], the suffragan bishop [Kazimierz] Tomczak was arrested at Lodz [Łódź], beaten with reeds upon his arms until the blood ran, and then made to clean the streets. The local director of the Catholic Action, Fr. Stanislas [Stanisław] Nowicki, had his head so severely injured in the course of his interrogation by the Gestapo that his skull had to be trepanned.

At Radom four priests were severely knocked about during their examination by the Gestapo, their teeth being broken and their jaws dislocated. The following question, among others, was put to them “Do you believe in God? If you do you are an idiot, and if you don’t you’re an impostor.” When the person questioned pointed out that the question itself was insulting, he was struck in the face.

In Częstochowa,

On ... September 4th, [1939], the Germans drove into the space round the Cathedral of the Most Holy Family from seven to eight hundred men and women, Polish and Jewish. They were all made to stand with their hands up for two hours; and those who fainted or lowered their hands were beaten and kicked by the soldiers. Towards evening they were all driven into the Cathedral and shut up without food for two days and two nights. Dozens fainted. The Cathedral was shockingly befouled. Appeals to the German authorities were fruitless. ...

In the evening about 600 persons, including three priests, were arrested in their houses, taken in front of the municipal building, and threatened with death.

By March 1941, it was reported that:

some seven hundred Polish priests have been shot or have died in concentration camps, throughout the German-occupied area. Some 3,000 Polish priests are held in concentration camps ...

According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), “Poland—The Church in Poland, 1939–1945,” volume 11, at pages 481–83:

In all, 13 Polish bishops were exiled or arrested and put in concentration camps. Of these the following died: Auxiliary Bishop Leon Wetmański of Płock on May 10, 1941, and Archbishop Antoni Nowowiejski of Płock on June 20, 1941, in Soldau (Działdowo); Auxiliary Bishop Michał Kozal of Włocławek on Jan. 26, 1943, in Dachau; Auxiliary Bishop Władysław Goral of Lublin at the beginning of 1945 in a hospital bunker in Berlin. There were 3,647 priests, 389 clerics, 341 brothers, and 1,117 sisters put in concentration camps, in which 1,996 priests, 113 clerics, and 238 sisters perished ... The diocesan clergy of the Polish Church, who at the beginning of World War II numbered 10,017, lost 25 per cent (2,647). The Dioceses of Włocławek (220, or 49.2 per cent), Gniezno (Gnesen, 137, or 48.8 per cent), and Chełmno (Kulm, 344, or 47.8 per cent) suffered a loss of almost half their clergy. The losses for the Dioceses of Łódź (132, or 36.8 per cent) and Poznań (Posen, 212, or 31.1 per cent) were also very heavy.

Zenon Fijałkowski, *Kościół katolicki na ziemiach polskich w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1983), provides the following synopsis at page 375:

During the Nazi occupation, the Catholic Church in Poland experienced enormous clerical and material losses. According to the latest research by W. Jacewicz and J. Woś, in the years 1939–1945, 2,801 members of the clergy lost their lives; they were either murdered during the occupation or killed in military manoeuvres. Among them were 6 bishops, 1,926 diocesan priests and clerics, 375 priests and clerics from monastic orders, 205 brothers, and 289 sisters. 599 diocesan priests and clerics were killed in executions, as well as 281 members of the monastic clergy (priests, brothers and sisters). Of the 1,345 members of the clergy murdered in death camps, 798 perished in Dachau, 167 in Auschwitz, 90 in Działdowo, 85 in Sachsenhausen, 71 in Gusen, 40 in Stutthof, and the rest in camps such as Buchenwald, Gross-Rosen, Mauthausen, Majdanek, Bojanowo, and others.

The toll among the diocesan clergy and male religious orders in the so-called Wartheland were staggering. Of the approximately 2,100 priests in 1939, 133 were murdered inside that district, 1,523 were arrested, 1,092 were sent to concentration camps, 682 were murdered in concentration camps, and around 400 were deported to the General Government. In all, 72 percent of the clergy were imprisoned in Nazi camps and prisons, and 39 percent perished. (Marcin Libicki and Ryszard Wryk, eds., *Zbrodnie niemieckie w Wielkopolsce w latach 1939–1945* [Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2004], p.140.) A detailed, comprehensive listing of losses among the Polish Catholic clergy is found in Wiktor Jacewicz and Jan Woś, *Martyrologium polskiego duchowieństwa rzymskokatolickiego pod okupacją hitlerowską w latach 1939–1945*, 5 volumes (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1977–1981) [afterwards *Martyrologium*]. For more recent overviews of the fate of the Roman Catholic clergy in occupied Poland see Czesław Łuczak, *Polska i Polacy w Drugiej wojnie światowej* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 1993), at pages 489–506; and Jerzy Kłoczowski, *A History of Polish Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), at pages 297–308.

Thus, according to the most recent research, losses among the Catholic clergy and religious, especially the diocesan clergy, under German occupation were proportionately higher than among the Christian population as a whole. Almost 2,800 out of approximately 18,000 Polish priests and male religious were killed, which represents almost 16 per cent of their total number. Some 4,000 of them (and an additional 400 clerics) were interned in concentration camps; thousands more suffered other forms of internment or repression. Of the almost 17,000 Polish nuns, more than 1,100 were imprisoned in camps and 289 were killed. Of the 38 bishops in Poland at the outbreak of the war, thirteen were exiled or arrested and sent to concentration camps (six of them were killed). In addition, some 240 Catholic priests and 30 clerics lost their lives at the hands of the Soviets, who occupied Eastern Poland from September 1939 until June 1941.

Poles constituted the vast majority of the Christian clergy persecuted by the Nazis. Nowhere else in occupied Europe was the Church hierarchy under direct assault. In Dachau, the principal camp employed to imprison clergy from all of Europe, Poles constituted 65 percent of the total clergy population, and about 90 percent of the clergymen put to death. (Franciszek J. Proch, *Poland's Way of the Cross 1939–1945* [New York: Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners of Nazi and Soviet Concentration Camps, 1987], pp.32–36; “Dachau”, *Encyklopedia katolicka*, volume 3 [Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1979], columns 965–67.) According to the latter source, 4,618 Christian clergymen were imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps, 2,796 of them in Dachau. Almost 95 percent of the clergymen in Dachau were Roman Catholics, and almost 65 percent were Poles. The 1,807 Polish clergymen interned in Dachau were comprised of 1,413 diocesan priests and 360 monks belonging to the Catholic faith, and 34 clergymen of other Christian faiths. Of the 947 clergymen put to death in Dachau, 866 were Poles (over 91 percent of those killed there). These consisted of 747 diocesan priests, 110 monks, and 9 clergymen of other faiths. Of all the Christian clergy in Dachau, Polish priests were undoubtedly the worst treated and were especially targeted for hypothermia and other forms of medical experimentation. For a detailed account of the fate of the Catholic clergy in Dachau see Bedřich Hoffmann, *And Who Will Kill You: The Chronicle of the Life and Suffering of Priests in the Concentration Camps* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1994). For resistance activities of priests in Dachau and other camps, see Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Resistance in the Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933–1945* (Warsaw: PWN–Polish Scientific Publishers, 1982), chapter 13 (“Religious life in the concentration camps”), pages 348–65.¹

¹ The massacre of thousands of Roman Catholic clergy by the Nazi Germans was not the largest massacre of Catholic clergy in the Twentieth Century. The Spanish Left, especially Communists and Socialists, managed to butcher 13 bishops, 4,184 diocesan priests, 2,365 members of religious orders of men, and 283 nuns in a shorter span, just before and during the Civil War in Spain (July 1936 to April 1939), the vast majority of them in 1936. The highest concentration of killings took place in Catalonia, where virtually every Catholic church was set on fire in Barcelona. The cruelty and barbarity with which those who remained faithful to their faith were murdered often exceeded the methods employed by the Nazis and the Soviets. See William James Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875–1998* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000); Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, from the Great War to the War on Religion* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), pp.127–35. For some examples of the mistreatment of the Spanish clergy see <http://www.catholicism.org/good-martyred.html>. See also <http://www.holycross.edu/departments/history/vlapomar/persecut/spain.html>. This Spanish anti-clerical bloodbath was exceeded only by the Soviet strike against the Russian Orthodox Church over a much longer period (between 1918 and 1938), when, according to the

Moreover, the Polish Catholic clergy suffered significant losses at the hands of the Soviet Union, which invaded and occupied Eastern Poland from September 1939 until June 1941, and re-occupied and incorporated prewar eastern Polish territories in 1944. Approximately 250 priests and seminarians were murdered, deported to the Gulag, or arrested during the first period of occupation, and several hundred were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in Soviet camps between 1945 and 1951.²

It should be noted that the number of Roman Catholic clergy (of the Latin rite) in Poland on the eve of the Second World War was not large, counting some 18,000 priests and male religious and 17,000 female religious. Their number was smaller than the ranks of the Catholic clergy in Belgium, and many times smaller than that of the Catholic clergy in France or Italy.³ Unlike Poland, the German authorities rarely interfered with the day-to-day activities of Christian clergy in most other occupied countries and, with few exceptions, the Christian clergy did not suffer mistreatment in those countries. This makes the wartime losses of the Polish Catholic clergy, as well as their rescue efforts, all the more striking. Unlike the Latin-rite Catholic clergy, the Eastern-rite Catholic or Uniate clergy in occupied Polish territories was virtually untouched by the Germans.⁴

The rescue efforts of the Polish Catholic clergy, especially those of nuns, became widely known immediately after the war, and the clergy suffered no ostracization by Catholic society on this account.

calculations of Canadian historian Dmitry Pospelovsky, about 600 bishops and 40,000 Orthodox priests were physically eliminated, that is between 80 and 85 percent of the clergy existing at the moment of the Revolution.

Surprisingly, but perhaps very tellingly, in a survey conducted in the early part of 2007, by the Mannheimer Forschungsgruppe Wahlen institute for Germany's ZDF public television program, Germans, who pride themselves on their tolerance, declared that Poland was, by far, the country in the European Union that they disliked the most. Almost one quarter (23 percent) of Germans polled openly declared their animosity toward the country that Germany most directed its fury and destruction at during the Second World War, and where the Germans killed six million people, half of them Jews and half Christians. (The next most loathed country, Romania, came in only at 11 percent.) This obscene resurgence of antipathy toward Poland in certain constituencies in Europe, peppered with anti-Catholic rhetoric, is epitomized by Pilar Rahola, a Catalan member of the Spanish extreme Left and self-styled human rights activist, who wrote in *El País*, a leading Spanish daily, on March 17, 2007: "Without any doubt, Poland is the key to the wickedness that culminated in the extermination of two thirds of the Jewish population of Europe." The curious symbiosis the extreme Right and Left is all too reminiscent of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which unleashed the most tragic episode in Twentieth Century Europe.

² Roman Dzwonkowski, "Represje wobec polskiego duchowieństwa katolickiego na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II RP 1939–1941," in Michał Gnatowski and Daniel Boćkowski, eds., *Sowietyzacja i rusyfikacja północno-wschodnich ziem II Rzeczypospolitej (1939–1941): Studia i materiały* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2003), pp.75–93; Roman Dzwonkowski, "Represje wobec polskiego duchowieństwa katolickiego pod okupacją sowiecką 1939–1941," in Piotr Chmielowiec, ed., *Okupacja sowiecka ziem polskich (1939–1941)* (Rzeszów and Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2005), 139–49.

³ By comparison, in France, in 1929, there were almost 46,500 diocesan priests, 7,000 priests who were members of religious orders, and 117,000 nuns. The number of clergy in Italy was even greater, with 129,000 nuns in 1936. There were some 40,000 nuns in Belgium, a country with a much smaller Catholic population than Poland.

⁴ Andrew Turchyn, "The Ukrainian Catholic Church During WWII," *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, vol. XLI, no. 1–2 (Summer/Spring 1985), pp.57–67. Out of some 2,800 priests and male religious, 25 were arrested and several were sent to concentration camps, where all but one survived. Rev. Omelian Kovch, of Przemyślany, who was arrested for providing false baptismal certificates to Jews, perished in the Majdanek concentration camp.

The Early Years of the German Occupation, 1939–1941

The Germans perpetrated atrocities against both Poles and Jews from the very first days of the subjugation of Poland. On September 4, 1939, the Germans killed several hundred Jews in Częstochowa. Hundreds more Jews and Poles were rounded up and driven into the Cathedral of the Holy Family where they were shut up without food for two days and two nights. Appeals to the German authorities were fruitless. Priests tried to comfort and help the captives as much as they could. Avraham Bomba, one of the interned Jews, recalled:

You come into the house. Imagine yourself. ... Somebody comes in without anything, without any reason. Out from the house. Not allowed to take water, not allowed to take bread ... bread, not allowed to take anything. And in the street. In the street with guns, they start running after you until ... until you got to the place. ... they took me into a church. The church ... was the Holy Family Church. ... the people they couldn't get so fast in in the back of the church. The got killed in the front going in through the door. And they killed a lot of people that way. We were there. There was no food. There was no water. There was no places, you know, for the human being ... We were over there, a priest. ... His name was (not deciphered). He was one of the finest gentlemen of the Catholic priest I have ever met. He said to us, "Children, never mind you're without any church. You do whatever you can. ..." He tried to bring in water for us. And really, I admired him as a gentleman. He knew that we are Jews ... We're there for three days ...

(Interview with Avraham Bomba, September 18, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.)

In the southern town of Będzin, not far from the German border, on the evening of September 8, 1939, the invading German army set fire to the synagogue and adjoining houses on Plebańska and Boczna Streets. Jews fleeing from their burning homes were fired at by the Germans. They converged on the street leading to the nearby rectory of the Church of the Blessed Trinity. Their screams alarmed the pastor, Rev. Mieczysław Zawadzki, who immediately ran to open the gate to the churchyard over the protest of German sentries. He led the Jews to safety on Castle Hill. Those Jews were spared the fate of scores of Jews and Poles whom the Germans executed that night. Later during the war Rev. Zawadzki also sheltered a Jewish family. (Stanisław Wroński and Maria Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945* [Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1971], p.321.) In 1960 a delegation of Jews presented him with the memorial book of the Jewish community of Będzin with the following inscription:

To the Most Reverend and Distinguished Dean Mieczysław Zawadzki. We present you with this book which embodies the soul of the Jewish community in Będzin, in gratitude and full appreciation for your humanitarian and courageous dedication in rescuing human lives from sure annihilation. The Jewish community of Będzin, living in Israel, will never forget your remarkable person, who risked his own life to tear away many of our brothers from the hands of the Nazi assassins.

Rev. Mieczysław Zawadzki was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. Another eyewitness, Helen Stone recalled (Lyn Smith, ed., *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust* [London: Ebury Press/Random House, 2005], p.76):

They burned our synagogue with the people inside. Opposite the synagogue was a church, and about two o'clock in the morning the priest heard that the synagogue was burning and he ran to the church, opened the door in case somebody ran out of the inferno, and quite a few people did; he saved their lives. I was moved about nine or ten times in Będzin [Będzin] as they were making streets Judenrein—cleansed of Jews.

The German invaders repeated this pattern throughout Poland. As the German Army rolled through Poland, Jews were systematically rounded up, abused and executed. Scores of synagogues were torched. The following eyewitness report, which was published in *The Inter-Allied Review*, no. 3 (March 1941), describes the daring but futile intervention of a priest in Szczucin, a small town near Dąbrowa Tarnowska, and the reaction of the

Germans.

It happened in Szczucin on the day of the Great Pardon [Day of Atonement, September 13, 1939], the most solemn of Jewish religious holidays. In spite of the German occupation, all Jews, old men, women and children, had assembled in the four or five houses of prayer. At 11 A.M., four lorries stopped before the synagogue near the Market Place and about a hundred SS. Men alighted armed with revolvers and machine guns.

Half of the surrounded the synagogue while the other half entered it and evicted the faithful. They tore their prayer vestments from their bodies, and stripped them naked to the belt. Then they threw out the sacred scrolls, the prayer books and the embroidered vestments which they tossed upon a pile of straw. Silver and gold vessels were placed in the lorries.

Whipped and hit with butt-ends, the Jews were compelled to dance around the pile, and the oldest among them were ordered to set fire to the straw. When the victims would not consent, they were beaten, kicked, slapped, and spat upon. The Germans pulled their beards and peyses [payes—a long beard], tore the wigs off the women, and jeered at their shaved heads. They pulled the hair of the young girls, tore off their dresses, and forced them to run naked around the Market Place. Now and then, the Nazis fired volleys into the air to scare the already panicky crowd.

At noon time, the vicar of the local Roman Catholic Church appeared on the scene in his sacerdotal vestments and implored the German officers to release the Jews and to permit them to continue their prayers. The SS. Men laughed at him and the officer told the priest that his turn would come. A few minutes later the Germans set fire to the straw pile and the synagogue which was totally destroyed within one hour ...

Often, as in the small town of Poddębice near Łódź, priests were treated on par with rabbis, so there was question of the former being in a position to come to the defence of the latter. (“Poddebice,” in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol1_00184a.htm> translated from *Pinkas ha-kehilot Polin*, volume 1 [Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976], pp.184–86.)

Shortly after the Nazi armies conquered the town, (on September 14, 1939, the Jewish New Year), the Germans arranged a “show.” They ordered the people to organize two procession—a group of Jews with Rabbi Rothfield in front, and Poles with the local Priest. Later, they imprisoned all those who marched for three days. Finally, they forced the Rabbi and Priest to collect with their hands the excrement which had accumulated.

Large numbers of Jews as well as Poles fled eastward before the advancing German army. Refugees, regardless of their origin, met with widespread sympathy and support on the part of Poles. As we shall see, they were well received at convents and monasteries too. A Jewish refuge from Aleksandrów wrote in 1940 (Yad Vashem archives, no. M.10/AR.1–789):

I want to raise here one more issue how the [local] population through which we passed treated us, the refugees. One must admit that regardless of our Jewishness they did whatever they could—and sometimes even more—to ease our distress. ... People we didn’t even know literally dragged us to their home [saying] that they could not allow Jews to be left in the streets in those days.

Jews often fled from their homes in search of safety and refuge in surrounding towns, as was the case for a teenage girl from Rózan (nad Narwią), a small town near Pułtusk, northeast of Warsaw. Many Poles, among them priests—like the one in Maków Mazowiecki, came to their assistance. (Rachel Weiser-Nahel, “I Was Just Thirteen,” in Benjamin Halevy, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Rozan (al ha-Narew)* [Tel Aviv: Rozhan Societies in Israel and the USA, 1977], p.40 (English section); translated as *Rozhan Memorial Book*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/rozan/Rozan.html>>.)

When the war broke out we fled to the village of Bagatella [Bagatele] where we had many friends—the village-head among the rest. A few days later he told us to leave explaining that such were the orders he had received from the Germans, who had threatened to [take] revenge on anybody would contravene—and that included his family, too. It was on Sabbath-Eve. Everything was ready to receive the holy day and the table was laid. We had to leave all this behind and went back to Rozhan [Rózan], where we stayed for another few weeks. Those were dark days. Jews were walking about sullenly and downcast. Everyday the men had to go out to forced labor and you could never be sure of coming home safely. ...

At the same time another group was made to build fortifications. The murderers killed Shmuel from the oil-mill while he was working. We were bewildered and felt helpless. One of the “good” Germans advised us to try to get away: “There’ll be no life for you here.” So we moved to Makov [Maków Mazowiecki], but couldn’t stay there either. The priest, one of the honest Gentiles, bribed the Nazis in order to make them let the Jews alone. They agreed on the condition that strangers who had arrived as refugees leave the town. So we had to clear out in all haste and come back to Rozhan. We stayed overnight with a Gentile woman, called Brengoshova ... where we also found the Greenwalds and my aunt Rebecca and her children.

Interventions on behalf of Poles and Jews, seized by the Germans Sandomierz in September 1939, were made by clerics at the behest of Rev. Jan Kanty Lorek, Bishop of Sandomierz. Rev. Jan Stępień, a professor in the diocesan seminary, recalls Bishop Lorek’s and his own role in his memoirs. (Julian Humeński, ed., *Udział kapelanów wojskowych w Drugiej wojnie światowej* [Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1984], p.282.)

All the men of military age, including Jews, numbering around 2,000, were taken from Sandomierz and interned in an open-air camp in Zochcinek near Opatów. With the authorization of Bishop Jan Kanty Lorek, I attended there and pleaded with the commander of the camp to release them. After lengthy negotiations he agreed to their release on the payment of 20 zlotys per person. I collected contributions with Mr. Goldberg, a shoemaker from Sandomierz. After collecting half the sum we went to Zochcinek. The commander refused to release the Jews. I stated that the Jews too were citizens of the town and that I had come in the name of the town council and would not leave without our Jewish citizens. We were successful. I remember that autumn evening as long columns of men passed by me. Although it was dark, the eyes of those men glowed with sincere appreciation. Prayers in my intention, and in that of Bishop Lorek’s, took place in the Sandomierz synagogue for a week.

Rev. Jan Stępień’s efforts on behalf of Jews are described in Marian S. Mazgaj, *In the Polish Secret War: Memoir of a World War II Freedom Fighter* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2009), at pages 36–37.

In organizing Jewish work brigades in Sandomierz, the Nazis requested that Father Jan Stepień [Stępień] serve as an intermediary between themselves and the Jewish community. As a professor of biblical studies in the diocesan seminary of Sandomierz, Father Stepień knew the Hebrew language and spoke German. He did all in his power to persuade the Nazis to exclude from the work brigades Jews who were old and disabled. At times, he was successful in his persuasions. The Jews of Sandomierz respected him.

One time, Father Stepień went to a watchmaker in the city who happened to be an elderly Jewish man and asked him to repair his watch. The watchmaker took the watch and asked the priest to pick it up the following day. When the priest came back the next day, the watch was repaired. The priest asked the watchmaker how much he owed him. “One singly zloty [złoty],” was the answer. The priest looked at the Jewish man with disbelief because one zloty represented very little monetary value. The watchmaker noticed his customer’s surprise and said, in a way of explanation, something to this effect.

A long time ago there was a very famous monarch. One of his ministers was a Jew. On the occasion of the king’s birthday, he invited his friends to his palace for a banquet. A Jewish minister was one of the invited friends. When the dinner was over, the king went around the tables and offered each guest a cigar. Men lit their cigars and began to smoke but the Jew did not. He held his cigar respectfully in his hand and waited. The king noticed this and asked as to why he did not smoke the cigar. The minister replied, “This cigar, which came from your majesty, is too valuable for me to smoke. When I return home, I will frame this cigar and inscribe underneath, This cigar was given to me by His Majesty, the King. My children and grandchildren will read it with a great respect and admiration.” You understand what I am trying to tell you, Father? I will not spend this single zloty I asked of you. I will frame it and write under it that it came from a priest who knows our sacred language and who saved me and many other Jews from the Nazi forced labor and possible death. My children and grandchildren will view it with a great reverence.

Jewish sources confirm the assistance that was provided by several members of the clergy in Sandomierz, where Jews were later hidden in the bell tower of the city’s cathedral and the cellars of the seminary. After the war Bishop Lorek received letters of gratitude from Jews who survived with his assistance. (Eva Feldenkreis-Grinbal, ed., *Eth Ezkera—Whenever I Remember: Memorial Book of the Jewish Community in Tzoyzmir (Sandomierz)*

[Tel Aviv: Association of Tzoyzmir Jews and Moreshet Publishing, 1993], p.542.)

After our release, we heard that Nuske Kleinman and Leibl Goldberg, who had miraculously evaded the march to Zochcin, asked the Polish priest, professor Szymanski [Adam Szymański, the rector of the diocesan seminary], who was known as a friend of Jews, to intervene with the Germans on our behalf. He immediately got in touch with the German authorities in town. We also heard that the Sandomierz Bishop, Jan Lorek, intervened with the authorities on our behalf.

The remarkable recovery of a Torah scroll salvaged by a Polish priest from a synagogue set on fire by the German invaders in September 1939 came to light at a moving ceremony at Boston College. (Ben Birnbaum, “Journey’s End: Torah Scroll Rescued by Priest Finds Home among BC’s Jews,” *Boston College Magazine*, Fall 2002.)

In 1939 in Poland, shortly after Nazi troops had invaded, a Catholic priest saved a Torah scroll from a burning synagogue. The name of the priest is not known, nor the location of the synagogue. What is known is that in 1960, the priest told another Pole that he would like to entrust the Torah to an American Jew. And so he was led to the U.S. embassy in Warsaw, where he handed the Torah in its green velvet slipcover to Yale Richmond ‘43, a career foreign service officer who was the embassy’s cultural attache.

Richmond held the Torah for 42 years, not quite knowing what to do with it, until the day recently when he was surfing the Web from his home in Washington, D.C., and discovered that his alma mater hosted a small but vital Jewish student group and had founded the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning to advance understanding between the two faiths. One of the center’s directors was Rabbi Ruth Langer, also a member of BC’s theology department. “I sent [Langer] an e-mail asking, ‘Would you like a Torah?’” he recalled.

And so on October 11, Boston College was the site of an ancient and traditional “Greeting of the Torah” ceremony, as about 80 people—members of BC’s Jewish community, representatives of its other religious communities, and guests and friends—gathered on a Friday afternoon to mark the completion of the scroll’s long journey. ...

Richmond, 79, a bearded Boston native who also served in Germany, Austria, Laos, and the Soviet Union before retiring from the foreign service, was one of four Jews in his BC graduating class. He explained his gift of the scroll to the University by saying, “Catholic Poland sheltered its Jews for more than 500 years, a Catholic priest rescued the Torah from a synagogue torched by the Nazis in 1939 and sheltered it for 21 years, and Boston College sheltered me for four years and awarded me the degree that enabled me to make a start on a 30-year career.” ...

While the provenance of the Torah—its synagogue and town—are not known, an expert’s evaluation in September determined from various stylistic touches and dedicatory inscriptions that the Torah was of Polish origin, that its creator was Rabbi Shmuel Shveber, a highly regarded scribe of his time, and that it was completed in 1919.

Yale Richmond’s sentiments about Poland are shared by historians who are well aware that Poland welcomed Jews from the 14th century onward, when they arrived en masse fleeing expulsions and pogroms in Western Europe. The next few centuries were a period when Jews enjoyed their Golden Age. Not only did Jewish religion, culture and communal life flourish in pre-partition Poland, but as historian Barnet Litvinoff compellingly argues, “Conceivably, Poland saved Jewry from extinction.” (Barnet Litvinoff, *The Burning Bush: Antisemitism and World History* [London: Collins, 1988], p.92.)

The public mistreatment of Jews by German soldiers raised consternation among the Polish population and caused priests to intervene. Professor Karol Estreicher, of the Jagiellonian University, witnessed the following scenes in Drohobycz, in southeastern Poland, in September 1939. In order to protect his family from retaliation by the Germans, Professor Estreicher published his memoir in 1940 under the pseudonym of Dominik Węgierski, to protect his family in Poland. (Dominik Węgierski, *September 1939* [London: Minerva, 1940], p.151.)

The first scene which struck me as I came to the Market Square was the sight of a group of Jews loading manure on a cart with their hands. The work was supervised by a Storm Trooper with a whip in his hand. He was whistling a gay tune and now and then striking some of the Jews, or pulling their beards. Sometimes he gave one of them a well-aimed kick.

The Polish population looked on with indignation on such treatment of human beings, and many peasants or workmen expressed their disapproval. In the afternoon the Germans began a looting of the Jewish shops. ... The Jews stayed at home, afraid to go out. But the Germans, using revolvers and riding-crops, forced the younger Jews to help in the loading of the robbed goods.

The Germans took a particular delight in forcing the Jews to perform revolting or filthy tasks. The Jews were told to

clear away manure, dead animals and men, and every kind of dirt, without using any implements which might help them not to soil their hands. The population of Drohobycz was definitely against such methods. The local parson—who before the war did much to help the Polish co-operatives to take business out of Jewish hands⁵—called on the commander of the garrison and protested against such public indignities. The commander made a gesture of helplessness—a well-known trick of the Germans—and listened sympathetically to the complaint, but said that the Gestapo alone were responsible for the whole business. He advised bribery.

In some areas sandwiched between the Nazi invaders from the East and Soviet invaders from the West, the Polish authorities fled during the turmoil. The ensuing breakdown in law and order was seized on by criminal elements to rob. Priests spoke out to curb these abuses, as was the case in Grabowiec, to the east of Zamość. Forty-two wounded Polish soldiers had been shot on September 25, 1939, when the Soviets briefly occupied Grabowiec, welcomed by pro-Communist factions (for the most part Jews) who formed a Red militia to support the invaders. The following account likely pertains to Rev. Józef Czarnecki, the local pastor. (Sh. Kanc, ed., *Memorial Book of Grabowitz* [Tel Aviv: Grabowiec Society in Israel, 1975], p.17.)

I must mention here a courageous priest, who warned the faithful, from the pulpit, not to plunder the Jews or attack them. Such acts were against Christianity and Humanity, the priest admonished.

For a similar account from Dąbrowa Białostocka, where, at the behest of the rabbi and Jewish town elders, a priest dissuaded a group of villagers from robbing Jewish property after the Germans had handed control of the area over to the Soviets in mid-September 1939, see Michael A. Nevins, *Dubrowa–Dabrowa Bialostocka: Memorial to a Shtetl*, 2nd edition (River Vale, New Jersey: n.p., 2000), at page 19.

Bishop Marian Leon Fulman of Lublin was arrested on October 17, 1939 and sentenced to death for his “anti-German” activities. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and he was sent to the Oranienburg concentration camp near Berlin. In 1940, he was transferred to Nowy Sącz where he was imprisoned for the duration of the war. (Ronald J. Rychlak, *Righteous Gentiles: How Pius XII and the Catholic Church Saved Half a Million Jews from the Nazis* [Dallas: Spence, 2005], pp.152–53.)

Bishop Fulman called together the priests from his and other nearby dioceses. He told them that “the new Jewish reserve the Nazis have set up here in Lublin is a sewer. We are going to assist those people as well as our own, as well as any man, woman or child, no matter of what faith, to escape; and if we lose our lives, we will have achieved something for the Church and for God.” Bishop Fulman’s activities led to severe retaliation from the governor-general of Occupied Poland, Dr. Hans Frank. Bishop Fulman was incarcerated, and he saw many of his priests die in the concentration camp. Following one execution, Hans Frank addressed Fulman:

“We shall exterminate all enemies of the Reich, including you, Bishop, down to the lowest of your kind. When we have finished with Europe, not one of you will be left ... Not one. No Pope. No priest. Nothing. Nichts.”

“God have mercy on you,” Bishop Fulman [replied].

“God better have mercy on you,” Frank mocked. “You obey the orders of the Vatican, and for that all of you will die.”

In his wartime diary, Dr. Zygmunt Klukowski of the town of Szczepczeszyn, in Lublin voivodship, recorded the following on October 22, 1939. (Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, Second revised and expanded edition [Kraków: Znak, 1969], p.645.)

Eleven Jews were arrested, taken to court martial and prepared for further measures. A group of Jews went to see the canon, Rev. [Józef] Cieśliński, pleading with him to intervene with the Germans. A committee [of Poles] promptly approached the German authorities ...

According to the town’s memorial book (Dov Shuval, ed., *The Szczepczeszyn Memorial Book* [Mahwah, New

⁵ The promotion of business initiatives of ethnic Poles, who were grossly underrepresented in Polish commerce, was unfairly labeled by many Jews as being anti-Semitic.

Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2005], pp.149–151, 155):

26 September 1939,—In such a hiding place in an attic, Abraham Reichstein's son-in-law, going up into the attic, wanted to take up the ladder. However, seeing an SS trooper below, out of fear, he let the ladder down on the German's hand, and injured him.

After this incident, an order was issued immediately, that Jews were not permitted to leave their homes. All of the Jews, men and women, were pursued like animals across the town, to the city hall, heavily guarded on all sides.

The lawyer, Popracki [Paprocki] learned of this. He went off to the priest, Cieslicki [Cieśllicki] and both went to the burgomaster [mayor] Franczek. All three made their way to the German commandant, and declared to him, that the incident with the ladder was just an accident, and represented that such an incident will not happen again. The commandant went out to the people with a long speech, and warned, that if this ever happened again, or there was a similar incident, that every tenth Jew would be shot. Until the commandant appeared, the Rabbi, Yekhiel Blankaman and Shlomo Maimon had been beaten, among others. ...

I wish to add, that there were Christians, who sympathized with the Jews, and gave them help, and many times suffered themselves because of it.

Such a person was the Milliner Brylowski [Bryłowski], whose garden bordered on the Hospital garden. He showed us a way. Where we could flee if an automobile full of Germans arrived to take us away: behind the stable he set aside the obstacles, and freed up the way for us, down to the river.

I also wish to mention Dr. Spoz, the Canon Cieslicki, the Vicar, the organist Stec and his daughter, the Komornik and the Pharmacist, who helped Jews. At a number of these, hidden Jewish articles

With time, as German acts of terror became commonplace, interventions proved to be less and less effective, and were soon futile. Rev. Franciszek Kapalski, the vicar, headed the Welfare Committee (*Komitet Opiekuńczy*) in Szczeczeszyn, which extended assistance to both Poles and Jews. (Regina Smoter Grzeszkiewicz, “Kapłani Zamojszczyzny prześladowani i zamordowani podczas II wojny światowej,” Internet: <<http://horajec.republika.pl/okup45.html>>.)

Sometimes priests could do no more than console the victims of German executions as in Konin, in the so-called Wartheland, as related by Issy Hahn in his memoir, *A Life Sentence of Memories: Konin, Auschwitz, London* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), at pages 11–12.

The next day, Thursday 21 September [1939], the Germans began arresting influential people from the town as hostages; the reason given was that two German soldiers had been found shot dead. Another poster went up on the tower: 'Tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock the execution of two hostages will take place.'

The next morning just before 11 o'clock Liberty Square was crowded; there were 300 or 400 people there. I pushed my way through the crowd to get to one of the two public water pumps in the square and climbed on top to have a good view of the spectacle. Over the heads of the crowd I saw the two condemned men being marched by six soldiers and one officer of the German army from the town prison to the square. The hostages came to a stop, facing the blank white wall of the old gymnasium. The crowd was silent. The men were told to turn and face the crowd.

One of the hostages, Mordechai Slodki, was a religious Jewish man of 70 who owned a fabric shop; I knew him well. The other was Aleksander Kurowski, a Polish Catholic who owned a posh restaurant near the main coach station. ...

A Catholic priest wearing a long mauve robe and a scarf around his neck approached the prisoners. He spoke first to the Jewish man. Then, with his Bible raised, he said a prayer with the Catholic man and made the sign of the cross. Then he turned and walked away. One of the Germans blindfolded the hostages.

The officer in charge ordered the firing squad to retreat 20 metres from the two men and take up their firing position. ... The officer in charge gave the order and the soldiers lifted their guns. ...

Some of the crowd moved towards the dead men. When I got close enough to see the bodies I couldn't believe my eyes: the men's arms and legs were still moving. Everyone was wiping tears from their faces as they passed the blindfolded corpses to show their last respects. Some made the sign of the cross.

The accounts attesting to widespread sympathy on the part of Poles toward persecuted Jews are borne out by a report filed by Wehrmacht General Johannes von Blaskowitz. On February 6, 1940, he wrote to General Walther von Brauchitsch, Commander-in-Chief of the German Army:

*The acts of violence carried out in public against Jews are arousing in religious Poles [literally, “in the Polish population, which is fundamentally pious (or God-fearing)”] not only the deepest disgust but also a great sense of pity for the Jewish population.*⁶

The reverse situation was not unthinkable, as the following highly unusual case shows. On September 1, 1939, Leon Schönker, the wartime leader of the Jewish community in Oświęcim, hid and cared for a wounded German pilot, who had parachuted from a crashing plane, without informing the Polish authorities of his presence. When the German army entered the town several days later, the Jews led them to the wounded man who, it turned out, was an important Nazi officer. This officer reciprocated by intervening with the local German military commander to alleviate conditions for the Jews, at least for a time. When some old, defective rifles which had been used for mandatory military drills before the war were found in a school run by the Salesian Fathers, the Germans arrested a dozen priests and threatened to execute them. Leon Schönker intervened on their behalfs with the local commander and persuaded him that the rifles were useless as weapons. The priests were released from jail. Word of this deed spread through the town and Leon Schönker became a local hero.⁷

Sympathy for downtrodden prisoners-of-war, both Poles and Jews, taken during the September 1939 campaign and guarded by the Germans in a school courtyard in Rzeszów, was openly expressed by Polish nuns. (Testimony of Chaim Bank in *A Memorial to the Brzozow Community*, Abraham Levite, ed. [Israel: The Survivors of Brzozow, 1984], pp.95–96.

Twice we received nourishment in the form of a bowl of soup from the German military kitchen. The Catholic nuns brought kettles of food for the Polish prisoners. The Jewish hostages from Kolbuszowa refused to eat non-kosher food and literally starved. I owned a few “zloty” [złoty] (Polish currency) and asked the nuns if they could possibly buy me some chocolate in town. They fulfilled my request and that chocolate was the only food the Jewish hostages would eat. The nuns let me know of the horrible misfortune befalling the Jews of Rzeszow caused by the German army right after the beginning of the invasion.

Sydney W. from Pułtusk near Warsaw, who was interned by the Germans after the September 1939 campaign at a prisoner-of-war camp for Polish soldiers, recalled the assistance he received from a Polish priests in Joachim Schoenfeld, ed., *Holocaust Memoirs: Jews in the Lwów Ghetto, the Janowski Concentration Camp, and as Deportees in Siberia* (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, 1985), at pages 293–95.

The Germans took us to a POW camp in Radom. It was November [1939] and already cold. My leg was terribly swollen and the wound festered; I could barely walk.

... In the car with me was a Pole, an officer from my unit who was also wounded, and looking at me one day, he said, “If the Germans find out that you are Jewish, it will be your end. I advise you not to reveal that you are Jewish; our service books don’t show our nationality. ...”

In the camp at Radom, I met a good friend, a former neighbor, a classmate of mine at school. In the Polish army he was a medic, the Germans too used him as such in the camp. He promised to help me in any way possible. First of all, he would see to it that I would be admitted to the hospital; to do this he intended to engage the help of another fellow from our town, who was a nurse at the camp hospital. When he told me who the other fellow was, I became frightened, because I remembered him from before the war, when he was an Endek who organized and took part in anti-Jewish brawls in our town. My friend, however, assured me that I had no reason to be afraid of him, because he’d changed and now hated the Germans more than the Jews. He would help me.

In fact, the next morning, when all the prisoners seeking admittance to the hospital had lined up in front of the entrance gate, the line was so long that joining it seemed to me to be a hopeless undertaking. I realized I would not be able to stand

⁶ Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Reiss, *‘Those Were the Days’: The Holocaust through the Eyes of the Perpetrators and Bystanders* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991), p.4; Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919–1945: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*, vol. II: *Foreign Policy, War and Racial Extermination* (New York: Schocken, 1988), p.939.

⁷ Moshe Weiss, “To Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation from Auschwitz,” *The Jewish Press* (Brooklyn), January 27, 1995; Henryk Schönker, *Dotknięcie aniola* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2005), pp.28–30. Leon’s son, Henryk, also became a local hero of sorts when a story spread that he had smashed a bicycle belonging to a German soldier. Although this rumour proved to be untrue, no one betrayed him.

there for hours on my wounded, aching leg, and left the line in despair. My landsman, the Endek, saw me hopping back to the barracks. He came up to me and told me not to worry. He led me through a back door into the hospital and to the admitting desk, where he persuaded a Polish doctor, himself a prisoner, to admit me as an emergency case.

The next day I was on the operating table. A big chunk of steel was taken out of my leg. The doctor told me that a few more days of neglect would have led to gangrene, which would have resulted in the loss of my leg.

My classmate told me that he had spoken to a Polish priest, who visited sick prisoners in the hospital every day, and the priest promised him that he would do everything possible to help me.

Two Gestapo men came into the ward and took away a friend of mine by the name of Kraemer, and all other prisoners with Jewish names. I was spared because my name doesn't sound Jewish.

The next day, when the priest came into my ward, he approached my bed and asked me if I wanted to confess. I understood that by pretending that it was a confession, we wouldn't have any witnesses to our talk. When we were alone I told him that, as he knew from my friend, I was a Jew and therefore in great danger, and begged him to help me. He was a kind man and told me that all is in God's hand and that I should not lose hope. He gave me a small cross to wear, and having learned from my friend that I was in the military orchestra, he also gave me a little hymn book. "Tomorrow," he said, "I will be saying mass in the hospital, as I do every Sunday. Before the services I will ask if there are among the worshippers some with good voices, or from the music band. You should step forward and I will ask you to join the choir." He said I should behave like all the others, cross myself and kneel when the others did, and with God's help he hoped that there would be no suspicion of my being Jewish. Since then I became known in the hospital as the choir boy. ...

However, after about six weeks in the hospital, an ordinance was received to dissolve the camp and to release the Polish prisoners, allowing them to return home.

William (Wolf) Ungar, a soldier in the Polish army who was injured during the September 1939 campaign, recalled waking up in a make-shift hospital in Gostynin and being comforted by a Catholic priest. (William Ungar with David Chanoff, *Destined to Live* (Lanham, Maryland, New York, Oxford: University Press of America, 2000), pp.63–64.)

I came out of the dream with the strange feeling that someone was hovering over me. I opened my eyes. A priest was kneeling down, speaking to me in Latin. In nomine domine et filio et spiritu sanctu... words linked themselves together in a singsong drone. For a moment I thought I was hallucinating. Then I realized the priest was flesh and blood and he wasn't speaking to me, but was giving me last rites. When he saw my eyes were opened he looked at me sorrowfully and made the sign of the cross.

A priest making a cross in the air over me was the last thing I expected. I was drowning in my own misery and sorrow, in pain, and a priest wasn't someone I wanted to see at that moment. I wondered if I was really so near death that I needed the last rites? I raised my hand and motioned for him to stop. The priest looked at me, his eyes widening slightly, surprised that I would interrupt him in the process of saving my eternal soul.

"What's the matter, my son?" he asked, putting his ear down near my mouth. "Are you in great pain?"

"No, Father."

"Then what's wrong, my child?"

"I'm Jewish, Father."

He looked into my blue eyes. "You're Jewish, my son?"

"Yes, Father."

"I'm truly sorry, my son."

"I understand, Father."

Then he stood up and walked away.

Mendel (Martin) Helicher, a Jew from Tarnopol who served as an officer in the 54th battalion of the Polish army, was taken captive by the Germans in September 1939 and sent to prisoner-of-war camp in Gorlice where he was protected by his last division commander, Zygmunt Bryszewski, and other Poles including a priest. An article by Y. Shmuelevich about Helicher's experiences published in *Forward* on January 17, 1966 is reproduced in the Mikulince memorial book, *Mikulince: Sefer yizkor*, edited by Haim Preshel (Israel: Organization of Mikulincean Survivors in Israel and in the United States of America, 1985), at 104–113.

The Hitlerists never stopped looking for Jews among the prisoners. ... One night in September 1939, at midnight, a gang of Hitlerists stormed into the hut and demanded a medical examination of every prisoner. They were looking for Jews.

Everyone who passed the examination and was found to be Gentile received a tag entitling him to receive food. "I, too, stood, in the long line," Helicher said, "completely naked. My heart trembled. In a matter of minutes, the German murderers would know that I was a Jew." At that point, a miracle happened. A man named Bigada, formerly a judge in Tarnopol, came over to the Jew. He had already passed the physical. The judge, a lieutenant, held out his tag to the Jew. Slowly, the Jew moved out of the line. The Polish judge, who passed the exam a second time and got a new tag, was a close friend of Zigmund Brishevski. If the Nazis had ever found out, Bigada would have been shot.

Danger was not over for Martin—Mendel Helicher and waited for him anew around every bend. Once, when Helicher was standing in line for food, a Ukrainian named Olenik recognized him. They had served together in the Polish army and Olenik knew Helicher was Jewish. The Ukrainian went to the Nazis and informed on Helicher. The Nazis examined him and when they found that he had been circumcised they branded a Jewish star on his left hand so that everyone would know that he was Jewish. They incarcerated him in the Garliz [Gorlice] prison. But his good and kind-hearted friend did not desert him. He made sure his Jewish friend got out of danger.

Among the Polish officers at Garliz was the judge from Tarnopol Pisterer. He was a "volksdeutsche" (literally a son of the German people) and served as an interpreter for the Nazis who liked him very much. He even wore a German uniform. "Judge Pisterer went to the judge I mentioned previously, Bogada," Helicher explained, "together with the clergyman Tsach [Józef Czach?] who had been the chaplain of the 54th battalion in Tarnopol. The three of them went to see the Nazis in charge of the camp. The chaplain said that I had been a Catholic all my life and belonged to his church. My circumcision, he explained, was the result of an operation. I was released on the strength of his testimony." To this day, he bears the Jewish star on his left hand and survived the Nazis as a devout Catholic.

When he was released from prison, he was returned to the P.O.W. camp where he lived as a Catholic among the officers and men. The Nazis no longer hurt him as a Jew.

Karol Kewes, a 15-year-old Jewish boy from Łódź, was attending a course for baccalaureate candidates in a military training camp when the war broke out. Manoeuvring between the German and Soviet invaders, Kewes's eye was injured by German fire just before his detachment was captured by the Germans on October 5 and taken to a prisoner-of-war camp in Dęblin Fortress. Kewes was sent to a hospital in Radom where he was attentively cared for by Polish nuns, who kept silent about the Jewish origin of their charges. His experiences are described in K.S. Karol, *Between Two Worlds: The Life of a Young Pole in Russia, 1939–46* (New York: A New Republic Book/Henry Holt and Company, 1986), at pages 19–23.

At St. Casimir Hospital in Radom, where I was finally sent to have my eye attended to, the groans of the wounded seemed restful to my ears after the screams of Demblin [Dęblin]. The atmosphere of this hospital was tense and a little surrealistic: The Germans had taken charge of everything, from surgery to administration, but they had left the religious at their posts. The nuns were excellent nurses and especially strong Polish patriots, conspirators even. The sister who looked after me had a German-sounding first name, Kunegunda [actually this would have been an assumed religious name, that of Blessed Kinga or Kunegunda, the Hungarian-born wife of King Boleslaus V the Shy of Poland], but she would rather have had her tongue torn out than pronounce a word in that language. As with all the other religious, the occupiers had to speak to her through an interpreter. The German military doctors didn't believe in talking to the wounded. I only learned the details of my operation from Sister Kunegunda. ...

Sister Kunegunda was very kind to me, perhaps in the hope of bringing me to religion, or more simply because of my relative youth. She sometimes brought me sweets and promised to contact my family with the help of another sister who happened to be traveling to Lodz [Łódź]. I wrote my parents a long letter, which ended by declaring my irrevocable decision to move to the provinces incorporated in the USSR, beyond the River Bug. ... Then one morning the doctor announced the arrival of "eine Dame," my mother. ... He left us alone for a moment, then he returned to announce to my mother that she could take me home ...

At the home of some friends of Sister Kunegunda in Radom, my mother gave me a suitcase with all my things carefully arranged, and directions on the best way to cross the Bug. ...

Sister Kunegunda's last piece of advice still resounded in my ears: "Badz Polakiem" ["Bądź Polakiem"] ("Be Polish"), with its unspoken implication: "Fight for Poland." ...

[In Lwów] I managed to find a modest job in a chemist laboratory where I washed test tubes, and even more modest lodgings (a kitchen commode on which I stretched out at night, my feet dangling in the air) at the home of a retired Polish lady who was poor but very obliging; if I remember, correctly, she was an acquaintance of Sister Kunegunda.

In Polish Pomerania (the so-called Polish corridor), in the fall of 1939, thousands of Poles, as well as some Jews,

were rounded up and killed in mass executions in the forests near Piaśnica. One group of 300 prisoners, transported there in November from the jail in the nearby town of Wejherowo, included Jewish children. Sister Alicja, born Maria Jadwiga Kotowska, the superior of the convent of the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Wejherowo and school principal, took them into her care. She led them by their hands like Janusz Korczak would later lead his Jewish orphans from the Warsaw ghetto onto a train headed for Treblinka. (Lucyna Mistecka, *Zmartwychwstanki w okupowanej Polsce* [Warszawa: Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, 1983], pp.94–96.)

On the entry of the Wehrmacht into Wejherowo (September 9), the extermination action began. The jails were overcrowded, and prisoners occupied not only the cells but also the corridors and the chapel. There were over 3,000 of them ...including members of the clergy ...

The Sisters were also blacklisted. They were placed in isolation in their convent which was occupied by the German army. ... At 3:30 in the afternoon [of October 23] ... during prayer the Gestapo burst into the convent, causing an uproar, with the aim of terrorizing the Sisters. They demanded that Sister Alicja leave. Upon leaving, they arrested her and took her to the courthouse. ... The next day the Sisters ... learned that Sister Alicja was in the local jail [where she remained despite numerous interventions] ...

Commencing November 5, every day six or more automobiles left the jail for Piaśnica ... On November 11 a large transport counting 300 prisoners left for Piaśnica. Among them was Sister Alicja Kotowska. Before entering the automobiles they had to empty their pockets ... Sister Alicja was the last member of the group to enter the courtyard of the building. She approached a group of Jewish children, took them by their hands and led them into the automobile.

In Piaśnica forest the prisoners, stripped to their undergarments, were lined up in front of the graves that had been prepared. They were forced to kneel [before being shot] ... Their bodies were covered over with a thick layer of lime and soil over which sod was placed.

The Germans started to abuse the Jewish population as soon as they arrived in Żelechów near Garwolin. After a brief respite, matters came to a head again in November 1939, when hundreds of Jews were rounded up and were on the verge of being killed. A priest intervened with the Germans on behalf of the endangered Jews. (“Zelechów,” in *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Communities in Poland*, Volume VII, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Pinkas_poland/pol7_00199b.html>; translation from *Pinkas hakehillot Polin*, Volume VII [Jerusalem: Yad Vahem, 1999], pp.199ff.)

The Germans entered Zelechów [Żelechów] on 12 September 1939. Immediately upon their arrival, they seized Jews on the street, subjected them to harsh abuse, plundered their property, and set several of their houses on fire. The next day, the synagogue was set afire, and the blaze claimed the life of Hayyim Palhendler, who before the war had been a member of the municipal council. At the same time, the Germans seized Jewish and Polish public figures as hostages and imprisoned them for twenty-four hours. After a few days, the Germans gathered a group of Jews and sent them to Ostrow-Mazowiecka [Ostrów Mazowiecka]; on the way, they shot many of them to death. ...

In November 1939 ... That month also saw a serious incident that jeopardized the lives of hundred of Jews in Zelechów. On a market day in town, a former Polish soldier shot at a German. The Germans immediately gathered hundreds of Jews and prepared to kill them, but through the lobbying of the priest, and after the actual culprit was captured, the Jews were set free.

In early November 1939, the Gestapo in Łódź carried out mass arrests of the intelligentsia, Catholic clergymen and political and social activists, both Poles and Jews, and confined them in a concentration camp created in nearby Radogoszcz. Józef (Josef) Saks, who arrived at the camp on December 23, 1939, recalled the atmosphere of solidarity that prevailed among the prisoners. (His account, recorded in October 1945, is found in the archive of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Record Group 301, Testimony 1023.)

On December 23, 1939, I arrived with a group of 39 Jews and 40 Poles from the [Gestapo] prison on Sterling Street (also some people from the prison [police detention for arrests] on Kopernik Street). There were a few dozen women in the camp, including a few Jewish ones. ... In the camp there were 4 big rooms. The Jews were in two rooms, but there were no special ghettos.

The Poles' attitude to the Jews, with the exception of particular individuals, was generally good. It should be pointed out that there were a few dozen priests in the camp. Most of the Poles were from the intelligentsia. The prisoners' honesty

toward each other is a characteristic feature worth emphasizing. I know of only one instance of something being misappropriated. During this period, the gendarmerie and auxiliary police treated the prisoners well. The Jewish prisoners and the Poles made an agreement that on Christmas Day, the Jews would do all the work in the camp. The next two days, however, the Jews were not called on to do any work at all. ... The Polish prisoners, knowing that we wouldn't get any meals, had left us their bread and had hidden coffee for us.

From western Polish territories incorporated directly into the German Reich, Jews were deported en masse to the General Government. Many of them passed through the Franciscan friaries in Limanowa near Nowy Sącz and in Niepokalanów near Warsaw. On January 2, 1940, Emanuel Ringelblum wrote in his diary *Kronika getta warszawskiego: Wrzesień 1939–styczeń 1943* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1983), at page 68:

In Limanowa, the behaviour of the Franciscans toward 1,300 Jewish refugees (500 from Kalisz, 500 from Lublin, and some 300 from Poznań) was very favourable. They gave them accommodations in their buildings and helped them [in various ways] ... even giving them a calf to kill.

In a biography entitled *A Man for Others: Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982; reissued by Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division of Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, Indiana, 1982), at pages 91–93, Patricia Treece writes about the extensive assistance provided to large numbers of Jewish refugees in Niepokalanów, Poland's largest monastery, which was under the direction of Father Maximilian [Maksymilian] Kolbe.⁸

⁸ Father Kolbe's beatification and subsequent canonization gave rise to an ugly campaign of vilification by uninformed sources, who hold themselves out as "experts" on Polish-Jewish relations. The charges against Father Kolbe were thoroughly discredited at the time but has been revived in recent years. In 1982, two historians—Daniel L. Schlafly, Jr., a Catholic, and Warren Green, a Jew—undertook extensive research on Father Kolbe's prewar activities. In their report, "The Charges and the Truth," published in the *St. Louis Jewish Light* (June 30, 1982), they stated that, in all of Father Kolbe's published works, there were only 14 references to Jews, some very positive, five negative, and none racist. Another charge levelled at Father Kolbe had to do with *Mały Dziennik*, the popular daily newspaper produced at his friary, which was accused of promoting anti-Semitism. Father Kolbe was away in Japan for much of the 1930's and issued instructions not to publish articles that could be construed as being anti-Semitic. See Michael Schwartz, "The Deputy Myth," *The Persistent Prejudice: Anti-Catholicism in America* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1984), pp.235–38. The tone for the hatred spewed on Father Kolbe was set by Rabbi Lev K. Nelson, who wrote in the Boston *Jewish Advocate* (November 4, 1982): "...the sainted Kolbe was a notorious anti-Semite during the Hitler regime in Poland ... How can we possibly say that Kolbe is Kosher when his whole life has been unclean—seared by the disease of anti-Semitism and sullied by the spewing of hatred towards human beings of a different faith? Is it irony or poetic justice that the man who was indirectly responsible for crowding Auschwitz with its victims, was in turn compelled to share their bitter lot and witness the result of the preaching of hatred!" Anne Roiphe, a literary editor of the liberal Jewish-American periodical *Tikkun*, who appears not to appreciate that the Nazis also built camps for and engaged in the systematic destruction of Christian Poles, especially the clergy, made the following remarks in *A Season For Healing: Reflections on the Holocaust* (New York: Summit Books, 1988), at p.130: "Father Kolbe was a nationalist of great fervor. His objection to the Nazis was nationalistic not moral ... A known anti-Semite, even one caught in the machinery to kill the Jews, hardly seem a candidate for sainthood, at least to Jews. In making a pilgrimage to the camp and marking the death of Father Kolbe, [Pope John Paul II] seems once again to diminish the death of all Jews who died there." Joseph Polak, director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at Boston University, called a modest shrine erected in the Auschwitz cell where Father Kolbe was put to death "a landmark etched only in thoughtlessness and cruelty". See his "Auschwitz Revisited: Icons, Memories, Elegies", *Midstream*, June/July 1990, pp.17–18. In his best seller, *Chutzpah* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), Alan M. Dershowitz wrote, at p.143, that Father Kolbe was "a notorious anti-Semite who almost certainly would never have sacrificed his life for a condemned Jewish inmate. (In fact, it is unlikely that Kolbe ever even met a Jew at Auschwitz, since the Polish prisoners were kept entirely separate from the Jews.)" On August 1, 1994, *The New York Times* ran a letter from Alfred Lipson, Senior Researcher, Holocaust Resource Center and Archives, City University of New York, which stated: "The Polish priest's canonization caused a controversy because of past anti-Semitism, especially his attacks on Jews in his popular publications and preachings." David M. Crowe, a historian who taught at Columbia University in New York and is former member of the Education Committee of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., wrote in his study *The Holocaust: Roots, History, and Aftermath* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2008), at p.371: "Kolbe was a Franciscan priest from Łódź who operated a religious center near Warsaw. He was arrested on several occasions by the Germans for helping refugees. But most of Father Kolbe's fame came from his willingness to die in place of another prisoner in Auschwitz. In 1971, questions were raised about his beatification after it was discovered that Kolbe was an anti-Semite who accepted the fictitious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as authentic [as did Winston Churchill, at the time—ed.]. He wrote about the 'perverse Jewish-Masonic press' and claimed that the *Talmud* 'breathes hatred against Christ and Christians' [which reputable scholars such as Peter Schäfer (*Jesus in the Talmud* [Princeton, New Jersey and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007]) readily acknowledge—ed.]. He also thought that the Holocaust was God's punishment for Jewish sins. [This is a totally preposterous charge, as the Holocaust did not get underway until after Kolbe's death. Ed.] In 1982, Pope John Paul II canonized him as a 'martyr of charity.'"

Truckloads (Brother Juwentyn [Juwentyn] estimates as many as 1,500 Jews and 2,000 gentiles at one time) were dumped at the friary by the Nazis, displaced persons who had been forced from their homes as “undesirables” in territory annexed by the Reich.⁹ The first group (Jews and gentiles from the Poznań area), many times outnumbering the Franciscans, was practically waiting on the doorstep when Kolbe and his malnourished friars returned from imprisonment. ... Kolbe and the Brothers somehow managed to feed their bedraggled guests until the Germans began allotting food for them. To do so, the friars begged in the neighborhood. ... Kolbe not only provided housing (the guests were given about three-fourths of the friary) and food, but clothing and every other kind of assistance as well.

Kolbe himself mentions in a letter the following services to refugees sheltered at Niepokalanow in May 1940: the infirmary was caring for sixty to seventy daily, the pharmacy was dispensing medicine to twenty daily, the little hospital for lay people was housing thirty daily, and the friary kitchen was feeding 1,500. ...

Even after the Germans began allotting rations to the displaced persons from the Poznan area, Kolbe, knowing firsthand the inadequacy of these official amounts, added to them. ...

At Father Kolbe's request, a second, non-Christian celebration was put on for the touched and grateful Jewish families on New Year's Day.

Brother Mansuetus Marczewski had noticed that Father Maximilian had an especially tender love for the Jews. This love was reciprocated. Early in the new year (1940), the Poznan deportees were resettled away from the monastery. Before leaving, the Jewish leaders sought out Father Maximilian. According to Brother Juwentyn, a spokesperson (Mrs. Zajac [Zajac]) said:

“Tomorrow we leave Niepokalanow. We've been treated here with much loving concern. ... We've always felt someone close to us was sympathetic with us. For the blessing of this all-around kindness, in the name of all the Jews present here, we want to express our warm and sincere thanks to you, Father Maximilian, and to all the Brothers. But words are inadequate for what our hearts desire to say. ...”

In a loving gesture to Kolbe and his Franciscans, she concluded by asking that a Mass of thanksgiving be celebrated to thank God for his protection of the Jews and the friary. Another Polish Jew added, “If God permits us to live through this war, we will repay Niepokalanow a hundredfold. And, as for the benevolence shown here to the Jewish refugees from Poznan, we shall never forget it. We will praise it everywhere in the foreign press.”

It is interesting to note that the Jews of Poznań, Poland's first historic capital, had largely favoured Germany over Poland, the region's occupying power, when Poland regained its independence after World War I. Father Kolbe continued his support of the Jews until he was arrested again in February 1941, among other reasons, for the extensive and open assistance he gave to Jews at the monastery.

A woman living in the neighborhood of Niepokalanow has also left her testimony of Father Maximilian in this period [i.e., 1940–1941]. She reports how she came to the friary to ask him ... whether it was “all right” to give handouts to war-impooverished Jews who were begging at her door. Patiently Father Maximilian Kolbe urged her, she reports, to help the Jews. She quotes the reason he gave her: “We must do it because every man is our brother.” (Ibid., p.104.)

He is nonetheless often vilified in Jewish literature as an avowed anti-Semite. But among the hundreds of testimonials of gratitude for the assistance carried out by Father Kolbe in Niepokalanów, there are several from the survivors of the Polish Jewish community. (Antonio Ricciardi, *St. Maximilian Kolbe, Apostle of Our Difficult Age* [Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1982], p.248.)

Father Kolbe was eventually deported to Auschwitz, where he died on August 14, 1941, by lethal injection, after a prolonged period of starvation. He had volunteered his life for that of a married man who happened to be a Catholic. While imprisoned in Auschwitz Father Kolbe befriended Sigmund Gerson, then a 13-year-old Jewish boy. Sigmund Gerson recalled their relationship many years later. (Treece, *A Man for Others*, pp.152–53.)

⁹ According to a report of the order's provincial from October 1940 found in the Niepokalanów archives: “During the course of the year 1940, Niepokalanów housed and fed many refugees. Among the first group of 3,500 refugees were 2,000 Jews. After the departure of the first group of refugees in the spring of 1940, a second group of exiles from Pomerania was housed in the friary. This group now also has departed. At the writing of this report, the monastery awaits the arrival of another 2,000 displaced persons. See Claude R. Foster, *Mary's Knight: The Mission and Martyrdom of Saint Maksymilian Maria Kolbe* (West Chester, Pennsylvania: West Chester University Press, 2002), p.630.

I was from a beautiful home where love was the key word. My parents were well-off and well-educated. But my three beautiful sisters, my mother—an attorney educated at the University of Paris—my father, grandparents—all perished. I am the sole survivor. To be a child from such a wonderful home and then suddenly find oneself utterly alone, as I did at age thirteen, in this hell, Auschwitz, has an effect on one others can hardly comprehend. Many of us youngsters lost hope, especially when the Nazis showed us pictures of what they said was the bombing of New York City. Without hope, there was no chance to survive, and many boys my age ran onto the electric fences. I was always looking for some link with my murdered parents, trying to find a friend of my father's, a neighbor—someone in that mass of humanity who had known them so I would not feel so alone.

And this is how Kolbe found me wandering around, so to speak, looking for someone to connect with. He was like an angel to me. Like a mother hen, he took me in his arms. He used to wipe away my tears. I believe in God more since that time. Because of the deaths of my parents I had been asking, "Where is God?" and had lost faith. Kolbe gave me that faith back.

He knew I was a Jewish boy. That made no difference. His heart was bigger than persons—that is, whether they were Jewish, Catholic, or whatever. He loved everyone. He dispensed love and nothing but love. For one thing, he gave away so much of his meager rations that to me it was a miracle he could live. Now it is easy to be nice, to be charitable, to be humble, when times are good and peace prevails. For someone to be as Father Kolbe was in that time and place—I can only say the way he was is beyond words.

I am a Jew by my heritage as the son of a Jewish mother, and I am of the Jewish faith and very proud of it. And not only did I love Maximilian Kolbe very, very much in Auschwitz, where he befriended me, but I will love him until the last moments of my life.

Another Jewish survivor, Eddie Gastfriend, confirmed this same impression of Polish priests in Auschwitz, who were targeted by the Germans for particularly brutal and degrading treatment. (Ibid., p.138.)

There were many priests in Auschwitz. They wore no collars, but you knew they were priests by their manner and their attitude, especially toward Jews. They were so gentle, so loving.

Those of us Jews who came into contact with priests, such as Father Kolbe (I didn't know him personally, but I heard stories about him), felt it was a moving time—a time when a covenant in blood was written between Christians and Jews.

...

Both Jews and priests were singled out for particularly brutal and humiliating treatment in concentration camps. (Ibid., p.137.)

Right after my arrival at Auschwitz, a young priest was murdered. His body, in a cassock, was laid out on a wheelbarrow. A mock funeral was staged by the SS men, who forced several priests and a few Jews to sing funeral hymns as they followed another cassock-dressed priest. He wore a hat turned upside down, a straw rope was tied about his neck, and they made him carry a broom as his cross. We were forced to stand there looking at this mockery while the SS men jeered at us hoping to arouse fear, to subjugate us: "Your god and your ruler; that's us, the SS and the capos and the camp commander. There is no other god!"

To some extent, Catholic priests and Jews were lumped together. The following incidents explain the connection in Nazi minds. Father Józef Kowalski was doomed because he would not step on a rosary crucifix. Father Piotr Dankowski, from Zakopane, was tortured and killed on Good Friday by a capo who sneered, "Jesus Christ was killed today and you also will perish this day."

In May 1941 we were working in a torn-down house when one of the prisoners found a crucifix. SS Storch got ahold of it and he called Father Nieweglewski.

"What is this?" he asks the priest. Father remains silent, but the guard insists until he says, "Christ on the cross."

Then Storch jeers: "Why you fool, that's the Jew who, thanks to the silly ideals which he preached and you fell for, got you into this camp. Don't you understand? He's one of the Jewish ringleaders! A Jew is a Jew and will always be a Jew! How can you believe in such an enemy?"

Father Nieweglewski is silent.

Then Storch says, "You know, if you'll trample this Jew"—and he throws the crucifix on the sand—"I'll get you transferred to a better job."

When the priest refused, the SS man and the capo threw him a couple of times on the crucifix; then they beat him so

badly that, shortly after, he died.

When, for some unknown reason, an anti-Jewish disturbance broke out in Głowno near Łódź in January 1940, the local priest and some other Poles interceded and condemned the violence. (“Głowno,” in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol1_00081.html> translated from *Pinkas ha-kehilot Polin*, volume 1 [Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976], pp.81–84.)

In the spring of 1940, the Germans assembled gangs of unemployed young ruffians to attack Jews, and sometimes Poles, in the streets. These hoodlums, often intoxicated, were paid by the Germans for their orchestrated and closely watched activity. One Jewish eyewitness described the scene in Warsaw during the Passover pogrom in 1940. (Based on Jacob Apenszlak, ed., *The Black Book of Polish Jewry* [New York: Roy Publishers, 1943], pp.30–31.)

The Passover pogrom continued about eight days. It began suddenly and stopped as suddenly. The pogrom was carried out by a crowd of youths, about 1,000 of them, who arrived suddenly in the Warsaw streets. Such types have never before been seen in the Warsaw streets. Clearly these were young ruffians specially brought in from the suburbs. From the characteristic scenes of the pogrom I mention here a few: On the second day of Passover, at the corner of Wspólna and Marszałkowska Streets, about 30 or 40 broke into and looted Jewish hat shops. German soldiers stood in the streets and filmed the scenes. ...

The Polish youngsters acted alone, but there have been instances when such bands attacked the Jews with the assistance of German military. The attitude of the Polish intellectuals toward the Jews was clearly a friendly one, and against the pogrom. It is a known fact that at the corner of Nowogrodzka and Marszałkowska a Catholic priest attacked the youngsters participating in the pogrom, beat them and disappeared. These youngsters received two zlotys daily from the Germans.

Public interventions by the clergy on behalf of Jews, though invariably futile and often suicidal, occurred from time to time. The following example is recalled by Zofia Kossak, co-founder of the wartime Council for Aid to Jews. (Teresa Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945* [Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982], p.200.)

On Nowy Świat Street a German officer grabbed an emaciated Jewish boy, no more than six years old. Holding him by the scruff of the neck like a pup, he raised the cover of a sewer with his other hand and pushed the child in. The passers-by looked with horror. A priest who had witnessed this started to beg for mercy for the child. The officer glared at him in wonder and stated officially, “Jude.” He slammed down the hatch and calmly walked away.

In the summer of 1940, the Main Welfare Council (*Rada Główna Opiekuńca—RGO*, a legally functioning Polish relief agency), together with Monsignor Adam Sapieha, the archbishop of Kraków, appealed to Hans Frank, the Governor of the Generalgouvernement, to suspend the mass resettlement of Jews from Kraków. Not only did this not bring about the desired effect, but also the three rabbis who had requested the Council and Archbishop Sapieha to intervene, including the chief rabbi of Kraków, Smelkes Kornitzer, were arrested and deported to Auschwitz where they were killed. The Jewish community did not approach Catholic Church leaders again to intervene on their behalf with the German authorities. This courageous but ultimately disastrous intervention is described by a Jewish community leader, in his chronicle of the wartime fate of the Jews of Kraków: Aleksander Bieberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), at pages 38–39, 223. Nonetheless, Archbishop Sapieha continued his relief work for Jews clandestinely. Through the intermediary of Rev. Ferdynand Machay, he furnished false baptismal certificates to Jews. Among the recipients were eleven members of the Kleinmann family hiding in Prądnik Czerwony. Archbishop Sapieha allowed his priests to baptize Jews secretly and forge baptismal certificates. (Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland 1939–1945* [Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963], p.40; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.824; Tomasz Pawlikowski, *Adam Stefan Kardynał Sapieha* [Lublin: Test and Towarzystwo im. Stanisława ze Skarbimierza, 2004], pp.82–86.)

Early in the war, Archbishop Sapieha, who headed the Catholic Church within Poland after the Primate’s

departure, asked Pope Pius XII for a forceful statement in support of Poland against the Nazis. However, the futility of making a public statement in Poland along those lines soon became all too apparent. When, in 1942, the Pope had such a letter smuggled into Poland to be read from the pulpits, Archbishop Sapieha burned it, fearing it would have no lasting positive impact and bring about severe repercussions. The Pope's messenger, Monsignor Quirino Paganuzzi reported the following about his mission (Rychlak, *Righteous Gentiles*, p.153):

As always, Msgr. Sapieha's welcome was most affectionate. ... However, he didn't waste much time in conventionalities. He opened the packets [from Pius XII, with statements condemning Nazi German], read them, and commented on them in his pleasant voice. Then he opened the door or the large stove against the wall, started a fire, and threw the papers on to it. All the rest of the material shared the same fate. On seeing my astonished face, he said in explanation: "I'm most grateful to the Holy Father ... no one is more grateful than we Poles for the Pope's interest in us ... but we have no need of any outward show of the Pope's loving concern for our misfortunes, when it only serves to augment them. ... But he doesn't know that if I give publicity to these things, and if they are found in my house, the head of every Pole wouldn't be enough for the reprisals Gauleiter Frank will order.

In the summer of 1940, the Germans expelled the Jews from the town of Konin, in western Poland, an area incorporated into the Reich, to the surrounding villages. Soon after, they were deported to the General Government. Francesca Bram (née Grochowska) records the following testimony in the Konin Memorial Book, published in Israel in 1968 and reproduced in Theo Richmond, *Konin: A Quest* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), at page 163.

One ought to emphasize the help we received from the priest of Grodziec [Rev. Władysław Jankowski], who occupied himself with handing out coffee and tea to us, and distributing milk to the children. Until late into the night there were warm kettles in the square. Bread was also given out. Besides that, the priest went around appealing to the peasants to give accommodation to the deportees, and help to the homeless. ... The Germans sought an opportunity to arrest him and this happened after he helped the Jews in Grodziec. Soon afterwards came news of his death.

On "Bloody Wednesday," July 31, 1940, the Germans staged a massive assault on the civilian population of Olkusz, in retaliation for the shooting of a German police officer earlier that month. (Twenty Poles were executed immediately after that incident.) Hundreds of men between the ages of 15 and 55, both Poles and Jews, were forced to assemble in public places and were abused and mistreated. When Rev. Piotr Mączka, the pastor of the Church of St. Andrew the Apostle, tried to intervene, he was beaten savagely, and died ten days later. Jacob Schwarzfitter, a Jew from Olkusz, recalled those events which he had lived through, in an interview given in 1946. (Voices of the Holocaust, A Documentary Project by Illinois Institute of Technology, Internet: <<http://voices.iit.edu/portal2.html>>.)

I had come to my (little) town Olkusz. That's my place of birth. There I remained until the evacuation (depopulation) of the town. Before speaking about the depopulation, I shall narrate, report one incident. On the 31st of July 1940, there took place a punitive expedition against my town. On an early morning at four o'clock, at daybreak, on a Wednesday, the whole town was aroused from sleep and put on its feet. And all men without distinction, Jews, from sixteen to fifty years of age, were taken out to various squares. They were taken out by the Gestapo. A few thousand Gestapo men arrived, in a town which had a population of only about fifteen thousand, and they started punitive expedition.

The punitive expedition took place because sixty kilometers from the city were murdered by bandits two gendarmes. But they felt it useful to make of it a political incident. And it was ordered to make responsible for it the peaceful (civilian) population. We were led out at daybreak, with our hands up, they jabbed us with bayonets and we were compelled to run. When we arrived at the square, we had to pass a cordon. On both sides stood SS men, with (metal) rods, belts, rubber truncheons, clubs, and they beat us. Every one had to go through. People went through the cordon, and emerged covered with blood. ...

Women were not taken, that time, only men. Then afterwards each had to show his fingerprint. After giving his fingerprint (it is possible that they had to surrender their identification cards which bore a single fingerprint) each one was tripped from the front over a leg and thrown down to the ground. We were made to lie on the stomach, the face deeply pressed to the earth, with the hands on the back. So we remained lying until twelve o'clock. And the SS men were passing back and fro, and when it pleased him he trampled (the person). I personally was hit several times with the boot on the head. At twelve o'clock they came ...

Twelve o'clock noon, after lying for eight hours we were ordered to get up. Everyone was pale and black. We all looked like dead men. So there spoke to us a Gestapo man, while another explained (interpreted) in the Polish language. That we are being treated most humanely, because they are still able to prove who is against God and against humanity. I and those others present, could of course, not understand that people could be treated still, worse, but that we have learned in the future.

Afterwards he explained to us the reason for the event. It was because two gendarmes were murdered. Among those present was a Polish 'prister' (the word was not clear, and caused a question).

No 'Prister' is a priest, a clergyman.

Yes. He explained among other things, that those here present are not criminals, that they are simply peaceful citizens. For that he was murderously beaten...

Throughout German-occupied Poland the Jews were gradually being confined in ghettos, located in cities and towns, which were walled or fenced off from the remainder of the population. The creation of the largest ghetto, in Warsaw, was described by British historian Martin Gilbert in *The Holocaust: A Jewish Tragedy* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1986), at pages 127–28:

Of the 400,000 Jews of Warsaw, more than 250,000 lived in the predominantly Jewish district. The remaining 150,000 lived throughout the city, some Jews in almost every street and suburb. On 3 October 1940, at the start of the Jewish New Year, the German Governor of Warsaw, Ludwig Fischer, announced that all Jews living outside the predominant Jewish district would have to leave their homes and to move to the Jewish area. ...

Warsaw was to be divided into three 'quarters': one for Germans, one for Poles, and one for Jews. ... More than a hundred thousand Poles, living in the area designated for the Jews, were likewise ordered to move, to the 'Polish quarter'. They too would lose their houses and their livelihoods. On October 12, the second Day of Atonement of the war, a day of fasting and of prayer, German loudspeakers announced that the move of Poles and Jews into their special quarters must be completed by the end of the month.

A traditional Jewish upbringing could give rise to insurmountable psychological obstacles on the part of Jews who sought refuge in Catholic institutions, as was the case of a young yeshiva student from Zduńska Wola who was welcomed into a local monastery. (Isaac Neuman with Michael Palencia-Roth, *The Narrow Bridge: Beyond the Holocaust* [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000], pp.56–64.)

On my way home that cold December morning [of 1940] ... I wandered into a relatively unfamiliar neighborhood. When I realized where I was, the yellow star on my jacket began to feel very large. ... Then I saw something I had not noticed before: a small monastery, its courtyard slightly ajar. I had never been inside either a church or a monastery; as a yeshiva student, I did not enter churches and didn't know much about Christian rituals. Yet the half-open gate beckoned. "Just for a minute," I said to myself, "until I thaw out. And then I can continue home."

I slipped through the gate, crossed the courtyard, and entered a dimly lit chapel. It was empty. ... On the altar stood a triptych of scenes that, I concluded, depicted the life of Jesus. The woman with the infant at her breast must be Mary, I thought. I also noticed a picture of the Crucifixion. After wondering how Reb Mendel would describe these representations, I sat down in a forward pew and took off my jacket so that the yellow star was hidden. Long before, I had cut off my earlocks, hoping thereby to look more like a Pole or at least to draw less attention to myself. I must have sat there, alone and in silence, for twenty minutes. ... Gradually my limbs thawed.

I was about to stand up when I felt a hand descend on my left shoulder. I had heard nothing, no footsteps, no breathing, nothing. He was just there. He kept his hand on my shoulder as I turned to look at him. I knew that I shouldn't move, get up, or try to flee. "And now the Gestapo," I said to myself, "for being in a forbidden place." But the monk's face was kind. "My son," he asked softly, "are you hungry?" I nodded. He gestured for me to follow him. I walked behind his billowing, thick, dark robe, out of the chapel and down a long, bare corridor.

The silence seemed to intensify as we went further into the monastery. We crossed a small courtyard and came to a low pig shed. He led me inside and asked me to sit and wait for him. I sat and looked at the pigs in the shed with me. They appeared content and well fed. They were obviously indifferent to the German soldiers occupying Zduńska Wola. For a moment, just for a moment, I wanted to be one of those pigs. ...

The monk returned with a bowl of potato soup. "I am brother John," he said, handing me the bowl and a spoon. "Eat in peace." He watched as I squatted on the floor and ate until my spoon scraped bottom. Then, from somewhere in the vastness of his robe he took out a piece of bread and gave it to me. I wiped the bowl with that bread until the entire surface

shone. Watching my eyes and moving slowly, Brother John reached for my jacket, which still was inside-out on the floor beside me. His finger traced the outline of the yellow star. It was barely visible to the eye, although its six points were unmistakable to the touch. ...

"I see you are a Jew," Brother John said.

I nodded, not trusting my voice. At any moment I expected either to be tied up and handed over to the Gestapo or booted down the corridor through the chapel and out the courtyard gate. At least, I thought to myself, I had eaten a meal.

Then, only half intending to say what I said, I blurted out, "Perhaps these pigs need looking after. I could also help around the monastery. I could sweep and clean and light the stoves in the mornings. I am used to getting up early."

"Oh?" said Brother John, "and why does a young boy like you get up so early?"

I told him about my duties at the stiebel, about lighting the stove every morning at five, and about Reb Mendel and my months of study with him. After recounting how Reb Mendel had died, I fell silent again, thinking that I had said too much. The silence between us grew.

Finally Brother John said, "We could use a boy like you, but you must promise me two things. First, while you work for us you must not leave the monastery. Second, you must tell no one else here that you are a Jew. And, of course, you must not mind sleeping out here with the pigs."

I told him that I would agree to those conditions after I had spoken with my mother and father, for I did not want them to worry about my sudden disappearance. Brother John asked me not to tell my parents where I would be or even that I would be working in a monastery, any monastery. I agreed to that, too, and with some relief, for I was sure that my father would have been upset to know that I was working in a Christian house of worship.

That very afternoon, after assuring my parents I would be safe, I came back to the monastery. Before entering through the same half-open gate, I carefully looked around to make sure no one had seen me. In a small satchel I had packed a toothbrush and one change of clothing as well as my phylacteries and a prayer book. As dangerous as it was to bring the very things that would betray my origins, I did not consider leaving them behind. Brother John was waiting for me in the chapel. Together we walked down the same long corridor as that morning. The silence now felt inviting and safe.

In the pig shed, I noticed that Brother John had brought in some new straw and heaped it in a corner, along with two thick blankets. After bringing me another bowl of soup, this time with some kind of meat in it, and a piece of bread and cheese, he said goodnight and left me alone. Despite the cold, the blankets were sufficient protection, because I slept buried in the straw rather than on top of it. In the morning I hid my satchel under the straw and began my duties. I scrubbed floor, cleaned the kitchen, and lit the stoves every morning at five. I fed the pigs and cleaned the shed once a day. Every morning also, as soon as it was light enough for me to see my hand and I knew that I was alone, I would say my morning prayers.

None of the other ten or twelve monks spoke to me. I don't know what Brother John told them, but it must have satisfied them, for none paid attention to me—none, that is, except Brother Peter. His dark and sad eyes, set close in a thin face, narrowed when he saw me, and soon I began to fear that he would report me to the Gestapo. But aside from staring at me at odd moments during the day, Brother Peter said and did nothing, and within three days I felt relatively secure in the monastery. Although I missed my family, I was glad to live without daily fear and grateful to have enough to eat. Every day the soup had meat in it, and some of it tasted unfamiliar, I decided not to worry about that. I felt increasingly at ease until I remembered that in two evenings it would be Hanukkah.

The burden of that thought coincided with a request that the monks made, and the confluence of the two disturbed me. One morning, Brother John asked me to take the place of a regular altar boy who was ill. Of course, I could not refuse, and I trembled as I put on the clothes of the absent altar boy, wondering what I would be asked to do. Immediately I regretted not having paid more attention to the boys. Although they were my size, they were somewhat younger, and I had not spoken to them since entering the monastery. I had not even watched them as they went about their duties. They regarded me, I hoped, as some sort of peasant boy brought in to do the heavy work of the monastery. At any rate, they paid me as little attention as I paid them.

Now I also began to regret having entered the monastery in the first place. Here I was, a yeshiva student, about to participate in church worship. I felt doubly hypocritical, first because I was pretending to be a Christian in the company of people who were believers and second because I was a Jew. I wondered what the law said about my actions. I racked my brain but had difficulty finding something that discussed my situation. So I did as I was asked. Yet when I carried a portrait of the Madonna, I hoped Reb Mendel was not watching. I also sought to ease my conscience by talking to the figure in the painting, "You're a Jewish mother. You understand, don't you?"

My silent comments to an image on canvas somehow eased my mind, but I soon experienced other moments of unanticipated theological delicacy. As I stood at the altar with the other boys and heard the mass being conducted, I tried to counteract that influence by whispering Hebrew prayers under my breath. By far my greatest fear was that I would be asked to carry the crucifix. That action, I was convinced, could not be balanced by Hebrew prayers on my part.

Fortunately, I did not have to face the prospect of such apostasy, for after three days the ill boy returned to the monastery and I returned to scrubbing floors, lighting stoves, and feeding pigs.

At the same time I was carrying the Madonna, I was wondering how I could celebrate Hanukkah in the monastery. Hanukkah had wonderful memories for me. ... Although Hanukkah was not a major holiday in my community, it was celebrated with joy. ...

Again, I began to miss my family and resolved to take advantage of my special circumstances. Carefully, I began gathering wax from the drippings of the votive candles. After I had enough, I made one candle, using for a wick one of the fringes from my tallis-kattan (prayer shawl), which I had worn under my shirt since entering the monastery. Jewish custom requires that the tzitzis (fringes) have eight ends, but seven are also acceptable, so I felt it was kosher to use one as a candlewick. I also was concerned about taking wax meant for the Virgin Mary and St. Teresa and transforming it into a Hanukkah candle. Here I found justification in a talmudic law that states that when something is thrown away it is no longer owned by anyone, so the drippings from the votive candles were no longer the property of the monastery, the Virgin, or another saint. The wax, that is, no longer belonged to anyone, and thus making a Hanukkah candle from it was permissible.

Once I had made the candle, I wondered where I could celebrate the ritual of Hanukkah. A light, even from a candle, would surely be noticed, and my singing might be heard. I began to look around the monastery. Every place I considered seemed to be too public. Then I discovered that one of the smaller buildings used as a dormitory for the monks had a trap door leading to a small attic. ... Entering the attic, I felt my way in the darkness along the woodwork until I reached an open space next to the chimney, a crawl space large enough for me to stand. ... Lighting a match, I surveyed my domain. For the first time since beginning to live in the monastery I felt at home. No one would bother me here. Taking my candle from my pocket, I lit a match to its bottom. As soon as the wax melted, I placed the candle on the ledge, pressing it into the brick. The light from my Hanukkah candle cast a gentle glow.

Almost delirious with joy, I began to chant the Maoz Tzur. For just a moment I was back home and younger in age. ... The monastery vanished. My struggles with the Madonna and the crucifix faded.

So concentrated was I on the traditional Hanukkah song that I heard neither the creak of the trap door nor the shuffling of feet. But suddenly I saw my shadow cast on the chimney in front of me and turned to see the intense, narrow stare of Brother Peter. I knew he had heard me singing the Maoz Tzur. I wasn't frightened as I turned to face him, although I don't know why I wasn't. Perhaps I had become accustomed to the intensity of Brother Peter's dark eyes, or perhaps I sensed a bond between us. We stood and looked at each other for a long, long minute.

Just as I was about to blurt out some improbable explanation, Brother Peter said: "Let us sing together, let us sing the Maoz Tzur." And so we did. Brother Peter knew the Hebrew words and the melody. We sang about wanting to reestablish the Temple and to rededicate the altar. ... As we sang, I watched our shadows on the wall. For a moment, just a moment, they seemed to merge into one.

I did not ask Brother Peter why he knew the melody, and he did not volunteer a reason. The next morning, I did not tell Brother John about Brother Peter and the singing, but I knew I had to leave the monastery. I told Brother John that my family needed me at home and that I felt I had to return. He thanked me for my work and told me that I could return whenever I liked. I thanked him and said that my father would call him one of the righteous men. Brother John blushed and said nothing.

I left the monastery that morning through the same half-open courtyard gate through which I had entered. As I left, I was very much aware that I had received one of the rarest gifts of life in the ghetto: kindness from a gentile stranger. In December 1940 any acts of kindness toward Jews would be punished in some way; by 1941 the punishment would be much more severe and specific. By then, anyone in Poland caught aiding a Jew outside the ghetto, either by offering food or lodging or transportation, would be subject to the death penalty. ...

I was home for the final night of Hanukkah. As we sang the melodies, I thought of Brother John and Brother Peter and of my weeks of peace under the shadow of war and occupation. The festival now seemed deeper somehow, denser, and richer. I did not imagine that it would be the last Hanukkah I would celebrate with my family.

Jewish converts posed a peculiar challenge for the Catholic clergy. Several thousand Jews who had converted to Catholicism, some of them one or two generations previously, were classified as Jews by the Germans and forced into the ghettos.¹⁰ These converts required both spiritual care and material assistance. But the activities of the

¹⁰ The number of Jewish converts to Christianity who resided in the Warsaw ghetto is variously estimated at between 2,000 and 6,000. According to official sources, as of January 1, 1941, just after the closing of the ghetto, there were some 1,750 Jewish Christians, but this figure is likely low. Generally, the converts were not well liked by the Jews and even suffered harassment at their hands. See Peter F. Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame

Polish clergy were not confined to converts. Monsignor Marcelli Godlewski, the pastor of All Saints church, which was included in the Warsaw ghetto, and his vicars Rev. Antoni Czarnecki and Rev. Tadeusz Nowotko, as well as priests from other Catholic institutions, extended their help to everyone. Jewish children from Janusz Korczak's orphanage often played in the church's garden. Rev. Godlewski opened the church's crypt up to Jews making their way out of the ghetto, provided false papers, and hid small Jewish children under his robe to get them away to safety. Among the Jews whom he saved was Ludwik Hirsztfeld, a leading professor of medicine. (There is more on the topic of Jewish converts in the Warsaw ghetto later on.) Rev. Godlewski was recognized as a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem in 2009. The following description comes from Irene Tomaszewski and Tacia Werbowska, *Żegota: The Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland, 1942–1945* (Montreal: Price-Patterson, 1999), at page 36:

When the walls were erected around the Warsaw ghetto, All Saints' church was enclosed within them. Its parish priest [pastor] was Marcelli Godlewski, known quite well before the war for his anti-Jewish views. [In actual fact, Rev. Godlewski was disliked by the Jews for promoting Polish business and workers' unions as well as credit unions, and for his association with the National Democracy.] However, once he witnessed the terrifying persecution of the Jews, Godlewski turned his energies to the task of helping as much as he could. He did so by remaining in the ghetto and ministering to the Jews who had been converted to Christianity. He also offered the shelter of his church to any others who turned to him.

Father Godlewski gave the Jews who came to him birth certificates of deceased parishioners, thus providing those ready to escape with an "authentic" document. He smuggled children out of the ghetto under his robes, and helped find shelter and provide food on the other side for those who did make it out.

Godlewski frequently had meetings with Adam Czerniaków, the chairman of the Judenrat, listening sympathetically and trying to give hope. Caritas, a Catholic welfare organization, opened a soup kitchen in the ghetto operated by a Father Michał Kliszko, [vicar at the cathedral parish of St. John the Baptist]. It was open to anyone who came. Several hundred Jews were kept hidden with Godlewski's former parishioners on the Polish side and in a chapel at 49 Żłota Street.

Father Godlewski and his young curates remained in the ghetto until they were expelled, but continued their work outside the walls.

Jewish converts to Christianity, even those with a pronounced Jewish appearance, often lived openly among Poles and survived the occupation without being denounced. The following account concerns the Herman family who lived in the Warsaw suburb of Włochy, where they had the support of the local Catholic priests. (Arnon Rubin, *Against All Odds: Facing Holocaust. My Personal Recollections* [Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2005], p.151.)

I had visited also the Herman family, father, mother, and a daughter Ewa, living in Włochy, a small town near Warsaw. I personally knew the family, because Ewa was a close friend of my sister, the two attended the same school and the same class during the Soviet rule in Lwów, they often met in our house. The Herman family occupied a small house in Włochy, all for themselves. They entertained me cordially. They all three had a very distinctive Semitic features each of them looked not like one Jew, but like ten Jews, together. I think that all the surrounding knew that they are Jews. It was impossible not to. They survived the war; I met them after the war in Kraków. Ewa told me that they had support of the local priest; by the way all Herman family had been converted Jews, and a very pious and devoted Christians.

All interventions on behalf of Jewish converts proved to be futile, and indeed counterproductive. In July 1942, the Episcopal Curia of Przemyśl, at the direction of Bishop Franciszek Barda, petitioned the town's commissar Giesselmann, through Monsignor Zygmunt Męski and Rev. Jan Kwolek, not to confine Jewish converts in the ghetto. These appeals had the opposite effect: the converts were all arrested, some of them were executed immediately and the rest were sent to the ghetto. The bishop also provided false birth certificates to non-converts, among them Stanley and Lusja Igel (Iguel). (Marcin Janowski, "Polityka niemiecka władz okupacyjnych wobec ludności polskiej i żydowskiej w Przemyślu w latach 1939–1944," in *Kresy Południowo-Wschodnie: Rocznik Przemyskiego Centrum Kultury i Nauki Zamek*, volume 3/4, no. 1 [Przemyśl 2005–2006]: p.215; Elżbieta Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* [Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008], pp.76 and 79.)

Priests in many parishes in the General Government provided assistance to Jews spontaneously. Michael Kossower, an eyewitness and chronicler from the town of Radzymin near Warsaw, wrote in that community's Memorial Book, *Le livre du souvenir de la communauté juive de Radzymin* (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv: Encyclopédie de la Diaspora, 1975), at pages 48–49:

It is also necessary to recall the boundless devotion of the pastor of Radzymin parish, Rev. Kaszczalkiewicz, who distributed hot meals to Jewish children in the church courtyard. After receiving threats from the Germans, he had to stop providing the service of his kitchen, but nevertheless continued to distribute dry food and also gave sums of money to the Jewish self-help committee. ...

In the fight against the typhus epidemic [in the ghetto], the Jewish doctor Abraham Deutscher from Skerniewice [Skierniewice] distinguished himself. He managed to prepare medication from materials which he received illegally from a pharmacy located in the "Aryan" quarter. ... He was also aided by several Polish doctors, such as Dr. Władysław Zasławski, and Doctors Tucharzewski, Szymkiewicz, Truchaszewicz and Karpiński from Warsaw, who entered the ghetto secretly during the night, bringing medicine and administering care to the most needy of its residents.

A village priest came to the assistance of Jews brought to a labour camp in Kampinos outside Warsaw. Rabbi Simon Huberband, who was an inmate of the camp in April and May 1941, wrote in *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland During the Holocaust* (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House; New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1987), at pages 95 and 101:

We received through some Christians the encouraging news that the priest of Kampinos had been giving fiery sermons about us in church every Sunday. He forcefully called upon the Christian population to assist us in all possible ways. And he also attacked the guards and the Christian camp administrators, referring to them as Antichrists. He harshly condemned the guards who beat and murdered the unfortunate Jewish inmates so mercilessly. ...

We marched through the village. We were given a warm farewell by the entire Christian population. Dr. Kon told us that when we passed the home of the Christian priest, he would greet us, and that we, in turn, should tip our hats. And that is what occurred. The honorable priest came out of his house with a bouquet of white roses in his hand. He did not say a word, because there were Germans in his home. As we passed by his house we tipped our hats. He answered by nodding his head.

We owed him, the priest of Kampinos, a great deal. Many of us owed our lives to the warm and fiery sermons of this saintly person. His unknown name will remain forever in our memory.

A young Jewish woman from Pruszków by the name of Balbina Synalewicz was taken to work as a labourer on a farm in Czerniaków outside Warsaw. One day she received word about the fate of her parents, who were confined in the Warsaw ghetto, from an unknown priest who had met her father by chance. (Elsa Thon, *I Wish It Were Fiction: Memories, 1939–1945* [Hamilton, Ontario: Merkel & Deahl, 1997], pp.24–25.)

One day, as I was working in the field, someone came to tell me that a man was waiting for me. I brought the raft to the other side and ran to the kitchen, where I introduced myself to the man. He was about twenty or twenty-two years old. His face was round, he had dark blond hair and blue eyes. He wore a sport jacket and black trousers. He got up to greet me.

"I have a message for you from your father."

"How are my parents?" I blurted. "How did you happen to meet them? Where are they?—A cascade of words, questions: I asked so many things. He couldn't answer some of these questions because he didn't know. Others, I suspected, he wouldn't answer because he knew too much.

"I saw your father in the place where he worked. He gave me your address, and asked me to see you."

"How were you able to travel?"

"I'm a priest. The Germans don't allow us to wear our religious habits. I have to dress in civilian clothes."

"What was my father doing when you saw him? Did you see my mother?"

"No, only your father. They are locked up in the ghetto. In the morning the SS take them out for different chores outside the ghetto. Your father wanted to know how you were. He asked if you had heard from his sister."

"Are you allowed to enter the ghetto in Warsaw?"

"I'm sorry, no, I can't. It has been sealed off."

We talked for a while. Chana asked him to stay with us for supper. But he excused himself and left.

I tried to think of something to say that would help my parents in some way. But nothing occurred to me. I wrote a letter

to my sister, telling her about the priest's visit. If Dad had been able to contact a priest, perhaps he was also able to do other things to ensure their safety, I said.

Later, with the help of the Polish underground, she obtained false identity documents in the name of Elżbieta Orlański and moved to Kraków. She maintained contact with Warsaw through letters sent to a Mother Superior in Warsaw. (Ibid., pp.31–32, 61.)

One day in the middle of summer of 1942, we were coming from the fields when someone said that Leah wanted to see me. She was in the kitchen with another woman, chatting. Leah introduced me to her as Irena Adamowicz.

Irena was a leader in the [Polish] Scout movement. Outraged by the injustice done to the Jews, she helped out however she could. Irena travelled across the country making contact with halutzim in the major ghettos and telling them about how the clandestine movement operated. ...

Irena talked to me for a while. She told me that I would be sent to Krakow [Kraków]. She asked me how I felt about the work and whether I knew how to pray. I told her I knew the prayers by heart after so many years of hearing the Catholic students saying their prayers every morning at school. She seemed satisfied with my answers. Irena gave me an address, and told me to send a letter there on the seventh day of every month as a sign that I was still alive. Whenever the underground needed me, they would let me know. She handed me a prayer book. "Be careful, and good luck," she said. ...

As Irena had instructed me, I addressed my monthly letters to the Mother Superior; absolutely no one else knew.

Jews who had acquaintances among the Catholic clergy turned to them for protection in the face of the unfolding terror and uncertainty. Alfred Szancer (later Królikowski), born in Kraków in 1928, recalled the efforts of his father Zygmunt Lancer, to secure the family's future. (Account of Alfred Królikowski, "Helped by Żegota," in Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, volume 2 [Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005], pp.134–35.)

It was impossible to live in the empty apartment on Rzeszowska Street [in Kraków] because of the expectation that it would later be included in the ghetto area, and my father was determined to avoid being enclosed in the ghetto. Thus he made contact with a former classmate, Father Stanisław Proszak, a parish priest in the village of Biały Kościół, eighteen kilometers from Kraków, in the direction of Ojców. This priest helped us a great deal, giving his guarantees on our behalf when we rented a room at a local farmer's, and later, by recording in the parish books a fictitious baptism of our entire threesome (Father, Mother, and me) and issuing us certificates of baptism. At that time our given names were also changed for the first time—Father's to Stanisław Zygmunt, Mother's to Jadwiga Zofia, and mine to Jerzy Alfred. According to our thinking then—somewhat naive, as it turned out later—this was supposed to disorient the Germans in case they discovered our escape from Kraków.

On the basis of these documents and thanks to Father Proszak's connections, we received temporary identification documents from the local administration—which we used as evidence of our identities for a brief period of time. For a time, Father, unable to make a living in the village, worked in Kraków at the Władysław Klimek Iron Foundry, owned by a friend of his, and on Sundays, he rode his bicycle to Biały Kościół. This lasted until the spring of 1941, when Father was warned—I don't know how and by whom—of the necessity to flee further.

In the early months of 1940, Eta Chajt Wrobel, who was part of the nascent underground movement in Łuków, undertook a mission to Łódź, where she had lived previously and, with the help of a Pole, managed to steal some guns from German officers. On the way back she had an encounter with an unknown Polish nun—a chance meeting that saved her life. (Eta Wrobel with Jeanette Friedman, *My Life My Way: The Extraordinary Memoir of a Jewish Partisan in WWII Poland* [New Milford, New Jersey: The Wordsmithy; New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2006], pp.53–54.)

In the meantime I decided that it would be prudent to go back to Lodz [Łódź] and get the guns that Janek was still hiding for me. And this time I didn't wear any yellow stars; I wore instead the crucifix [her Polish girlfriend] Lola's mother had given me. ...

At Janek's house, I knocked, and he answered the door. When he saw me, he pulled me into his apartment. I told him I'd come for the guns. He gave me two guns wrapped in women's clothing and put them in my handbag. We decided it would be best for me to make several trips to pick up the rest ... taking only two guns at a time.

On my way back to Lukow [Łuków], as we pulled into one station, I noticed Gestapo agents surrounding the train. I was terrified. I had no papers and if they searched my bag, I would have been shot on the spot. Though I tried to keep my demeanor cool and calm, something must have shown in my face. A nun sitting across the aisle noticed me and looked into my eyes. I still remember how beautiful her young face was underneath the cowl of her habit. Suddenly, she got up and ordered me to take her suitcase. I obeyed without saying a word. She pushed her way past the Germans as I followed behind her like a maidservant. The Gestapo agents had no time to react to her leaving the train so quickly and never asked her or me for our papers—after all, she was obviously not Jewish, and I was wearing a crucifix.

I walked with her for at least two blocks before she stopped, turned, and looked straight at me. “What are you up to?” she asked. “I can see death in your eyes.” She also saw the cross I was wearing, blessed me, and sent me on my way. She knew exactly what I was up to, and must have guessed I was a Jew, but yet didn’t give me up. That woman, whoever she was, saved my life.

The second trip I took for guns was uneventful; the third trip was something else again.

Later, when the ghetto in Łuków was being liquidated in 1943, Eta Wrobel declined an offer of assistance extended to her by a Polish acquaintance (Ibid., 75).

A few days later, one of the women who sometimes let me stay at her house brought me a birth certificate from a Polish girl who had died. She asked me to leave and live with her as a Christian, and that her priest would help me. Again, I had to say no—I didn’t want to leave my Tateh [i.e., dad] and brothers.

Germany Attacks the Soviet Union, June 1941

The eastern half of Poland had been invaded and seized by the Soviet Union in September 1939 in consequence of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. Germany turned on its erstwhile ally and attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. Jews fleeing from the advancing German armies found succour and refuge with a Catholic priest in the small town of Porozowo near Wołkowysk. (Account of Kalman Barakin, in Michał Grynberg and Maria Kotowska, comp. and eds., *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945: Relacje świadków* [Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2003], p.386.)

The Germans entered Parasowo [Porozowo] only in the evening [of June 24, 1941]. Immediately they ordered all the men from the town to assemble in the main square. There they separated the Jews from the Catholics. The Jews were lined up in rows and counted, and every tenth one was told to leave the ranks and line up on one side. About twenty men were assembled in this way. The Germans immediately put them against a wall and shot them. My friend and I were in the square standing among the Jews, we were counted but were fortunate not to have been among the ten and thanks to that we remained alive. Then all of the men, both Jews and non-Jews, were locked up in the church. It was very tight there, and there was simply no air to breathe. We were kept in the church the entire day, and then released. The inhabitants of the town returned to their homes. We and other Jews, refugees from Białystok and other localities, about 24 persons all together, went to search out local Jews, but they did not allow us into their homes for fear of the Germans. We therefore went to the priest of Parasowo—Grabowski, who took us in and received us very cordially. There were already about 25 Poles, who worked in the airfields, in his home. A group of Germans came to Grabowski and wanted to take us away, but the priest rescued us. He told them that we were workers who worked in the airfields and the Germans left us alone. Rev. Grabowski kept us at his house for all of seven days. He gave us food and drink free of charge. He constantly excused himself that he did not receive us the way he should ... He then obtained from the Wehrmacht [military authorities] a certificate allowing us to return to Białystok without obstacles. We returned to Białystok as a group of 24 persons on the first or second of July.

With the rapid flight of the Soviets, the ensuing breakdown in law and order in the latter part of June and the early part of July 1941, was seized on by criminal elements to rob and to settle scores with those believed to have supported the former Soviet occupiers. Jewish accounts record that priests spoke out against, and intervened to curb abuses directed at, Jews in several localities to the east of Łomża. Among the most outspoken priests were Rev. Franciszek Łapiński of Rutki, Rev. Feliks Bryx of Knyszyn, and Rev. Cyprian Łozowski of Jasionówka. (See the respective accounts in Paweł Machcewicz and Krzysztof Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego* [Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002], volume 2, pp.330, 238, 196–98.) A similar report comes from Powursk, near Kowel, in Volhynia. (Asher Tarmon, ed., *Memorial Book: The Jewish Communities of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, and Kolki (Volyn Region)* [Tel-Aviv: Organization of Survivors of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, Kolki and Surroundings Living in Israel and Overseas, 2004], p.418.)

In the interwar years, Alexander Bronowski, a lawyer, was engaged by Bishop Marian Leon Fulman to represent the diocese of Lublin in legal matters despite vociferous protests in the nationalist press. After the war broke out Bronowski settled in Świsłocz, to the east of Białystok, in the Soviet occupation zone, where he continued to work as a lawyer. He describes his experiences there after the German entry in June 1941, and the assistance he received from several Poles, among them a priest—Rev. Albin Horba, the pastor of Świsłocz. Rev. Horba was transferred to the nearby parish of Międzyrzecz in May 1942, where he continued to help Jews by providing them with false baptismal certificates. After the war he was arrested by the Soviet secret police and held in various prisons until April 1948.¹¹ (Alexander Bronowski, *They Were Few* [New York: Peter Lang, 1991], pp.7–9.)

¹¹ Tadeusz Krahel, *Doświadczeni zniewoleniem: Duchowni archidiecezji wileńskiej represjonowani w latach okupacji sowieckiej (1939–1945)* (Białystok: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne–Oddział w Białymstoku, 2005), pp.45–46. In his memoir, Rev. Horba does not confirm Bronowski's story of having turned to Bronowski to defend Poles in Soviet courts. Rev. Horba says he did not know Bronowski

At court I appeared in show trials, political trials, criminal cases and the like. When the accused were Poles, the local priest and the pharmacist (a Pole) frequently turned to me to defend them. ...

My work at Swislocz [Świsłocz] was satisfying. I had social connections with both Jews and Poles. I lived comfortably. This situation prevailed until the outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. It took everyone in Swislocz by surprise. The evacuation of the court and other Soviet offices to the east was hurriedly organized. The judge suggested that I leave Swislocz with the court. I declined, saying that my aim was to contact my family who were in the ghetto in Lublin; the judge understood.

On the fourth day of the war, June 26, 1941, Swislocz fell to the Germans, who began executing communists and rounding up Jews for heavy forced labor, looting their property. As I was known in the town not only as a Jewish lawyer but also as a lecturer who spoke out against the Nazi crimes, I realized that I had to find a hiding place. I left my apartment. First I went to my friend the pharmacist, and he, after hiding me for several days in his pharmacy, took me to the priest's apartment [actually they hid in a cellar near Rev. Albin Horba's rectory—Ed.].

A week after the capture of Swislocz a new commander arrived and the persecution of the Jews intensified. I found out that I was being sought as an enemy of the Nazis and as a Jew. I therefore decided to escape to Bialystok [Białystok], where some tens of thousands of Jews lived. Moreover, this move would bring me closer to Lublin. The pharmacist and the priest agreed with my decision.

To facilitate my flight from Swislocz, they contacted a certain Polish woman, the directress of an orphanage situated on the main road to Bialystok, and asked her to allow me to stay there. She agreed without a moment's hesitation. It emerged that I had once defended her against a groundless charge of maltreatment of Soviet orphans. After sleeping one night at the orphanage I departed unseen at dawn, supplied with bread, which was worth its weight in gold. The directress knew that I was a Jew and that I was escaping from Swislocz. I had gone no more than thirty meters when I heard her calling out to me to stop. She ran towards me, took the chain with the cross hanging on it from her neck, and fastened it on mine. I did not remove that cross throughout the journey to Bialystok. I was surprised and moved by her concern to protect me, and could find no words to thank her.

The distance to Bialystok was about eighty kilometers. ... Like me, there were other Jews from small towns walking to the large Jewish center at Bialystok.

When I left Grodek [Gródek] a Jewish lad of about fourteen fell into step with me. He too was making for Bialystok. A few dozen meters behind us were four Jews. Four kilometers outside Grodek I saw a German truck approaching, and when it reached us three German soldiers armed with rifles sprang out. They come up to me. "Jude?" they asked. I sensed danger and grew tense. Then one of them saw the cross around my neck. "Los," he muttered. They left. A few minutes later I heard firing. The Germans had shot the Jews walking behind us.

I was shocked. Despite my blistered feet I continued walking with the boy and even accelerated my pace. By evening we reached Bialystok. I parted company with the lad ...

I could not stop thinking about the Polish woman who had saved my life and the boy's. I do not recall her name, nor do I know her whereabouts. Swislocz is now part of the Soviet Union. I have searched for her address, but to no avail.

But I do know that when she ran towards me and placed the cross on my neck she did so for humanitarian reasons: to save a human life. In my heart I retain a deep sense of gratitude to her, and to the priest and the pharmacist. I learnt subsequently that the priest had died and the pharmacist had left Swislocz.

Dr. Kac from Łódź had taken refuge from the Germans in Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland. Fleeing Lithuanian collaborators in the summer of 1941, he made his way back from a camp near Nowa Wilejka to Warsaw. In January 1942, he recorded his testimony which attests to extensive help received from Poles, among them a priest, along the way. (Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, volume 3: *Relacje z Kresów* [Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 2000], pp.471–74.)

Indeed [Polish] peasants very often helped us at no cost. We entered their cottages where they frequently refused to take anything from us when they offered us milk, bread, etc. Apart from that they showed us compassion and were indignant at everything that was happening to the Jews. ...

It is important to stress that I encountered exceptionally sincere warm-heartedness from Catholic peasants and Polish landlords. I was comforted and helped with money, food, and a place to sleep. My wound was dressed in manor houses. ...

The area I now entered had Polish police who tended to accommodate the Jews. In one of the Belorussian towns [i.e., in a Polish-speaking area incorporated in the so-called Ostland, and earlier Soviet Belorussia], not far from the Lithuanian

personally before he came seeking shelter in the company of Dr. Majzel, a local Jewish doctor, and his wife. Ibid., p.209.

border, through the efforts of the mayor, priest and head of the Jewish Council, I was placed in the hospital and provided with papers [i.e., an identity document] and money for my further journey.

With the German takeover of Eastern Poland in June 1941, the Germans started to round up and execute Jews. When they entered the village of Pohost Zahorodny (or Pohost Zahorodzki) near Pińsk, in Polesie (Polesia), Jews started to flee and found shelter in the garden of a Catholic priest. That story is related in *Voices from the Forest: The True Story of Abram and Julia Bobrow*, as told to Stephen Edward Paper (Bloomington, Indiana: 1st Books, 2004), at pages 30–33.

Their numbers had now swelled to over forty and included young men and children as well.

Nearing the mansion of the Polish priest, Drogomish [Rev. Hieronim Limbo], they heard the galloping of horses.

The mansion, where the priest lived with a housekeeper, was also the church where he held services for all of the Catholics in Pohost Zagorodski.

Drogomish, in his black robes and white collar, saw them from the window and rushed outside. The priest was old and bent, and known throughout the village to be a good-hearted man. ... People would come from miles away to tour his gardens and catch the smell of jasmine and orange blossoms.

He had been sitting alone in his garden alcove sadly contemplating the growing turmoil in his village and apparently trying to think of some way to help. Now the disturbance had come to his front yard. He rushed out to see how he could aid the fugitives.

Urgently, he motioned the Jewish men and boys into his garden. The garden spread over two acres, but was dwarfed by the potato patch, which was a quarter-of-a-mile wide and half-a-mile long, stretching all the way to Bobric [Bobryk] Lake and filled with two-foot-high potato plants.

Quickly, the fugitives left the road, following the priest down the furrows between the plants to the edge farthest from the road. There, in the weeded dirt furrows between rows of potato plants, they lay down to hide. From this position, they could probably hear the passing of the SS riders moving into the shtetl.

Nazis from Borki now entered Pohost Zagorodski from the north, riding past the Polish school on Mieschanska [Mieszkańska] Street. Both groups converged on the marketplace and dismounted.

The soldiers started moving house to house, brandishing their machine guns and whips ... Accompanied by the local [Belorussian] police force, they forced all the men they found into the street. ...

In the village hospital, those men who were too sick or infirm to move were shot on the spot.

Almost ninety men and young boys were rounded up and forced to the marketplace. ...

In the center of the village, the Obersturmbannführer called to his sergeant, "Is that all you found?"

"Yes, Herr Obersturmbannführer," the sergeant replied. "That's it."

This was not good enough for him. ...

Twenty SS troopers mounted their horses ... down Dworska Street to the church. When they reached the old mansion that now served as the Catholic Church ...

As the sergeant and his men started into the garden on their horses, Drogomish ran out once more.

"What are you doing in my garden?" he yelled. "You are stomping on the plants. You'll destroy them."

"There are Jews hiding in the garden," the sergeant said.

"There is nothing here except the potato plants. And you're ruining them," the priest said, moving in front of the horses of the sergeant and his men, trying to block their way.

"Get out of the way, Father," the sergeant demanded.

"No," Drogomish said, defiantly. "You have no right. This is a holy place, the grounds of the church."

"Toss him out of the way," the sergeant said to his men. Four soldiers dismounted and threw the frail priest to the ground.

"Jew lover," the sergeant snarled.

The soldiers then searched the field, knocking over the plants, trampling on others and tearing up the dirt and crops. Thus they combed the field while the forty Jews lay trembling in the dirt.

Finding the men, the SS forced them to their feet, whipping and beating them with sticks as they herded them back to the marketplace.

When a hundred and thirty Jewish men and boys were finally assembled in the Rynek [Rynek] marketplace, the SS soldiers mounted their horses and formed a circle around them to prevent any escape attempts. Then they made them run down Dworska Street across the Bobric River bridge out of town. ...

The SS troops took the Jews past the Bobrow lumberyard to an old Jewish cemetery. In the cemetery, the soldiers lined them up in groups of ten. ...

The Jews, in their lines of ten, were marched to a row of tombstones ... There they were made to kneel down with their backs towards the soldiers. The SS shot them with their machine guns.

A priest is credited with saving a Jewish family when the Jews of Molodeczno were being rounded up by the Germans in October 1941 for execution. Chana Szafran (née Pozner), her sister Luba and her father Mordechai, who were outside the town at the time, were arrested by the local police on their return but released thanks to the intervention of a local priest who knew Mordechai Pozner. From there they reached the ghetto in Wilejka where they remained until April 1943. Chana Szafran describes the circumstances of her rescue in her account published in Moshe Kalchheim, *Be-komah zakufah, 1939–1945: Perakim be-toldot ha-lehimah ha-partizanit be-ya'arot Narots'* (Tel Aviv: Irgun ha-patizanim, lohame ha-mahtarot u-morder ha-geta'ot be-Yi'sra'el, 1991), translated as "At the Onset of the War in Molodeczno," Internet: <http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/maladzyechna/mal_pages/m_stories_onset.html>.

On Saturday, the 25th of October 1941, very early in the morning, our wish neighbor came in panic to the house and said that, once again, the Germans had surrounded the town. She suggested to my mother that we should all flee together. My mother said that first my little sister Liuba, who was eleven years old and I, should run to our father and tell him to hide. She assumed that just as before, the Nazis were only looking for men. So both of us ran as fast as we could and told Father about what had occurred in town. I never saw my mother again. Later on, when I was in the police station, I found out from that neighbor that Mother was killed while she tried to escape from the house. The Germans had shot at her as she tried to flee. ...

All the Jews who were found that day were collected and put in the local police building. We met about fifty men, women, and children. Amongst them was also our neighbor—Paula Drutz. She was the one to tell me about the fate of my mother. While we waited in the police station, my father saw an army buddy of his who was now one of the policemen. He was sitting there nonchalantly playing his guitar. My father [Mordechai Pozner] begged him as a man who was to be shortly executed, to give note to the local priest. At first, he ignored Father's request, but when my father pleaded, he agreed to bring the note to the priest. At midnight, the priest arrived with two policemen to the station. They took my father to one of the private rooms, and, after some time, he was returned. He explained to us the plan: one of the policemen would soon come, and take him to the bathroom. After some time, my sister Liuba and I should ask also to go to the bathroom. We would all then escape. While we were waiting for my father to go, they would call Jews one by one and then the Jews would return, beaten-up and confused. The girls were returned with torn clothes and looks of horror in their faces; it wasn't difficult to guess what had been done to them.

In Molodeczno [sic], there was at that time a large POW camp that contained Soviet prisoners. Because of this camp, the entire town was lit up by huge projectors to prevent the escape of POWs. When the policemen who escorted us took us outside of the police station, he yelled to us, "Run very quickly, kikes! If you don't run, I'll shoot you!" We ran as fast as we could and hid in the rubble of homes that stood on either side of the street. This was during a curfew hour when nobody was allowed to walk about in town, so we had to wait until morning in order to leave our hiding place. We then walked to the edge of the street—the place where we had originally decided to reunite with Father.

Like this, because of my father's quick thinking, we were saved from the fate that the rest of the Jews in the police building encountered. The reason why this priest cared so much for my father was that my father, before the war, was a political representative of the community and knew the priest well. When the Soviets had invaded the area in September of 1939, they had arrested the old priest, saying that he was engaged in anti-Communist propaganda. Father had collected signatures from the local population and had collected testimony that this priest was only involved in religious matters, and, after a short time, the Soviets listened to the pleas of the town residents and released the priest. At the time when our life was in danger, he saved my father as well as the two of us.

Rev. Stanisław Tyszką of Troki near Wilno brought help to the Jewish prisoners in Zatrocze camp near Landwarów. Later he was wanted by the Germans and had to hide during the war. (Testimony of A. Ajzen, "Moshe Lerer," Meilech Bakalczuk-Felin, ed., *Yizker-bukh Khelm* [Johannesburg: Khelemer Landmanshaft, 1954], pp.313–14; translated as *Commemoration Book Chelm*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/chelm/Chelm.html>>.)

During the years 1941 and 1942, Lerer [Moshe Lerer was a librarian at the YIVO Institute in Wilno] and I worked together in the Zatrocze concentration camp near Landwarow [Landwarów]. Here, I clearly sensed that inwardly he had made up his mind about everything and ultimately had made peace with death. Barely fifty and some years old, he looked

like an old man who was already critically ill, with his bent body, extinguished eyes and deep, sunken cheeks. His resignation, it seems, was noticed by the rowdy element in the camp and they bullied him. Tears get stuck in my throat when I remember the heavy work that was intentionally placed on his bent shoulders. We all tried to make it easier for him and to take upon ourselves some of his duties; if this work was with peat or in unloading goods—the younger ones among us tried to make it easier for him everywhere and to take his place. He appreciated this very much and a sort of tender feeling to all of us was planted in him along with his resignation and he wanted to comfort and cheer us up.

This love for us caused a series of changes in him and his character and ideology. A communist according to belief, he became tolerant of belief and took part in all religious meetings in the camp. As if by a magic wand, his former nervousness vanished and there appeared in him instead distinct signs of understanding, of fatherly devotion to his camp comrades and even hope. I still remember his enthusiasm when, due to my endeavors, Tiszka [Rev. Stanisław Tyszką], the Troker[Troki] priest, (later shot by the Germans) became a friend of the camp workers, warned about the dangers that threatened us and came to us in his free moments to study Hebrew. At first he [Lerer] was afraid that here the priest was somewhat of an outsider. Later, when everyone became convinced of Tiszka's pure, humanitarian intentions, Lerer seemed to have been revived. "There are still, it seems," he said, "virtuous non-Jews here in the land. If this is so, everything is not yet lost!!."

The Jews in Eastern Poland were soon enclosed in ghettos and terrorized. Enormous ransoms were extorted from the Jewish communities. The testimony of Moshe Smolar, found in Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), at page 154, captures the response of a Catholic priest and the faithful to that tragedy in the town of Brześć on the River Bug.

The community was pressured into making a "contribution" to the Germans of two million marks (or four million rubbles), and the members of the Judenrat were arrested as hostages to ensure that the sum was paid. One of the Catholic priests organized help for the Jews and collected money for them to help pay the huge sum.

Reference to the assistance of the Catholic clergy in meeting contributions imposed on the Jews in Żółkiew and Słonim are mentioned elsewhere.

Jacob Gerstenfeld-Maltiel described conditions in Lwów, and displays of Polish solidarity with the Jews in the early months of the German occupation, in his memoirs, *My Private War: One Man's Struggle to Survive the Soviets and the Nazis* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993), at pages 56–57 and 62–63.

The problem of telling Jews from Poles was solved by introducing the requirement for Jews and the people of Jewish descent down to the third generation to wear on the right arm a white armband with a Star of David. ... In the first days after the order was published [July 15, 1941] I saw a priest with a Star of David armband. But after some days, this sort of thing disappeared and only the accursed wore the armbands. The Polish population during the first period of this harassment displayed a certain measure of sympathy for the Jews ...

... the Germans demanded a "contribution" from the Jewish population totalling 20 million rubles to be paid in ten days. Of course the Germans threatened undefined consequences if the entire sum was not delivered in cash on time.

The Judenrat published an appeal to the Jewish population and asked for their cooperation. ...

... I knew personally some members of the Polish intelligentsia, who paid appreciable sums to help with the contribution. Although the sums made little difference, the gesture of good will showed a spirit that counted and had a strong moral meaning. ... These signs of sympathy from Polish society incited the Jews to even greater generosity than they had shown till then.

A number of Jewish testimonies confirm that Poles contributed considerable sums to help pay the ransoms imposed by the Germans on the Jews of Lwów, Wilno, Chełm, and Rzeszów.¹²

¹² See Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 3: *Relacje z Kresów* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 2000), pp.471, 492 (Wilno), 554, 724 (Lwów); Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), p.275 (when the Germans imposed a heavy levy on the Jewish community in Chełm in late 1939, the local Polish intelligentsia contributed food and money to Jews); Daniel Blatman, *En direct du ghetto: La presse clandestine juive dans le ghetto de Varsovie (1940–1943)* (Paris: Cerf; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), p.470 (Poles contributed 100,000 złoty in Rzeszów). The latter source also mentions that, when the Germans rounded up the Jews of Olkusz in May 1942, and held them in the local high school for three days

When Rabbi Isaac Yaakov Kalenkovitch and other Jews arrested in Drohiczyn Poleski, in Polesie (Polesia), for failing to provide the Germans with the contribution imposed on the Jewish community, Jews turned to the local priest for assistance. (Dov B. Warshawsky, *Drohiczyn: Five Hundred Years of Jewish Life*; translation of *Drohitchin: Finf hundert yor yidish lebn* [Chicago: Book Committee Drohichyn, 1958], p.318.)

The Germans imposed a second contribution on the town. However, since there was no more money or gold, the murderers took 35 Jews and the rabbi of the town as hostages. If we didn't give them the demanded sum of money, they would kill the rabbi and the 35 Jews. The mayor [a Pole by the name of Czapliński] of Drohitchin [Drohiczyn] interceded on behalf of the rabbi and the Jews, but it did no good. The wives of the arrested men and rabbi went to beg the priest Palevski [actually, Rev. Antoni Chmielewski, the local pastor] to save their husbands' lives. The priest Palevski quickly went to the SS commander and convinced him to release the rabbi and the 30 hostages. Five Jews were kept as hostages until the contribution was paid.

Priests also came to the assistance of individuals who were required by the Germans to pay large ransoms for the safety of family members. A resident of Tomaszów Lubelski recalled how her mother turned to a Polish priest, who gave her a large sum of money in exchange for a gold chain, thereby allowing her grateful mother to pay the “indemnification” demanded by the Germans. (Rachel Schwartzbaum (Klarman), “During the Years of Horror,” in Joseph M. Moskop, ed., *Tomaszow-Lubelski Memorial Book* [Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2008], p.406.)

I, and several other Tomaszow [Tomaszów] families set out to return to Tomaszow [from the Soviet occupation zone]. Arriving to my parents, they fell upon me, and wept sympathetically. ...

Immediately on the morrow, my parents receive a notice that because their daughter had returned from Russia, my parents are required to pay a large sum of money on my behalf as indemnification money. A keening went up in our house, regarding how it would be possible to get such a large sum of money, however there was no answer to this. In the morning, at eight o'clock, the sum must be presented. My mother took a gold chain that we still had in our possession, and went off to sell it to the Polish priest. She told the priest everything, and the priest took the chain, paid her, and told her, 'Go save your child.' My mother thanked him with a full heart, and went away. On the following morning, she paid the sum on my behalf. In this manner, all of the families that returned from Rawa [Ruska] were required to pay extraordinarily large sums as an indemnification.

When the Germans occupied Słonim in June 1941, they took the highly unusual step of appointing Rev. Kazimierz Grochowski, who was the acting pastor of St. Andrew's church and—as a native of the Poznań region—had an excellent command of the German language, the mayor of the city. He was in that position for only a few months. During that time he intervened on behalf of the Jews and provided them with false identity documents. His benevolence was noted by a Jew who stayed briefly in Słonim. (Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem*, p.373.)

From Jeziernica, I was off to Slonim [Słonim]. I found a half-demolished city. Half of it had been consumed in flames during the battles. When the Germans took over, they shot a small number of Jews. I came upon a long line of Jews, and was told that they were standing on line to receive work from the Germans at various labor sites. The Germans paid them with bread. The mood in the city was good. The local priest had been appointed as mayor, and he had prevailed upon the Germans not to treat the Jews as badly and as brutally as in other cities.

On the day of my departure from Slonim, July 12, 1941, they instituted the yellow badge for Jews.

Rev. Grochowski was arrested by the Germans and accused of hiding Jews. Since no Jews were found in the rectory he was released. Rev. Grochowski was arrested again in March 1942 and imprisoned in Baranowicze. He was executed in an unknown location soon after.¹³

without food or water before deporting them, the Polish population brought water and food to the Jews. Ibid., p.470.

¹³ On Rev. Grochowski see Tadeusz Krahel, “W Generalnym Okręgu Białoruś (c.d.),” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 12, December 1998; Tadeusz Krahel, “Ksiądz Kazimierz Grochowski,” *W Służbie Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 2, February 2009. See also the testimony of Salomon Szlakman, in Michał Grynberg and Maria Kotowska, comp. and eds., *Życie i zagłada*

The Holocaust Gets Under Way with Full Fury, 1942–1945

The Germans introduced the death penalty for assisting Jews because so many Poles had been willing to come to their assistance. Despite repeated warnings, incessant anti-Semitic propaganda, and sanctions such as fines and imprisonment, Poles continued to deal with and shelter Jews thereby frustrating German attempts to isolate the Jews, a precondition for their annihilation. Hence the Germans felt compelled to introduce harsher measures to curtail contacts between Poles and Jews, to the fullest extent possible. *Gazeta Lwowska*, an official German daily published in the Polish language, stated on April 11, 1942:

It is unfortunate that the rural population continue—nowadays furtively—to assist Jews, thus doing harm to the community, and hence to themselves, by this disloyal attitude. Villagers take advantage of all illegal ways, applying all their cunning and circumventing regulations in order to supply the local Jewry with all kinds of foodstuffs in every amount. ...

The rural population must be cut off and separated from the Jews, once and for all, must be weaned from the extremely anti-social habit of assisting the Jews.

(Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, p.40.)

A circular issued on September 21, 1942, by the SS and Police Chief in Radom District, outlined and justified the new Draconian measures that were to be undertaken to put an end to this “problem”:

The experience of the last few weeks has shown that Jews, in order to evade evacuation, tend to flee from the small Jewish residential districts [i.e., ghettos] in the communities above all.

These Jews must have been taken in by Poles. I am requesting you to order all mayors and village heads as soon as possible that every Pole who takes in a Jew makes himself guilty under the Third Ordinance on restrictions on residence in the Government General of October 15, 1941 (GG Official Gazette, p.595).

As accomplices are also considered those Poles who feed run-away Jews or sell them foodstuffs, even if they do not offer them shelter. Whatever the case, these Poles are liable to the death penalty.

(Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, p.40.)

On the eve of the liquidation of the ghetto in Żelechów near Garwolin, which took place on September 30, 1942, the Jewish leaders placed their confidence in the local Catholic parish. The story is related in Jonathan Kaufman, *A Hole in the Heart of the World: Being Jewish in Eastern Europe* (New York: Viking/Penguin, 1997), at page 102.

The night before the Germans came, with rumors of the deportations sweeping the terrified ghetto, several Jewish leaders hurried across the dark market square and knocked on the door of the rectory across the street from the church. When the priest answered, they asked him to hold the documents of their community—the birth and death records and the most important papers—in safekeeping. They would be back to retrieve them when they could. The priest agreed, and he hid them in the rafters of the rectory for safekeeping. The next day, the deportations to Treblinka began.

Priests and nuns throughout Poland responded to the increasingly harsh measures imposed by the Germans by helping Jews who fled from the ghettos. Jewish children were particularly at risk, but rescue efforts on their behalf were not always welcome. It has often been charged that conversion was the primary or at least a very important factor in the decision of the clergy and religious to extend assistance to Jews. In fact, this was one of the reasons given by Warsaw’s Jewish leaders for their refusal of the Catholic Church’s offer to place several hundred Jewish children in convents and monasteries. Emanuel Ringelblum, the chronicler of the Warsaw ghetto, acknowledges this offer of assistance and records, in most unflattering terms, the motivation attributed to the Catholic clergy by the Jewish community leaders at the time: proselytism (“soul-snatching”), financial greed, and looking out for their own prestige. After meeting with vehement opposition from Orthodox and other Jewish groups, the project

was shelved. Jewish parents were, however, given a free hand in placing their children privately in Catholic institutions, though many rabbis remained adamantly opposed to that idea too. Some of the discussion recorded by Ringelblum merits repeating:

I was present at a discussion of this question by several Jewish intellectuals. One of them categorically opposed the operation. ... The priests' promise not to convert the children would be of no avail [even though a register would be kept of the children, recording their distribution throughout the country, so that they could be taken back after the war]; time and education would take their toll. ... Jewish society has no right to engage in such an enterprise.

(Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War* [New York: Howard Fertig, 1976], pp.150–51.) Although Ringelblum is anxious to shift the blame for the failure of this project to the Catholic clergy, it is not reasonable to believe that the Church authorities would initiate the undertaking only to welcome its demise, when in fact numerous convents and monasteries were already active in sheltering Jewish children. Moreover, there was reluctance on the part of many Jews to give over their children to Poles for safekeeping. One survivor records the following conversation:

"I gave my little son to a Polish family and I hope to God he'll survive," a young father said with relief. "Oh no," I heard Mr. Blum exclaim. "I'd never give my children to a Christian family. Who knows if my wife and I will survive to claim them after the war? And if not," he continued in a voice charged with emotion, "they'll grow up to be good Christians, God forbid. Oh no!" he repeated passionately. "It's better that they should die as Jews. Let them go together with their people; let us perish together. I couldn't entrust my children to the gentiles," he concluded with determination. (Pearl Benisch, *To Vanquish the Dragon* [Jerusalem and New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1991], p.131.)

Żegota activist Irena Sendler (Sendlerowa) recalled that sometimes Jews asked her for "guarantees" that their children would survive the war. Sendler explained to them that she could not even assure the children's safe passage out of the ghetto. This too discouraged Jews from seeking placements for their children with Christians. (*Żegota: Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland (1942–1945)*, Documentaries International Film & Video Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1998.) It is true that some Poles asked for payment for the care of their Jewish charges, just as virtually all Danish rescuers did,¹⁴ but this was to be accepted given the risks involved and the material hardships faced by everyone under the German occupation. As a recent study shows, unlike Western Europeans, the overwhelming majority of Poles were simply not in a position to offer long-term material assistance to Jews.¹⁵ Honest survivors, such as Yitzhak Zuckerman, a leader of the Jewish underground in Warsaw, are appreciative of even paid aid to Jews. Moreover, realizing that devout Jews would have done the

¹⁴ Until the fall of 1943 Danish Jews were unmolested. SS general Dr. Werner Best, the German in charge in Denmark, gave a free hand to Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, the martime attaché at the German embassy in Copenhagen, to do whatever was necessary to derail the planned deportation of the Jews. Duckwitz flew to Sweden, where he secretly met with President Per Albin Hansson. The Swedish president assured him that should the action against the Danish Jews take place, Sweden would in principle be ready to admit them. When the round-up of Jews was about to begin, Duckwitz made his way back to Sweden to alert the Swedish government to be ready to admit the fleeing Jews. The local German naval command warned the Danish underground of the impending fate of the Jews, disabled the German harbour patrol, and turned a blind eye to the rescue operation. The Jews who were transported to Sweden by Danish boatmen were allowed entry. Since the rescue operation took place with the connivance of the local German naval command, there were no casualties either among the Jews or among the boatmen. During the initial stages of the rescue operation, only well-to-do Danish Jews could afford the short passage to Sweden. Private boatmen set their own price and the costs were prohibitive, ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 kroner per person (\$160 to \$1600 U.S. in the currency of that period). Afterward, when organized Danish rescue groups stepped in to coordinate the flight and to collect funds, the average price per person fell to 2,000 and then 500 kroner. The total cost of the rescue operation was about 12 million kroner, of which the Jews paid about 7 million kroner, including a 750,000 kroner loan which the Jews had to repay after the war. See Mordecai Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: Collins, 2007), pp.105–109; Leni Yahil, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry: Test of a Democracy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969), pp.261–65, 269. While the Danish rescue is constantly extolled without reference to the minimal risk it entailed to the rescuers and the handsome compensation they took (in fact, most historians suppress this information); conversely, the Polish rescue effort is deprecated without reference to the death penalty the Germans imposed on the Poles for providing any form of assistance and the fact that hundreds if not thousands of Poles paid with their lives for this "crime." See, for example, Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), pp.64, 390–91. At the same time, Evans downplays German guilt. *Ibid.*, pp.555, 560.

¹⁵ Grzegorz Berendt, "Cena życia—ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po 'aryjskiej stronie'," in *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, IFiS PAN, 2008), vol. 4, pp.110–43.

same, Zuckerman does not deprecate Polish rescuers who attempted to convert Jews. In any event, the dangers inherent in rescue activities would tend to negate the importance of gaining “souls” as a prominent factor in the decision to extend help. (Yitzhak Zuckerman “Antek”, *A Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993], pp.461, 493.)

If I gauge the phenomenon by one of the finest figures I knew, Irena Adamowicz, who helped Jews deliberately and consciously, as a devout Christian, who assisted as much as she could, I nevertheless cannot ignore the fact that she also saw another mission for herself: to convert Jews, since there is no greater commandment than to convert Jews to Christianity, accompanied by the faith that will save the world. I'm not saying she would have abandoned someone even if she hadn't kept her sights fixed on the Christian purpose; but let's look at this from the other side: for example, if a rabbi chanced to save a gentile. He wouldn't see anything bad if, at this opportunity, he began telling him about the religion of Moses and the various practices of Judaism. Is there anything wrong in that? Irena also filled such “missions.” I know of at least four or five such cases.

Rev. Stanisław Szczepański of Wilga near Garwolin, together with his sister Marianna Różańska, sheltered two Jewish sisters in the parish rectory for several months, and provided them with false documents that enabled them to survive the war passing as Poles. (Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, volume 5: *Poland* [Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004], Part 2, p.679.)

One day in September 1941, German policemen surrounded a labor camp for Jews in the forest near Wilga, Garwolin county, Warsaw district, and prepared to make a Selektion among the inmates. Several prisoners, fearing for their fate, fled from the camp. They included the sisters Luba and Lea Berliner, who knocked on the door of the village priest [Rev. Stanisław Szczepański¹⁶] and asked for assistance. Marianna Rozanska [Różańska], the priest's sister, quickly placed the two fugitives in hiding and when the Germans came to search for them she carefully shielded them. The Berliners stayed in their hideout until Rozanska equipped them with forged papers, with which they survived by enlisting for forced labor in Germany. After the war, one of the Berliner sisters stayed in Germany, and the other resettled in Israel.

Escapees from the Warsaw ghetto were taken in by the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz. Ruth Altbeker Cyprys, who was assisted by numerous Poles while passing as a Christian in Warsaw, writes about her stay with the Sisters in the early part of 1943 in her memoir, *A Jump For Life: A Survivor's Journal from Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Continuum, 1997), at pages 129–30, 134, 163, and 222.

At my friend's house, the advocate Mrs. L., I met her husband's sister, Sister Maria-Janina, a nun of the Sisters of Resurrection Order from the Convent in Żoliborz [Żoliborz] Street. Apart from her duties in the convent she directed a small carpenter's workshop in a shed near the cloister. Sister Maria-Janina, upon learning of my troubles, offered me accommodation on the workshop premises, which I gladly accepted. The room was small but comfortable. Although it was very cold and lacked conveniences, I felt at home there at last. I could spend my whole time there doing whatever I liked except for a few hours during which the room served as an office. Slowly I grew acquainted with my new surroundings. Next to my room, in the kitchen, there lived a maidservant who ran the house and cooked for the boys in the shop. She had an illegitimate son ... On top of this she was very inquisitive and talkative. It was apparent that the shed was inhabited by other people as well: I heard voices through the partitions although I never saw anybody. In great secrecy Sister Maria-Janina confided in me that in the next room there lived two Jewesses. The older one, who had typically Semitic features, never went out, not having been registered anywhere. The younger one on the contrary was out all day, and was even employed somewhere.

Sister Maria-Janina advised me not to communicate with them. Actually I preferred sitting alone in my little room, during the long evening hours, not making any new friends. I noticed the same trait in the behaviour of Jews in hiding: a tendency to keep away from other Jews. One could only tell the other sad stories, terrible experiences, the loss of nearest and dearest ones—there would be no end of unhappy memories. In order to live on we had somehow to forget the past and strive to become accustomed to the present.

Sister Maria-Janina, who was sixty years old, had an exceptionally beautiful character. The widow of an advocate, for

¹⁶ Michał Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993), pp.459–60.

the past fifteen years she had been devoting her strength and energy to the convent and public welfare. The toy workshops were designated for the poorest boys, the street urchins. The Sister admitted anybody who applied. ...

As I had no job at the time I tried to help out as much as I could. Whenever there was anything to sort out in the city I went readily. Often I was sent to cash money in some welfare institution, or to collect provisions for the boys. ...

One day in our house in Zoliborz a skirmish broke out which could have had very serious repercussions for all of us. The boys were coached in grammar school subjects by a teacher popularly nicknamed 'Student'. This 'Student', as it turned out, was a Jew—a fact of which Sister Maria-Janina was well aware. Quite by accident a young man came to the workshop and recognized the teacher as a fellow student from university, a communist, with whom he had constantly quarrelled. These two had a very sharp altercation after which the visitor reviled the Sister for sheltering a Jew. It was quite obvious that the unexpected visitor was bound to turn the teacher over to the Gestapo, and the trembling inhabitants of our slum implored the teacher to leave, for a short time at least. He was courageous, however, and insisted on staying; he admitted that in any event he had nowhere else to go. Sister Maria-Janina's behaviour was remarkable. She did not give him notice nor did she tell him to quit. 'God will help us,' she said, and nobody denounced us. Yet I considered it unsafe to stay in the small house in Zoliborz and as soon as I had received another offer of a job I took the opportunity and left the hospitable shelter, but I stayed in touch with Sister Maria-Janina until the end of the war.

Afterwards, Sister Maria-Janina signed a deposition attesting that she was Ruth Albeker's relative. As the latter explained:

A genuine Aryan relative was priceless to a Jew at that time. The best documents could prove worthless if a crafty Gestapo man asked: 'It's all right with your papers; they are in order and I believe you to be an Aryan. But give me some names of your friends or relatives who have known you for a long time.' Such a Jewish Gentile, a human creature with no relatives and acquaintances would then be lost.

After the failed Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Ruth Albeker was evacuated to the Kraków area. There she encountered Mrs. Maria, who had also been evacuated from Warsaw. Mrs. Maria, who worked closely with a Polish organization that rescued Jewish children, had sheltered Ruth Albeker's daughter, Eva, and several other Jewish children. During the evacuation Mrs. Maria had become separated from two of her Jewish charges, but they were found living in a small town under the guardianship of a local vicar and soon rejoined Mrs. Maria. Although she attended mass regularly in many churches during the occupation, Ruth Albeker encountered no hostility on the part of the Catholic clergy toward Jews.

Exceptionally, Jews decided to convert to increase their chances of survival. Halina M., then a child, and her mother Zosia, a widow, were saved through the intervention of a Polish acquaintance, who directed her mother to a priest at the parish church of the Holy Saviour (Zbawiciela) in Warsaw and later arranged to place Halina in the care of the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Halina and her mother assumed the identity of Polish Catholics by the name of Chmielewski and survived the war. (Henryk Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After* [New York: Penguin Books, 2002], pp.206–11.)

Mother bought honey-cakes in a honey shop on the corner of Marszałkowska Street and the Square of the Redeemer [Saviour], and often talked with Pani Renia who worked there. Her husband, Pan Stefan, was an engineer with the gas-works. One day Mother said to her, "I have a problem. I have to move into the ghetto." "Why?" Pani Renia asked. "Because I am a Jew." "Ah, don't go there." "But I have to." "No, you can't go there." ...

Pani Renia also put us in touch with a priest and we went to him at the Church of the Redeemer through the sacristy. He was a prelate who demanded that we know the catechism very well. ...

Our baptism took place in the evening, by candlelight. Long shadows played on the walls, and the echo carried each word high. Pan Stanisław, Rita's first husband and Yola's father [Rita, a divorcée, was the lover of Halina's uncle Hipolit—Ed.], was my godfather. We didn't go back to the Jewish side. Pan Stefan, Pani Renia's husband, went there in the gasworks' van and brought out suitcases with our things to an apartment which Pani Renia had found for us at 7 Miodowa Street. ...

Men in black leather coats stopped us on the street by our house and came with us into the apartment. I no longer know whether they ordered me to, or whether I knelt down myself and started to pray out loud. And I don't know which was more effective—my prayer, or the money which they got from Mother. Immediately after that, Pani Renia found me a place

with the Sisters of the Resurrection, and Mother moved in with Rita who had married an Austrian and was living in a German quarter on Aleja Szucha. ...

The boarding school of the Sisters of Resurrection was at 15 Mokotowska Street. I always remembered the numbers and names, but nothing other than that interested me. A new name is a new name, I didn't ask about anything. I knew that despite my baptism I was still a Jew, which was very bad. That was enough, I didn't want to know any more. When it became too dangerous on Mokotowska Street, they moved us to Stara Wieś, to a white mansion with a turret and little towers belonging to a prince. ... the mansion which stands to this day in Stara Wieś, Węgrów district, belonged to Prince Radziwiłł. German officers occupied part of the mansion. They had a separate entrance on the other side, but they used to come to our chapel. Sister Alma once said to my mother, "Ah, Halusia is so smart, when she sees a German, she immediately runs away."

We carried water from the well and peeled potatoes—two buckets of water and forty potatoes a day. In the summer, we picked mushrooms, strawberries and blueberries in the woods. The nuns made tasty dishes out of them. We prayed in the morning, evening, before and after eating. We confessed every week, and for one day a month we spoke to no one except the cross on the wall. I prayed very sincerely. On these words, which I often did not understand, depended my life not only on heaven, but also here on earth. We went to church for Sunday Mass and Communion, but Confession, Novenas and Vespers were held in the chapel at the mansion. The priest who heard our confessions had escaped from Germany and hidden with the Sisters of the Resurrection because—which we didn't know—he had been born a Jew. Germans also confessed to him because he spoke good German and even had a German last name. How were they to know that a Jew was hearing their confessions?

We went to the village school, but the nuns gave us extra lessons in Latin and German. They also taught us embroidery and to make play things out of paper and straw. They arranged games and theatricals for us. They darned our stockings and repaired our clogs. They cared for us and treated our flu, hepatitis, and scarlet fever. They went into the countryside to ask for milk and potatoes and flour for us. We didn't have enough to eat, but I never felt it. I only felt fear in my stomach. My face grew thin, my nose longer, and fear showed in my eyes, and I looked nothing like Shirley Temple any more.

I went to my mother to Warsaw for holidays. Yola [Jola was Rita's daughter—Ed.] took me to the circus where the antics of the acrobats filled me with dread, and to the cinema where I sat even more anxiously because everything was in German and I only saw Germans around me. Once they sent me to fetch milk from Meinl's, a shop for Germans and Volksdeutsche. A moment later, the telephone: "Frau Haslauer, who is that Jewish child?" Walter immediately took me back to Stara Wieś and I never went there any more. My mother came to see me, but I was afraid of her visits. Krysia Janas's grandmother came once and took her back for Easter. They were discovered in the train. The Sisters tried to save Krysia, but one of the Germans told them to desist because it could end up badly for the whole boarding school. I don't remember her face. She was nine years old, the same as me.

We were not taught hatred—only love, above all for the Lord Jesus. But hatred was stronger. Especially when coupled with love. Because how could you love the tormented Jesus, and not hate those who betrayed Him? And how strong must the hatred have been if even little Krysia Janas was betrayed? That's why I made a pact with the Christian God that I would never by a Jew and that, in exchange, no one would hate me. That was Easter 1944.

Other Jews who were taken in or helped in other ways by the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ included were Elżbieta Sobelman, Eva Grosfeld, and Eva and Jan Schutz. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: Poland, Part 1, pp.349, 459–60; Part 2, p.753.)

[1] Elżbieta [Elżbieta] Sobelman was 11 years old when both her parents died in late 1942. Before his death, her father had asked Krystyna Klarzuk, a former acquaintance of his, to take care of his daughter. Klarzuk, a young married woman with a baby who lived in central Warsaw, welcomed the young orphan and looked after her devotedly without expecting anything in return. Although the neighbors soon became suspicious, Klarzuk refused to be intimidated by their threats and blackmail. After obtaining Aryan papers for Elżbieta, she enrolled her at an institution run by the Resurrectionist (Zmartwychwstanki) nuns, where she continued to look after her and watch out for her safety. Elżbieta was transferred to a transit camp for Poles who were evacuated from the Zamosc [Zamość] region and sent to the orphanage belonging to the RGO [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, a social welfare agency]. Elżbieta remained in the orphanage until the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1944, when she was deported to Pruszkow [Pruszków] with the rest of Warsaw's population. After wandering from one hiding place to another, she finally reached the village of Chorowice in the county of Skawina, Cracow district. Although Elżbieta lost contact with Klarzuk, the ties between them were renewed immediately after the liberation in January 1945 and continued for many more years.

[2] Aldona Lipszyc, a widow who had been married to a Jew and lived with her seven children in Warsaw, owned a farm and house in Ostrowek [Ostrówek], in the county of Radzymin. Before the war, Lipszyc had been active in the PPS [Polish Socialist Party] and was known for her progressive views. During the war, Lipszyc, guided by humanitarian principles, which overrode considerations of personal safety or economic hardship, helped her Jewish friends by offering them shelter in her home. The first to stay in her apartment in Warsaw was Helena Fiszhaut, an old school friend who had escaped from the ghetto during the large-scale Aktion in August 1942. Thanks to her ties with the Polish underground, Lipszyc was able to provide Fiszhaut with Aryan papers and find her a job with a Polish family as a maid. In the fall of 1942, a woman introducing herself as Olga Grosfeld knocked on Lipszyc's door, telling her that she had come from Przemyśl [Przemyśl] with her 13-year-old daughter, Eva, following the advice of a mutual acquaintance. Lipszyc gave Grosfeld a warm welcome, and looked after her until she was driven out of the city with the rest of Warsaw's population following the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944. Lipszyc also arranged for little Eva to be admitted to an institution for war orphans run by the Zmartwychwstanki [Resurrection] Sisters, where she stayed under an assumed identity until the liberation. [Aldona Lipszyc also sheltered a number of other Jews.]

[3] During the war, Irena Stelmachowska lived in Warsaw with her two daughters, Wanda and Aleksandra. In winter 1942, Irena offered Eva Schutz and her 11-year-old son, Jan, shelter in her apartment. Eva and Jan, who had false papers in the names of Ewa and Jan Sarnecki, had escaped from the Lwow [Lwów] ghetto and reached the Nunnery of Resurrection in Żoliborz [Żoliborz] with the help of an acquaintance. At the nunnery, the mother and son were handed Irena's address [the contact was established by Sister Laurenta¹⁷]. Eva and Jan stayed with the Stelmachowskas [sic] until the end of the Warsaw Uprising in October 1944, when they were deported to Pruszkow [Pruszków] and separated. After the war, Eva and Jan left Poland.

Hania Ajzner was a young girl when the war broke out. She lived with her family in the Warsaw ghetto until a Catholic friend of her father's provided them with birth and baptismal certificates. After escaping from the ghetto, Hania was placed in a boarding school in the suburb of Żoliborz, run by the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, under her new identity of Anna Zakościelna. Her true identity was known to the nuns and the chaplain, but she was never asked about her baptism. She recalls an episode that occurred when a revolt broke out in the Warsaw ghetto. (Hania Ajzner, *Hania's War* [Caulfield South, Victoria, Australia: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2000], p.143.)

One night, Sister Wawrzyna came into the dormitory after the girls had already settled down. "Get up, girls, come up to the windows," and she drew aside the black-out curtains. They could all see a red glow over the fields to the South. "That is the Ghetto, burning," she said. "There was an uprising in the Ghetto. You must all pray, girls, for there are heroes fighting and dying there."

Ania stood there in silence. ... It was a long time before they went back to their beds. It was the 19th April, 1943.

After an illness which required hospitalization in December 1943, through the efforts of a priest, Father Rodak, who helped place Jewish children in convents, Hania was taken to a hostel for teenagers in the Old Town, run by the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth, where she met another Jewish girl, Joasia Ravicz. After the failed Warsaw uprising of August 1944, the two Jewish girls, escorted by Sister Jadwiga, made their way to Częstochowa. They went to the Pauline monastery of Jasna Góra where the monks fed them and put them up temporarily in a hospice. The girls were accepted at a boarding school, also run by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, where there were about a dozen Jewish girls from Warsaw. After the war Hania was reunited with her mother. Her memoir mentions other Jewish children hidden in convents: her cousin Halina Ajzner (Wengielek), in a convent in Maciejowice near Warsaw run by the Sisters of the Family of Mary; Halina Kszypoff; and the sisters Judy and Tosia, in a boarding school in Żoliborz run by the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Often parents were not informed of the whereabouts of their children sheltered in convents in order to protect the security of everyone participating in these perilous undertakings. Bernard Goldstein, a Bundist leader from Warsaw, describes the following cases. (Bernard Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness* [London: Victor Gollancz,

¹⁷ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, pp.513–14.

1950], pp.157, 164–67, 239.)

In the same tenement lived Comrade Chaimovitch, formerly an official of our cooperative movement. Now he was liaison man between the Judenrat and the Transferstelle, which supplied the ghetto food allotment. He had the right to visit the Aryan side, wearing a uniform cap with a blue ribbon and a Star of David.

I went up to visit Chaimovitch and found him and his wife greatly agitated. He had just returned from smuggling their ten-year-old daughter out of the ghetto. A Christian friend had arranged for her admission to a children's home run by a convent somewhere in Poland—where, he was not permitted to know for fear that he might disclose the dangerous secret.

'The child did not want to go to the Christians,' Chaimovitch told us, weeping. 'She cried and pleaded to be allowed to stay with us. If our fate is to die, she wanted to die with us. It was only with great difficulty and against her will that we were able to get her across.' He wrung his hands. 'Where is my child? Will I ever see her again?' ...

My guide took me to a small three-room apartment on the first floor. Mr. and Mrs. Chumatovsky, with whom I was to stay, worked in the [armament] factory. ...

In a tiny room in the apartment I found Zille, [Zalman] Friedrych's wife, and their five-year-old daughter, Elsa. Friedrych himself lived elsewhere....

Five-year-old Elsa was a pretty, active blond child who blue eyes radiated life and spirit. She could not understand why we had to remain constantly cooped up in our small room, not even going for a walk in the courtyard. In other ways, however, she was sometimes frightened by her awareness of the dangerous situation.

Sometimes I would forgetfully lapse into Yiddish. The child would become almost hysterical. "Stop speaking that language. Don't you realize it means our lives?" she would hiss sharply in Polish.

Elsa would sit at the window, watching other children at play in the yard. Often she would cry. Fearful of attracting attention, her mother would try to quiet the girl. Sometimes the only way was to stuff a handkerchief into the little mouth. The child's crying made our landlady very nervous. The neighbors knew that she had no children. She was afraid that we would be discovered. She had heard terrible tales of how the Germans stamped out the lives of little Jewish children with their boots, and then shot the mothers and their Gentile hosts as well. ...

The nervous anxiety soon began to tell on our hosts. Our landlady was often in tears. Her hysteria multiplied our own fears. Together with our hosts we began to cast about for a way in which little Elsa might be removed to safety. Our landlord had a sister who was Mother Superior in a convent near Cracow. We decided to send the child to her.

Mrs. Chumatovsky went there first to discuss the project and to make the necessary arrangements. When she returned with a favourable answer, we prepared the girl for the trip. She was told that she was going to an aunt's where there were other children with whom she could play outdoors and have lots of fun. For several days our landlady taught the child how to say prayers in preparation for her new life and new name under the crucifix. The child slowly accustomed herself to the new role. Her intuitive understanding of the danger which hung over her and her mother drove her to do her best. She seemed to know instinctively that all this was necessary to avert a terrible catastrophe.

With a heavy heart, her lips pressed tightly together to restrain her sobs, Zille packed Elsa's things and sent her away.

Mrs. Chumatovsky stayed with the child at the convent for several days. Elsa would not let her leave. She wept and pleaded not to be left alone. When the child was somewhat calmer Mrs. Chumatovsky was able to return.

Exactly where the convent was, the Chumatovsky, of course, refused to say. In case of arrest the parents might not be able to endure the torture and might give the information to the Germans, bringing tragedy to the convent and all its inmates. Besides, the parents, in their anxiety, might attempt to communicate with the child and unwittingly betray the secret. The Chumatovskys obtained a Catholic birth certificate in the girl's new name and assumed legal guardianship over her.

Just before the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944:

We also managed to take little Elsa Friedrych out of the convent near Cracow where she had been hidden. The child of our heroic Zalman Friedrych was now completely alone; her father had perished in a gun fight with the Gestapo, her mother had been killed in Maidanek [Majdanek]. She was later brought to the United States and adopted by American comrades.

In actual fact, Zygmunt Friedrych daughter, who used the name Elżunia, was sheltered at the orphanage of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary in Zamość, whose activities are described later on. Marek Edelman, one of

the leaders of the ghetto revolt, is said to have collected the child after the liberation.¹⁸

Whether or not a Jewish child should be christened also proved to be a contentious matter that was not always easy to resolve. In order to blend in, a Jewish child in a Catholic institution or passing as a Christian in a Catholic milieu needed to receive the sacraments together with the other children. To do so without incurring sacrilege required that the child be baptized. This often posed a dilemma for nuns and priests, as well as for the parents of the Jewish child. (Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness*, pp.224–25.)

I am reminded of an incident—one of hundreds—which occurred in the family of Shierachek, the former Jewish policeman, my fellow tenant on Grzibowska [Grzybowska Street in Warsaw]. His sister was a servant in a Christian home in Wawer [Wawer, a suburb of Warsaw]. Naturally she had to act the part of a Catholic. Regularly each Sunday she attended church and participated in the religious ceremonies with her neighbors. Her thirteen-year-old daughter lived with her, under the protection of her employers' daughter, a schoolteacher. Supposedly, the little girl's parents had been arrested by the Nazis, and she had been placed in the custody of the teacher. The girl was raised as a Christian.

The mother, although not at all religious, was deeply concerned about the child. She feared that in time the little girl would forget that she was a Jew and begin to feel truly like a Christian. She would thus be lost to the Jewish people.

Before her school examination, the little girl had to go to the priest for communion with all the other students. The teacher, a deeply religious woman, refused stubbornly to be a party to this deception. Her convictions would not permit her to send a Jewish child who had not been converted to such a holy ceremony. It would be a betrayal of her own religious faith.

The teacher consulted two other priests—the priest at the school was permitted to know nothing about it. One of them told her that his convictions would not permit him to baptize the girl under compulsion. The second, considering the desperate situation of the child, agreed to perform the ceremony.

Now the mother was assailed by doubts. She was afraid that the impressiveness of the ritual would give her child the final push toward Catholicism. In her anxiety she came to Grzibowska to consult with her brother, Marek Edelman, and myself. Hard and bitter, Marek was inclined to oppose the whole idea on the ground that it was tantamount to capitulation. Child or adult, he was damned if he would recommend knuckling under to those Nazi bastards. To hell with them! But the more conservative counsel of Shierachek and myself prevailed. To save her life, the child must be baptized.

Decisions to shelter Jews in convents of nuns were often made unilaterally by the superior of the order or of a particular convent. Sometimes, as in the case of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in their Warsaw convent on Kazimierzowska Street, the decision was made collegially. The superior, Sister Wanda Garczyńska, wanting a unanimous agreement, summoned all the nuns to a meeting which began with a reading of the Gospel of St. John, chapter 15, verses 13 to 17, that begins, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for a friend ..." and ends "These things I command you, that you love one another." Ewa Kurek-Lesik records the event, as movingly related to her by Sister Maria Ena who took part, in "The Conditions of Admittance and the Social Background of Jewish Children Saved by Women's Religious Orders in Poland from 1939–1945," *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, volume 3 (1988), at page 247.

It was 1942–43. The school on Kazimierzowska had been closed. The SS was based in a huge block opposite our house, where the RGO [Central Relief Council] kitchen was open and functioning almost without a break. The people, too, came in a constant stream—children, young people, adults with canisters for soup. Only for soup? For everything. Kazimierzowska pulsed with life—from the nursery to the university. Amongst the hive of activity there were also Jewesses. Real ones. With red, curly hair, freckled, with prominent ears and unusual eyes. Thoroughbreds. There could be no mistake. It was well-known that concealing a Jew meant the death sentence.

The sister knew that other orders had already been warned and searched. So she hid nothing, withheld nothing. She called us together. She began the conference by reading a fragment of the Gospel of St John. ... She explained that she did not wish to jeopardise the house, the sisters, the community. She knew what could be awaiting us. There was no thought of self. She knew: you should love one another as I have loved you. How? So that He gave His Life.

I lowered my head. I did not dare look at the other sisters. We had to decide. If we said one word, openly, honestly admitted to fear for our own skins, our own lives, the lives of so many sisters, the community. ... Was it prudent to risk it for a few Jewesses? It was our decision whether or not they would have to leave.

¹⁸ Adam Kopciowski, *Zagłada Żydów w Zamościu* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005), p.194.

Silence.

No one stirred. Not a single breath. We were ready. We would not give up the Jewish children. We would rather die, all of us. The silence was overwhelming—we did not look at each other. The sister was sitting with closed eyes, her hands folded over the Gospel. We were ready.

We got up. We did not even pray together as we normally do. We went to Chapel. We felt light and joyful, though very grave. We were ready.

More than a dozen Jewish girls found refuge at the boarding school run by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Kazimierzowska Street in Warsaw. Among them was Joanna Olczak, born in 1934 to a Polish father and a Jewish mother who had converted and married in the Evangelical (Augsburg) faith. Joanna, like her mother, was considered to be a Jew under German racial laws. Joanna was brought to the school in the spring of 1942. (Joanna Olczak-Ronikier, *In the Garden of Memory: A Family Memoir* [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004], 253–63.)

I remember Nena [i.e., Irena Grabowska, a member of the Home Army] well. It was she who took me, on the advice of the Sisters of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, from Piastów to the boarding school they ran on Kazimierzowska Street in Warsaw.

I can clearly see my first encounter with that place. I am standing on the threshold of a huge gymnasium, holding Irena's hand tightly. The shining floor smells of fresh polish. By the wall a large group of girls are sitting cross-legged, all staring curiously at the new girl. I am dying of embarrassment and fear. For the first time in my life I must remain alone in a new place, with strange people. I want to tear away from Irena and run home crying, but I know it is not possible. There is no home, and if I 'make a scene' here—my grandmother's most abusive definition of hysterical behaviour—I shall compromise myself in the eyes of these girls for ever, and that will not help me at all. So I take the first conscious decision of my entire life: I let go of Irena's hand and, on that shining floor, in defiance of fate, I do a somersault, then a second, and a third, and keep on rolling until I end up at the other end of the room. The girls clap and the nuns laugh. I know I have won their hearts, I feel accepted, and thus safe.

That was when I found a way of coping with life by hiding my true emotions behind a jester's mask. I put a lot of effort into pretending to be a resourceful, cheerful child and into amusing everyone around me. It was the special skill of many occupation-era children. None of the dozen or so Jewish girls hidden at the convent, some of whom already had terrible experiences behind them, ever despaired or showed their sadness or fear about the fate of their loved ones. The crying was done at night. The day went by as normally as could be, like before the war, criss-crossed with all sorts of activities. The nuns were gentle and smiling. Nowadays I cannot understand how on earth such extraordinary calm and cheerfulness prevailed in that ark sailing on the oceans of the occupation nightmare, when absolutely everything going on inside the convent carried the risk of death. They were not just hiding Jewish children, but also teaching subjects banned by the Nazis. There were secret study groups for secondary-school pupils, secret university lectures, a priesthood [chaplaincy] for Home Army soldiers, contacts with the underground, help for prisoners and people deprived of a living, and food for malnourished Jews who had escaped from the Ghetto. Courageous and composed, the nuns were only people, after all, and must sometimes have been terrified at the thought of what would happen if the Germans discovered just one of those crimes. Everyone knows how easily adults' worries are passed on to children. How did they manage to protect us from fear? They did not hide the danger from us. Frequent alarm practices prepared the schoolchildren for surprise raids by the Germans. When an internal bell rang during lessons, we gathered the pre-war books for Polish and history from our desks double-quick and shoved them into a special storage space—a sort of cloakroom—among our shoe bags and gym kits, where we always put them away after school anyway. Sometimes the alarm was real—then the nuns hid the endangered children in the enclosure. I am told that I once sat inside the altar for a few hours during one such search, but I cannot remember. By then I was already thoroughly versed in conspiracy. I knew by heart all the new facts in each successive fake identity card. This time my mother was called Maria Olczak, née Maliszewska, and my grandmother had become her own daughter's mother-in-law, borrowing the name Julia Olczak, née Wagner, from my father's late mother. My grandmother's sister Flora, alias Emilia Babicka, née Płońska, daughter of a carpenter born in Łunińsk in Byelorussia, was no longer her sister, but just a chance acquaintance. Flora's husband Samuel was called Stanisław. Luckily he was still her husband, which made his life much easier, because his daughters, Karolina and Stefania, who had two different surnames and were not apparently related to each other or to their parents, were always making blunders and were incapable of hiding their family connections. It was all very complicated.

What did I tell my schoolmates at the boarding school about myself? I do not think anyone ever asked me any questions, which is amazing, because everyone knows how full of curiosity little girls can be. Evidently the nuns issued a strict ban on talking about personal matters. That must be why I had no idea about the situation and origin of the other pupils. How

many secrets those little heads must have been hiding. How many lies they must have contained. How much information as seemingly basic as one's first name, surname and family address they had to bury as deep as possible in their memories to avoid revealing them accidentally and causing a disaster. The challenge to 'be yourself!'—that basic condition for mental sanity—had been replaced with the categorical order: 'Forget who you are and become someone else!'—which was a lifesaver, but later on, after the war, made life immensely complicated, because it was hard to recover one's lost identity.

Once every two weeks I visited my family, who were still living in Piastów. Irene used to collect me from the convent and take me home. ...

The convent refectory smelled of ersatz coffee and slightly burned porridge, while little girls chased up and down the corridors laughing. The whole boarding school was absorbed in preparing a Nativity play for Shrovetide. The play was entirely written and composed by Miss Zosia Orłowska—nowadays Zofia Rostworowska, wife of Poland's first Minister of Culture after independence was regained in 1989—who rehearsed our roles with us. The show was to be performed before an audience from the city: relatives and friends of the pupils. The little girls of Jewish origin were also eager to take part, so the good Miss Zosia came up with the idea that they would appear as couriers of the exotic Three Kings. Coloured turbans and make-up would disguise their Semitic looks. I was a Negro page and, all backed-up, I could freely show off my gymnastic skills. Nowadays the first-hand accounts that Sister Ena has collected in her book [Where Love Matured into Heroism] remind me of other, less amusing adventures. Anna Kaliska writes:

One day three Volksdeutsch appeared in the parlour with a demand to hand over the little Olczak girl, whose mother was a Jew. They demanded an inspection of all the children, and had come with precise instructions. Sister Wanda [Garczyńska] locked the little girl and a few others whose origin can easily be guessed behind the enclosure on the second floor, and the rest had to file into the parlour. Then they began to inspect the house, first the ground floor, then the first floor. Sister Wanda showed them round. Her explanation that the enclosure was on the second floor and that access there was forbidden by the rules of the Order was passed over in silence, and the three Germans started to go up the stairs. We remained on the first floor. I can still hear their heavy footsteps today—I can remember the appalling fear—we knew all too well what would happen to her and the children. Some sisters were praying in the chapel as the footsteps approached the door of the enclosure. Then there was a moment's silence, and we heard Sister Wanda calmly say: 'I shall once again remind you that this is the enclosure.' And again there was a silence, in which it was felt as if everything around us and inside us had died and gone still. And then footsteps coming down the stairs, as they were gone.

At that point, at the nuns' request Irena Grabowska took me away from the convent to live with Maria Jahns in Pruszków.

...

According to the list, my mother and grandmother spent that terrible Easter at Tworki, where they lived from March to June 1943. ... The nuns had taken me back again. The girls in my class were getting ready for their First Communion, including those of Jewish origin, with their parents' consent, if they were still alive, or that of their guardians if they had any. My secular family approved of the Catholic education that was instilled into me at the convent, besides which I had been christened before the war.

Yet the nuns did not force any of the girls in their charge to change their religion. Dr. Zofia Szymańska-Rosenblum, who in September 1942 saved her little niece from the Ghetto and brought her to Kazimierzowska Street, writes in her memoirs: "With the greatest subtlety Sister Wanda asked me if I would agree to Jasia being christened and taking Holy Communion, assuring me that it was the child's ardent wish and would be desirable in terms of safety. 'But if you have any objections, please rest assured that my attitude to Jasia will not be changed and that I shall save the person.'"

Jasia's mother had been deported from the Ghetto earlier, probably to Treblinka, her father fought in the Ghetto to the last moment and must have been killed there. I had no idea about my schoolfriend's experiences. She did not talk about them, and if she cried, it was only when no one could see. We were both very excited about our First Communion. We wrote down our sins on cards, so that, God forbid, we would not forget them during confession. We spent hours at our prayers in the chapel, and now and then we ran to one of the nuns with the happy news that we felt a 'vocation'. Two jolly, lively little girls, enjoying life, as if they hadn't a care.

On 3 June 1943 the day of our First Communion came. Some photographs of the ceremony have survived. In one of them seven little girls in white sacramental vestments are posing for the camera—it is the classic souvenir picture, taken by a professional photographer. Five of the girls in the photograph are Jewish. I am astounded by the courage, and at the same time the sensitivity, of the nuns. They heroically regarded hiding these children as their Christian duty. They treated the inevitable threat of death as a consequence of their decision. But where did they get the motherly sensibility that prompted them, amid the all-surrounding danger, to give us a little joy? Not just spiritual but also secular, the kind little girls should have—somehow they knew we had to look pretty in our white dresses, made to measure and decorated with embroidery, that we had to have little white garlands on our heads, our hair twisted into curls, and that we must have a souvenir of that memorable day. Those photographs, and I have several at home, always move me with their festivity and

solemnity, absurd, it would seem, in those awful times. Or maybe the photos had some other, hidden aim? Perhaps they were supposed to save us in the event of danger, to convince the people who came for us that as ardent Catholics we did not deserve to die? If that was what the provident nuns intended, I feel even greater emotion as I gaze at our earnest little faces. We all survived. Thank God.

Conditions at the boarding school on Kazimierzowska Street were described by Zuzanna Sienkiewicz, a frequent visitor, in her account in Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewin, eds., *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles Helped the Jews, 1939–1945* (London: Earls Court Publications, 1969), at pages 360–61.

In those horrible times Sister Wanda [Garczyńska] radiated love of her neighbours, be they who they may, and even the enemy was not forgotten in her ardent prayers, in her begging God for forgiveness for the crimes being committed incessantly in those times. One of those 'operations' of which Sister Wanda was in charge at the time was that of hiding little Jewish girls. She took them into the boarding school with false documents. Some were easily passed off as 'Aryans', but others had very prominent Semitic features. These poor little ones would disappear into pre-arranged hiding places whenever there was a visit by the Germans. Some 'Aryan' mothers reproached Sister Wanda, asking how, at a time when it was so difficult to get an education for children, a Catholic school could be filled with non-Catholic children to the detriment of Polish Catholics. Sister Wanda was convinced that she was behaving righteously but, like all people truly great in spirit, she was very humble and she decided to seek the advice of a wise priest on this matter. It was then that Father [Stanisław] Trzeciak came to Kazimierzowska St.; he had been known before the war for his stand, often very firm, against the influence of the Jewish faith on our Polish psyche. For many he was the standard-bearer whose public utterances they used to justify their anti-Semitic actions. Then, when Sister Wanda presented the entire argument and the reproaches which she had suffered for her actions, Father Trzeciak remained silent for a moment and then asked: 'What is the danger to these little Catholic girls if you do not have room for them?'

'They will study in worse conditions or they may even completely lose these years of school.'

'And what danger would there be to the others if you were to send them away?'

'You know, Father, inevitable death.'

'Therefore, Sister, you do not have the right to hesitate and consider. Priority goes to those little ones in danger—to the little Jewesses,' answered the priest.

These are facts which I know from Sister Wanda's own account to me and, in addition, I know that in all the Homes of the Nuns of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, in Szymanów, in Nowy Sącz, in Jarosław and other places, smaller and older Jewish girls were hidden and sheltered and in urgent cases, so were their mothers.

In Kielce Voivodship I know of cases where an entire village knew that a Jew or Jewess were hiding out, disguised in peasant clothes, and no one betrayed them even though they were poor Jews who not only could not pay for their silence but had to be fed, clothed and housed.

The aforementioned Rev. Stanisław Trzeciak, pastor of St. Anthony's Church on Senatorska Street in Warsaw, was reputedly the most outspoken anti-Semitic priest in interwar Poland, yet during the occupation he demonstrated deep concern for the fate of endangered Jews, especially children.¹⁹ According to historian Szymon Datner, Rev. Trzeciak rescued at least one Jewish child.²⁰ According to a statement submitted to Yad Vashem by Tanchum Kupferblum (alias Stanisław Kornacki) of Sandomierz, later a resident of Montreal, he also sheltered two Jews from Kraków who survived the war (<http://www.savingjews.org/righteous/cv.htm>—Cieslakowski, Jan).

Sister Wanda Garczyńska is also remembered fondly by other Jews whom she helped such as Anna Clarke, who found herself with her parents in the Hotel Polski in Warsaw in the summer of 1943. Hotel Polski was set up by the Germans in order to lure Jews out of hiding by holding out a false promise of passage to safe countries. (Anna Clarke, "Sister Wanda," *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 7 (2002): 253–59).

And in Hotel Polski I saw my cousin Esther Syrkis ... She was here with her sisters Idunia and Mala, Mala's husband, and

¹⁹ Tomasz Szarota, *U progu Zagłady: Zajścia antyżydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie* (Warsaw: Sic!, 2000), p.49; Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, "Trzeciak Stanisław," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczna, 2006), vol. 17, p.214.

²⁰ Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej—Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006), 389, 418.

the three little daughters of the three sisters. They had exchange papers to go to Germany, and were getting ready to leave the next morning. With a pile of children's clothing getting rapidly smaller on her ironing board, she was telling me of Sister Wanda.

Sister Wanda had hidden her, her sisters and a sister-in-law of one of them. Found a job for Mala's husband as a gardener in one of the monastery's gardens. Most important of all, hid the three little girls. When the mothers came to claim them before coming to the Hotel, the children were 'full of lice', Esther took her eyes off the board to look at me—'but alive and in one piece'. 'Don't write anything down, but here is her address. Go to her when in need and she will help you, too,' she was saying next morning, shortly before the whole group left in an orderly fashion. And to their death, as we now know. A few hours later the Gestapo Marias came and took away everyone still in the Hotel.

When the trucks came I was standing in the wide entrance gate of the Hotel. Two girls in a party of workers passing the gate on their way to register at a brick factory in the neighbourhood made room for me between them. ... Outside the Hotel they let me go free ...

My own meeting with Sister Wanda took place late in the fall of that same year when I needed a place to stay. From a dark street up a dark staircase and into a large dimly lit room where Sisters slept all across the floor. Soon I found a mattress, too. 'Why are you risking the lives of so many people because of me?' I asked Sister Wanda. 'For the love of the God we have in common', she answered.

Soon Sister Wanda had a job for me. A country estate had asked for a governess for a high-school boy. Sister Wanda had confidence in my ability to teach the required subjects except one. I was to teach the boy religion.

... Here now in 1943 was a nun in her cell patiently teaching me the arcane of her religion, the catechism, the prayers, the mass, to fool her parishioners. The miracle of the mass was the fact over which I stumbled over and over again, both the fact and the significance of the fact that the transformation of the bread and of the wine was happening in front of my eyes. ...

At the estate, my 14-year-old student showed little enthusiasm for study, secular or religious, thus leaving me plenty of time for the ponds, the woods and air of the countryside. Then on Sunday morning it was time for church.

Sister Wanda had warned me in Warsaw not to try to avoid going and I went. No one made any remarks about my behaviour either at church or later. But many eyebrows must have been raised. ... Never before except for a school excursion had I been inside a church, let alone during a service in a little country church. I couldn't have known where to stand, to sit, to get up, make the sign of the cross or to kneel.

The story of some twenty children—among them, Felicia Riesel and Lilian Lampert—cared for by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is confirmed in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at pages 99, 227–28.

[1] In 1941, immediately after the German occupation of Lwow [Lwów], Maria and Bronislaw [Bronisław] Bochenek decided to help their Jewish acquaintances who had studied at the university with Maria before the occupation. After the ghetto was sealed off, the Bocheneks took food to David Riesel, a Jewish doctor, and his family. Maria also gave her birth certificate to a Jewish woman named Susanna Glowiczower, which made it possible for her to move to Warsaw. Bronislaw, who was forced to flee because of his left-wing views, settled in Cracow [actually, Warsaw], where he was later joined by Maria. The Bocheneks continued their good work in Cracow [Warsaw], offering shelter to Riesel, his wife, Lea, and their six-year-old daughter, Felicia, who had escaped from the Lwow ghetto. Since the Bocheneks were on the Gestapo's "Wanted" list, Felicia was transferred to a local convent [on Kazimierzowska St. belonging to the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary²¹], while her parents fled to Warsaw. The Bocheneks themselves also fled to Warsaw, after finding an apartment in Lwow for the three members of the Amcislowski family, who also sought refuge with them. The Bocheneks likewise sheltered Professor Jozef Feldman, who was being hounded by the Gestapo, first in their Cracow home and later in their Warsaw home. In Warsaw, the Bocheneks helped Professor Henryk Glowiczower, Susanna's husband, who was already in Warsaw under an assumed identity. Throughout the occupation, the Bocheneks saw to all the needs of their Jewish acquaintances who sought refuge with them. They took special care of Lea Riesel, who was in the throes of a nervous breakdown, and her daughter, Felicia, who had taken ill at the convent and required hospitalization. In undertaking these selfless acts of courage, the Bocheneks were guided by an unwavering sense of loyalty to their friends.

[2] Sister Wanda Garczynska [Garczyńska] was the prioress of the Chaste Sisters [Niepokalanki—Sisters of the Immaculate Conception] Nunnery in Warsaw, which served as a shelter for many Jews, especially children, during the

²¹ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.49.

war. One of these children was Lilian Lampert, who was admitted into the nunnery's boarding school with the help of prewar acquaintances of her parents. "I was treated exactly like the rest of the children, which profoundly influenced the whole of my adolescence. I was still learning to play the piano," Lilian wrote in her testimony to Yad Vashem. Lilian spent vacations in Szymanów [Szymanów], where the sisters ran a boarding school for older girls. At a certain point, the sisters decided to move her there permanently, since Szymanów was a long way from Warsaw and therefore safer. She was then able to see her mother, who had managed to procure Aryan papers. Sister Wanda also helped Roza and Josef Pytowski, who turned up in Warsaw with nowhere to stay after escaping from the Piotrków [Piotrków] Trybunalski ghetto. Their daughter, Franciszka, asked Sister Wanda for help and she found them a place to stay with two elderly women who were in touch with the nunnery. The frightened women suspected that the Pytowskis were Jewish but Sister Wanda did her best to allay their suspicions. "She took care of my mother as if she was her own mother. She taught her how to behave naturally during services in the nunnery chapel as well as in the courtyard, where joint evening prayers were conducted every day," wrote Rosa [sic] and Josef's daughter Maria. "Sister Wanda never regretted having sheltered a Jewish girl and allowing her to join services."

In her testimony for Yad Vashem (File 2396b), Lilian Lampert (born 1931) wrote:

The nuns knew of my identity and I retained my real name. They showed great courage by providing refuge for a Jewish child with red hair and Semitic features. ... I was treated exactly the same way as any other child at school. ... I even continued my piano lessons. Only my outings outside the compounds were curtailed, understandably, for my own safety.

Summers and holidays were spent at the order's affiliate in Szymanów, where the nuns conducted a boarding school for high school girls. Since Szymanów was more isolated, and hence seemed more secure, it was decided to transfer Lilian there permanently. Lilian was not the only Jewish child there.

I remember, sometime in 1943–44 the arrival of another red-haired girl, and the nuns' efforts to bleach her hair, which attracted my curiosity. Her name was Jasia [Kon]. That's all I knew at that time. She too survived the war.

At a later date, the convent in Szymanów was subjected to constant random inspections by the Germans, who requisitioned part of the convent's building to billet soldiers. In the fall of 1944, Lilian was sent to rejoin her mother, who was hiding in the village of Zaręby Kościelne, near Grójec. They remained there until the area was liberated in February 1945. Lilian still affectionately remembers some of the nuns: Irena, Brigida, Wanda, Teresa, Deodata, Blanka, Bernarda, and also Father Skalski, their chaplain.

In her memoir, *Byłam tylko lekarzem... [I Was Only a Doctor]* (Warszawa: Pax, 1979), at pages 145–77, Dr. Zofia Szymańska (née Rozenblum), a renowned neurophysicist, describes how she found shelter with the Sisters of the Immaculate Virgin Mary on Kazimierzowska Street in Warsaw, after leaving the Warsaw ghetto in August 1942. That convent served as a centre for underground activities on behalf of Jews in Warsaw. Within a few weeks, Dr. Szymańska was taken to a small convent of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus (Grey Ursulines) in Ożarów, outside Warsaw, where she lived until April 1945. She was accepted with the approval of that congregation's Mother General Pia Leśniewska. In both convents, Dr. Szymańska received material care and an abundance of spiritual comfort from many nuns and priests (among them Rev. Dąbrowski, a Pallottine, who comforted her greatly in difficult moments). No one attempted to convert her. News of her stay at Ożarów was widely known to the villagers but no one betrayed her, not even when a German military unit was at one point quartered in the convent. Dr. Szymańska's ten-year-old niece, Janina ("Jasia") Kon (changed to Kaniewska), who had a very Semitic appearance, was sheltered by the Sisters of the Immaculate Virgin Mary on Kazimierzowska Street in Warsaw, and in boarding schools in Wrzósów and Szymanów, outside Warsaw, where more than a dozen Jewish girls were hidden. All of the sisters at the boarding school in Szymanów were aware that their young charges were Jews, as were the hired help, the parents of the other students and many villagers. None of the Christian parents removed their children from the school despite the potential dangers, and in fact many of them contributed to the upkeep of the Jewish children. Dr. Szymańska wrote: "The children were under the protection of the entire convent and village. Not one traitor was to be found among them." Throughout this time Dr. Szymańska remained under the watchful eye of Maria Stefania Górka (Sister Andrzejka), who kept in touch with Janina Kon's parents in the Warsaw ghetto until they were deported. Dr. Szymańska's story is also related in

Margherita Marchione, *Consensus and Controversy: Defending Pope Pius XII* (New York and Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2002), at pages 101–104.

With the German occupation of Poland in 1939, the people of Warsaw faced a hopeless situation. Dr. Szymanska became involved in the work of helping thousands of Jewish children. While still working for Centos [the Union of Welfare Societies for Jewish Orphans] during the first winter of the war, she understood the future fate of Warsaw Jews and the lack of help from the Jewish organizations outside Poland, especially American Jews. She knew that this was the beginning of the end. With her two sisters, brother-in-law and nine-year-old niece, Jasia, she lived in the Warsaw Ghetto from October 1940. The Centos Building was bombed on the first day of the War. In 1942, the Germans closed the Centos and her permit was terminated. The program was liquidated. All two hundred residents were exterminated.

When the reality of the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto became imminent, Sister Golembiowska [Gołębiowska], who was working with the Polish underground network, persuaded Dr. Szymanska to leave the ghetto with Jasia. They were moved by the network to the Institute for Boys at 97 Puławska [Puławska] Street. Another Catholic friend, Irene [Irena] Solska, took Dr. Szymanska to Sister Wanda Garczyńska [Garczyńska] of the Immaculate Conception Sisters on Kazimierzowska Street. This convent was a link in the underground network to “help those who were hiding and living in danger and misery.” Within seventeen days she was relocated with the Ursuline Sisters. Jasia, entrusted to a family friend and colleague, spoke about the bombings of the Warsaw Ghetto, accidentally disclosed her Jewish background. Immediately she was transferred to Kazimierzowska Street and instructed to approach the gate alone. She knocked and said: “I’m Jasia and I don’t have anyone.” Sister Wanda responded, “No, my child, you are not alone, you have me.” During these years of hiding, Jasia was moved many times among the villages of Wrzosowo [Wrzosów] and Szymanowo [Szymanów] and Kazimierzowska Street. The Gestapo suspected that the nuns, under the pretext of foster care for Polish orphans, were saving the lives of many Jewish children. In spite of constant danger the girls attended classes regularly in a serene atmosphere. Indeed, the heroic role of the Immaculate Conception Sisters in saving Jewish lives needs to be told.

In her book, Dr. Szymanska writes: “The example of the Sisters allowed me and others not to lose faith in human beings during those years of atrocities and cruelty.” At the end of August 1942, with the approval of the Mother General Pia Lesniewska [Leśniewska], she was moved to the Ursuline Gray Nuns’ convent in the village of Ożarów [Ożarów]. There she remained for two years and eight months in a small room and was visited by Sister Urszula Gorska [Maria Stefania Górka, Sister Andrzejka], a student of classical philology at Warsaw University [before it was closed by the Germans at the beginning of the war]. From her small convent cell, she looked closely at the lives of the nuns but could not understand their obedience to suspend their obvious enjoyable work routine and their readiness to pray and contemplate. Only later was she able to understand the power of contemplative devotion to God—the sole source of their strength—which gave a sense of meaning and purpose to their lives.

She frequently asked herself: Why did God allow this to happen? Why wasn’t Hitler excommunicated? [Hitler had severed his ties with the Catholic Church long before he came to power and considered the Church to be one of his chief enemies.—Ed.] Why didn’t the American Jews organize assistance and intervene with the American Government to help the European Jews perishing in the concentration camps? The Germans began the liquidation of the ghetto in 1942. They transported whole orphanages of children to the concentration camps. After the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, only her younger sister Eliza was still alive and trapped in the Ghetto. Stella and her brother-in-law had been transported to the concentration camp. When she learned the fate of her family, she shared her thoughts of depression and suicide with Sister Gorska. Responding to her needs, one of the sisters moved to her cell to help her. Many were the conversations they had about the need for people to assume responsibility and help save lives. In this crisis, the sisters were influential and encouraged her, but never did they try to persuade her to convert to the Catholic faith.

After the Russian offensive in the Spring of 1945, Dr. Szymanska spent the last Easter with the Ursuline Sisters. From documents and statements of eyewitnesses, she found out that the entire village of Ożarów knew that she and others were hiding in the convent. The sisters were aware of the consequences of hiding Jews; yet, without hesitation, they continued the dangerous task and saved many lives. She states: “No other country but Poland paid such a tremendous bloody tribute to the cause of saving Jewish lives. It is an undisputed fact that it is much easier to demonstrate and march for the cause of Jews, as happened in some Western countries, than to hide one of them for years during the German occupation of Poland.” After the war, she returned to completely devastated Warsaw and worked for the Ministry of Education, Department of Child Welfare. She inspected the care given in orphanages. She learned that under the direction of Mother [Maylda] Getter, who saved the lives of several hundred Jewish Children, the Sisters of the Family of Mary was one of the most active congregations protecting Jews during and after the war.

Sister Andrzejka (Maria Stefania Górka), who was recognized as a Righteous Gentile, wrote in her statement to Yad Vashem (File 7668) that many Jewish children were sheltered in the children’s home operated by the

Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus in Milanówek. Among the charges were Stenia Jankowska, daughter of a doctor from Łódź, and the Raniszewski sisters, who moved to Paris after the war. The Jewish children had false identity documents. They were referred there either by their families or by non-Jewish acquaintances of the families, as well as by Jewish organizations active in the rescue of children. They continued to be sheltered even when their sponsors could not keep up with payments for their upkeep. Fortunately, none of the Jewish children was discovered by the Germans. Jewish adults were also taken in. For example, Professor Helena Radlińska of Warsaw's Free University (Wolna Wszechnica Oświatowa) and the two Kurz sisters were hidden in the mother house on Gęsta Street (now Wiślana Street) in Warsaw. The Mother General, Pia Leśniewska maintained close contact with an organization that assisted Jews. Sister Andrzej's main responsibility was the children's kitchen, in addition to her teaching duties (biology). She was also dispatched to the ghetto walls where she collected deserted children and took them to various convents. When danger lurked, she organized the transfer of Jewish children to other locations. Sister Andrzej recalled how she took a girl whose head had to be bandaged to disguise her marked Jewish features from Warsaw to the children's home in Brwinów.

In most cases we knew very well that the children were Jewish. However, even in cases where we did not know for sure, and only suspected they were Jewish, it was never mentioned and never the subject of discussion, and we took the children as they were. ...

We usually baptized the Jewish children were baptized in those cases where we were told that this was crucial for their survival, especially so as not to arouse suspicion that they were Jews. We wanted all the children to be present every day for confession and prayers. Some of the Jewish children became very attached to the Christian religious rites, but we made them understand that they would not be required to be committed [to accept Christianity when they grew up]. From my contact with tens of Jewish children, I noticed that they needed much empathy and expressions of love, since in the beginning they kept to themselves, which could have aroused suspicion. I decided to break down the wall between them and us and gain their confidence. ... Today [1985] in our convent there are several nuns who have been with us after the Holocaust. No one ever came to ask for these Jewish girls, and when they grew up they asked to remain with us and be inseparable from us. ... Most of the surviving children we returned at the end of the war or several years afterwards to their families or to representatives of the Jewish community who were armed with appropriate documentation testifying a relationship to these children. ... Not one of the Jewish children who were sheltered by us, and especially in the Milanówek house, did not return to his family in a much better condition. ...

This human experience helped me to better understand the human soul and heart, and especially the soul of a child who suffers through an experience as terrible as the Holocaust.

Confirmation of the rescue activities of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, who sheltered Jewish children in Warsaw, Brwinów, Milanówek, Ołtarzew, Radość, Zakopane and Czarna Duża, is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: Poland, Part 1, at pages 249–50; Part 2, at page 872.

*[1] During the German occupation, Sister Maria Gorska [Andrzej Gorska], a member of the Ursuline Sisters convent [order], was an active participant in the convent's [order's] effort to save Jewish children. Officially, Gorska ran a soup kitchen for orphaned or abandoned children in central Warsaw. Unofficially, her job was to help Jewish children by arranging for them to be smuggled out of the ghetto and transferred to institutions belonging to the Ursuline Sisters, which had branches throughout occupied Poland. In performing these and other dangerous operations, Gorska was inspired by Christian love and a sense of obligation to save human life. Among Gorska's tasks were obtaining Aryan papers for the Jewish children, protecting those who looked Jewish, and hiding them during German raids. Gorska was in touch with Żegota [Żegota], which supplied her with documents as necessary. Gorska saved the lives of many Jewish children who left Poland after the war. Gorska's activities are the subject of Dr. Rozenblum-Szymanska's book *Byłam tylko lekarzem* ("I Was Only a Doctor").*

[2] During the war, Mieczysław [Mieczysław] Wionczek lived with his family in Warsaw. He was a student at the underground Warsaw University. In 1941, he met a young Jewish woman who was known during the occupation as Teresa Czarkowska. In 1942, Mieczysław and Teresa were married. In order to remove any suspicions regarding Teresa's origins, the wedding was held in the St. Jan [John] Cathedral. All of Mieczysław's family, as well as Teresa's family, who were then in hiding, attended the wedding. After the wedding, Mieczysław's mother held a wedding reception in her home,

which removed any possible doubts that the German authorities might have had. One of the people that the newlyweds Mieczysław and Teresa helped during the war was Krystyna Prutkowska, then 19 years old. They offered her work as a maid ... In 1943, when Teresa's niece Antonina Dworakowska fell ill with polio, Mieczysław helped her parents find a room for her in the Sisters of Urszula convent in Zakopane, where the girl received the required aid. After the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, Mieczysław and the nuns in this convent also hid his wife, who was by then nine months pregnant, as well as Antonina's parents.

Jews were often moved from convent to convent, or other institutions operated by nuns, to ensure their survival. Maria Teresa Zielińska, born in 1927, recalled her exploits after her escape from the Warsaw ghetto in October 1940, in Wiktoria Śliwowska, ed., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998), at pages 148–50.

Death threatened not only me but all those who would accept me and all the tenants of their apartment building. Nonetheless, Janina Przybysz (Ninka) took me with her to 12? or 19? Zielna Street where she lived just with her mother, because her father had died recently ...

After a few days, I went to 43 Mokotowska Street to live with Aleksander and Maria Jaźwiński, who had no children. ... I was with them until Christmas.

I returned to Zielna Street. From there, on December 27, 1940, I was taken in by Mother Michaela Moraczewska, Mother General of the Sisters of the Holy Mother of Mercy [Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy]. The Sisters had a correctional residence for girls in Warsaw at 3/9 Żytnia Street. Mother Alojza was the educator of the particular class in which I was placed, and I was now called Genia, but before that, they called me Elżbieta. There, I learned colorful embroidery.

In May 1941, while seeing a doctor in the health center on Okopowa Street, I was recognized by the nurse, Helena Wiśniewska. Therefore, [out of caution] I had to immediately change my place of residence. I went to the Grochów district to 44 Hetmańska Street, where the same order of Sisters had another correctional residence. I was given the name Urszula. It affected me greatly, knowing of the danger to me and to them. ... I learned to work in the garden and in the hothouse. I was there more than a year, and then I went again to Ninka on Zielna Street, where I stayed until June 1943. ... [After being recognized on the street] I returned to Zielna Street, and together with Ninka went to Żytnia Street to Mother Alojza to ask her for help. She wrote a letter to the Sisters in Częstochowa, who lived at 3/9 Saint Barbara Street, and she asked a lady she knew to take me there.

From the thirteenth of June, 1943, onward, I stayed there and was given the name Mirka. This was also a correctional residence. I went there with a Kennkarte [German identity document] issued at 3/9 Żytnia Street. In Częstochowa, I also changed my place of residence several times.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy sheltered other Jewish children in their convents. The following account is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 184.

In the winter of 1942, Klara Szapiro fled from the Warsaw ghetto with her seven-year-old daughter, Nina. After being harassed by blackmailers, Szapiro was directed by an acquaintance to Adela Domanus, who obtained forged papers for her and her daughter and arranged for them to stay with one of her friends. When this hiding place proved unsafe, Domanus placed young Nina in a Christian orphanage [at the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on Żytnia Street, in Warsaw²²] and found a job for Klara as a maid with a German family, with whom she stayed until the area was liberated. In risking her life for persecuted Jews, Domanus was guided by sincere humanitarian beliefs, which overrode considerations of personal safety.

Priests were often instrumental in placing Jews in convents and worked hand in glove with nuns to rescue Jews. According to historian Ewa Kurek (Ewa Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine: How Polish Nuns Saved Hundreds of Jewish Children in German Occupied Poland, 1939–1945* [New York: Hippocrene Books, 1997], p.52):

Priests also fulfilled the role of intermediaries between Jews and convents, and they extricated children from the ghettos. Children were led out of the Warsaw ghetto by, among others, Rev. Prelate Marceł Godlewski, the pastor of the Church of All Saints, and by Rev. Piotr Tomaszewski, the chaplain of the Father Boduen Home, who, for example, brought three-

²² Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, pp.115–16.

year-old Monika to the Sisters of Charity during playtime. Monsignor Antoni Godziszewski had contacts with the Czystochowa [Częstochowa] ghetto, from which he smuggled children to suitable institutions in that town. A similar role was played in Kielce by Rev. Jan Jaroszewicz, the future bishop of the Kielce diocese.

The Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on Kawęczyńska Street, in the Warsaw suburb of Praga, under the care of the Salesian Fathers, became a beacon of hope for endangered Jews. Fr. Michał Kubacki, the director of the Catholic relief organization Caritas (whose services he drew on to help Jews), sheltered Halina Engelhard (later Aszkenazy), then a teenaged girl, in the church for several months. His protégé Fr. Józef Stanek, who also served at another parish in the city, sheltered a Semitic-looking Jewish girl of eight or nine years known as Zosia (Zofia), who was assigned to adorn the church altar with flowers and other light household chores. Both girls were later transferred to other locations. Zosia moved to a private home, whereas Halina was taken in by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy (Magdalene Sisters), on Wronia Street, and then by the Sisters of Charity on Freta Street, also in Warsaw. Sister Bernarda of the Magdalene Sisters told her, “Remember, my girl, that you are Jewish. Be proud of it.” Halina soon found out that there were other Jews hiding in the convent. These charges, as well as other Jews, continued to receive assistance from the Salesian Fathers throughout the occupation. False identity documents were issued at the Basilica to Rozalia Werdinger and others. The Salesians issued ardent appeals at private religious gatherings on the need to help Jews: “These people are our brothers,” Fr. Kubacki would state: “They have a soul just like us. In the heavenly court, it is not they who will be condemned, but those who murder them today. In God’s eyes, it is man’s behaviour that counts, regardless of his religion. Be he a Buddhist, Jew or Muslim, if he believes in one God and keeps his commands, God loves him. A good Catholic is not one who keeps the religious rites and regularly attends church to pray, but the one who obeys the commandment relating to fellow men, and extends a helping hand to others in need.” (Halina Aszkenazy-Engelhard, *Pragnęłam żyć: Pamiętnik* [Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Salezjańskie, 1991], pp.80–88, 92–93, 107–108, 114.) The following account appears in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 412.

In April 1943, during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the Germans discovered where Halina Aszkenazy was hiding and dispatched her on a transport leaving the city. After jumping off the train, Aszkenazy made her way, with tremendous difficulty, back to Warsaw, where she knocked on the door of Michał [Michał] Kubacki, a director of the Christian charity “Charitas” [“Caritas”] and priest of the Bazylika Church in the Praga suburb of Warsaw. Kubacki, who knew Aszkenazy’s mother and had promised in the past to help her and her daughter, welcomed Halina and immediately provided her with false birth and baptism certificates. Aszkenazy hid in a room in the church for three months, during which time she became acquainted with Christian prayers and rituals. At one point, Aszkenazy was joined by an eight-year-old Jewish girl who was later adopted, on Kubacki’s recommendation, by a Christian family. Kubacki, inspired by compassion and religious faith, also financed the upkeep of two young girls whose rescuers were unable to support them. After being provided by Kubacki with a German Kennkarte, Aszkenazy left her hiding place and after numerous ordeals was liberated. After the war, Aszkenazy immigrated to Israel, where she wrote her memoirs, including Kubacki’s role in saving her life, in a book entitled I Wanted to Live.

In her memoir Leokadia Schmidt describes the assistance she and her husband Maniek received from Rev. Edward Świącki, the prewar prefect of secondary schools in Warsaw. Rev. Świącki was himself wanted by the Gestapo for his connections with the Polish underground and was living under an assumed name. He encouraged his cousin Maria Michalski and her family to provide shelter for the fugitives from the Warsaw ghetto, arranged for false identity documents for them, and helped Maniek financially after he was apprehended by the police and had to pay a large bribe for his release. Rev. Świącki placed their young son in the care of the Father Boduen home for foundlings where he was the confessor of the nuns of the Order of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, who operated the institution. When the boy fell ill, Rev. Świącki and his cousin cared for him. (Leokadia Schmidt, *Cudem przeżyliśmy czas zagłady* [Kraków and Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983], pp.54, 160, 203–206, 218, 242–43, 256.)

Another survivor describes the fate of her aunt, Frania Fink, a native of Zamość, who survived in Warsaw leading the life of a beggar. She frequented Catholic churches where she begged, received assistance, and occasionally

shelter. Her identity as a Jew was known or suspected by many. Although occasionally taunted by some young ruffians, she was not betrayed during the two years she lived on the streets on Warsaw. (Joseph Freeman, *Kingdom of Night: The Saga of a Woman's Struggle for Survival* [Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2006], pp.113–15.)

Frania had lived in Zamosc [Zamość], along with her husband and three daughters, when the war broke out in 1939. They managed to endure ghetto conditions with the help of Polish friends who provided food and money. They also gave Frania a false ID, which she could use in case of an emergency.

In October 1942, the Zamosc ghetto was brutally liquidated by the German forces. By then, one daughter had escaped to Russia and another had left the ghetto and was working in a factory on the Aryan side. During the liquidation, my aunt removed her armband with the Star of David and sneaked out of the ghetto to get some food for her daughter and husband. Upon her return she witnessed the liquidation of the Jews of Zamosc. From afar she saw the town's Jewish inhabitants shot by the SS and Ukrainian Auxiliary Police. Horrified, she ran back to her Polish friends crying: "It is time for me to get out of this place. I'm alone. My husband and little girl have been sent away by the Germans with our people. I have nowhere to go. I cannot stay here, endangering the life of your family. May the Lord take care of you. Thank you for helping me. Some day I will return and pay you back for the things which you did for me and my family.

To get out of the city she took care to pass as a gentile. Fortunately, she had [sic] blond hair and blue eyes and spoke fluent Polish without any accent. Leaving nothing to chance, she boarded a train wearing a big cross on her chest and under her arm was a Christian prayer book. Reasoning that it was easier to get lost in a big city, she left Zamosc, for the Polish capital of Warsaw, where she assumed the appearance of a beggar. Warsaw was a crowded metropolis, full of people trying to do their best to persevere. But survival was not easy, even for Poles, as the Germans planned to transform the entire population into slaves working for the Fatherland. As a result, the streets of Warsaw were teeming with paupers just looking for handouts. Many stationed themselves at the entrances of churches, so they could plead with worshipers for food and money.

My aunt was a lost soul in Warsaw, without funds and without shelter. She slept where she could—sometimes invited into homes by strangers, sometimes on the street. It was a very hard and dangerous life, but she had no choice. Ironically, it was the Catholic churches that provided the greatest refuge for my Jewish aunt. She found a priest who gave her permission to solicit on the steps of the sanctuary. He also allowed her to wash her clothes and take care of herself in the rear of the church, but only during the warmer months. In the winter she had to clean her face and hands with snow and frequently went weeks without washing herself. The harsh cold and rains of winter left her sick, and she often had to find refuge by sleeping on the hard wooden benches inside the church. Already familiar with Catholic liturgy, she prayed and sang along with other worshipers, with a prayer book in one hand and a cross in the other. But this, too, was not easy. At times, Polish youths taunted her by calling "to stoy Zydowka" ["to stoj Żydówko"] ("[Stand] You Jew!"), forcing her to flee to another part of the town and finding another church for safe harbor. ...

For two years my aunt had to endure the shame of posing as a beggar woman, living off the magnanimity of church officials and the generosity of strangers. She also lived through the Warsaw uprising in August 1944, when the Germans destroyed the city, killing hundreds of thousands of Poles. She saw how the Nazis eradicated Polish patriots who dreamed of a democratic Poland, while the Red army cynically watched from the other side of the Vistula. The Germans left Warsaw in ruins, liquidating almost all the inhabitants of the city. Those who did not perish were sent either to labor camps in Nazi Germany or to transit camps in Poland. My aunt was arrested and spent the remainder of the war in one such camp in eastern Poland, from where she was liberated by Russian and Polish forces in January 1945.

It was only with great difficulty that she returned to Zamosc after the war in Europe came to an end. Immediately she reconnected with her Polish friend who, true to his word, returned the hardware store that Frania had left with his years earlier. She got back her home, too, but she was alone. It was very difficult for her to go on living, so it was that our finding each other came as a blessing.

Rev. Józef Kamiński, an Orionist priest, found shelter for a young Jewish boy smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto by his mother and left at the Catholic Aid Centre. The boy eventually made his way to an orphanage run by the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived where he survived the war. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.324.)

In the summer of 1942, Jozef Kaminski, a priest, turned to Antonina Kaczorowska, and asked her to look after Marian Marzynski, a five-year-old orphan. After Kaczorowska, a matron at Warsaw's Saint Roch hospital who lived on the hospital premises, agreed the orphan was brought to her apartment. Although she soon discovered that Marian was a Jew

who had been smuggled out of the local ghetto, Kaczorowska decided to look after him. Kaczorowska obtained Aryan papers for Marian, whom she passed off as a relative. Inspired by her religious faith to look after the persecuted, Kaczorowska took good care of Marian without expecting anything in return. Marian stayed with Kaczorowska for eight months, after which a place was found for him in an orphanage run by a convent in the village of Łazniew [Łaźniew], near Warsaw, where he stayed under an assumed identity until April 1945. Throughout his stay at the orphanage, Kaczorowska came to visit him and brought him clothes and candy. After the war, his mother traced him and reclaimed him.

Jan Dobraczyński, an author and prewar member of the nationalist National Democratic Party (“Endecja”), used his offices in the Department of Social Services in the Warsaw municipal corporation to place 500 Jewish children in Catholic convents. He recalled those times in an interview published shortly before his death. (“Traktowałem to jako obowiązek chrześcijański i polski,” *Słowo-Dziennik Katolicki*, Warszawa, no. 67, 1993.)

I was afraid to place [Jewish] children in just any institution; I relied only on convents. I was well known to all of the Sisters and they trusted me. I gathered the Sisters and told them: “Dear Sisters, we will be hiding Jewish children. If a child is sent with my signature, that will be an indication that the child is Jewish, and you will have to know how to act on this.” I also told them that we would not be sending more children to any institution than we agreed to ...

... our social workers searched for [Jewish] children. Sometimes they were found on the street, or in some primitive hiding place. Once we were informed that two boys were hidden in a cubbyhole in [the suburb of] Praga. One of them was running a high fever and it was imperative to move them. A nun took the sick boy on a streetcar and he started to scream out something in Yiddish. The driver was astute enough to sense the danger and yelled out: “This streetcar is going to the depot. Everyone out.” At the same time he signalled to the nun that she and the boy should remain.

Each of the children was taken for a few days to the home of a social worker. There they were taught their new names and prayers, and how to make the sign of the cross. The children were after all being taken to Catholic institutions and couldn’t differ outwardly from the Polish orphans residing there.

All but one of the children survived the war. (The one boy who didn’t survive was killed by Ukrainians in Turkowice, where he was sheltered in a convent.) ... a few of the children remained Christians, but the rest reverted to the faith of their forefathers.

The Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived ran a number of institutions where Jews were sheltered throughout Poland: Brzeżany, Chomotów, Częstochowa, Grodzisko, Łaźniew, Łódź, Lublin, Miechów, Piotrków Trybunalski, Rzepińce, Szynwald, Tarnów, and Turkowice. At the orphanage in the village of Turkowice near Hrubieszów, 33 Jewish children were saved. The rescue involved all of the convent’s 22 nuns. Although the Jewish children were not baptized, they all had false baptismal certificates and were permitted to receive the sacraments. The nuns were assisted by their chaplain, Rev. Stanisław Bajko, a Jesuit, and by a whole network of people outside the convent, including a district social services inspector. No one was betrayed. The mother superior of the convent, Aniela Polechajłło (Sister Stanisława), and three of the sisters—Antonina Manaszcuk (Sister Irena), Józefa Romansewicz (Sister Hermana), and Bronisława Galus (Sister Róża)—have been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, p.629.)

The Turkowice convent in Hrubieszów [Hrubieszów] county, Lublin district, was one of the largest children’s convents in Poland, known for having provided asylum for Jewish children during the occupation. Some arrived in the convent from the immediate surroundings, but most were sent there from distant Warsaw by Zegota [Żegota]. The efforts to save children were spearheaded by the mother superior of the convent, Aniela Polechajłło [Polechajłło], known as Sister Stanisława. She collaborated with Jan Dobraczyński [Dobraczyński], the head of the department for abandoned children in Warsaw’s City Hall and an active Zegota [Żegota] member. Polechajłło was an educational role model and inspired her students with her own spirit of tolerance. Helped by the nuns Antonina Manaszcuk (Sister Irena) and Józefa [Józefa] Romansewicz (Sister Hermana), she received the Jewish children warmly and never forced any to accept the Catholic religion. The three nuns worked to save Jewish children in full cognizance of the danger they had taken upon themselves. A number of German soldiers were always stationed in the convent, some of whom knew that Jewish children were hiding there but were willing to turn a blind eye because of their sympathy for the nuns. Zegota chose to send children of particularly Jewish appearance there because of the convent’s remote location in a forest far from any main roads. Whenever Zegota activists came across children difficult to hide because of their appearance, they would inform the Turkowice convent and the nuns Romansewicz and Manaszcuk would set out on the long journey to Warsaw to rescue

them. All the boys and girls brought to the Turkowice convent were saved and not a single case of a Jewish child being denounced or handed over to the German authorities is known. Those saved by the three nuns have very fond memories of them and the convent—of how they cared for them with kind devotion and without discrimination, motivated only by their conscious and religious faith.

Katarzyna Meloch, born in 1932, was one of many Jewish children who was accepted by the nuns. Her account is recorded in Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, at pages 114–15.

I was a Jewish child, saved in an institution for children operated by nuns, Servant Sisters of the Most Holy Virgin Mary (headquartered in Stara Wieś). I am one of a large group of Jewish children saved in Turkowice in the Zamość area. “Jolanta” (Irena Sendler, the head of Żegota’s department for the care of children) reports that thirty-two Jewish children found shelter in Turkowice. One of the nuns, decorated posthumously, Sister Hermana (secular name Józefa Romansewicz), writes in her yet-unpublished memoirs about nineteen children who were hidden in the institution.

Three nuns from Turkowice (from a religious staff of approximately twenty-two persons) have already been awarded Yad Vashem medals, but rescuing us Jewish children was the joint effort of the entire religious staff. When I write and speak of the collective rescue deeds, I have in mind not just “our” nuns. In the Social Service Department of the municipal administration of Warsaw, operations were conducted, clandestinely, to place Jewish children in homes operated by religious orders. The writer Jan Dobraczyński was the initiator of this activity. He was assisted by coworkers Irena Sendler, Jadwiga Piotrowska and also by my wartime Aryan guardian, Jadwiga Deneka. The “collective enterprise” would have been impossible without the consent of Inspector Saturnin Jarmulski. He knew (Sister Superior had no secrets from him) that Jewish children were located in the Turkowice institution. He demanded just one thing, that we all have our Aryan documents in good order.

I cannot fail to mention Father Stanisław Bajko. He saw to it that our identity was corroborated by church practices. ...

For me, the most important of these persons was and is Sister Irena (Antonina Manaszczyk). Two years ago, she received, in person, a medal at Yad Vashem. ... Sister Irena took us, girls and boys, by a dangerous route from Warsaw to our place of destination. On a daily basis, she looked after several Jewish girls. In the task of rescuing us, she was the right hand of Mother Superior.

Michał Głowiński’s account is also recorded in Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, at pages 56–70, and in his autobiography *The Black Seasons* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005). Michał Głowiński, born in 1934, was transferred to Turkowice in February 1944, after staying briefly with the Felician Sisters in Otwock and the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Pleszew) in Czersk.

Rev. Tadeusz Zimiński cared for 8-year-old Ludwik Brylant, from a family of converts, for several weeks in suburban Annopol, after he escaped from the Warsaw ghetto toward the end of 1941. An unknown Pole protected the young boy when he jumped onto a streetcar as it left the ghetto. He then made his way to family friends by the name of Dąbrowski in the Old Town, and was transferred to Rev. Zimiński, who placed him in an emergency shelter in Warsaw. He was among several children who were taken, just before Christmas 1941, to the convent of the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived in Turkowice where he survived the war. (Testimony of Ludwik Brylant in Katarzyna Meloch and Halina Szostkiewicz, eds., *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, volume 3 [Warsaw: Midrasz and Stowarzyszenie “Dzieci Holocaustu” w Polsce, 2008], pp.174–77.)

The aforementioned Irena Sendler, who worked with Żegota, recalled the obstacles she had to overcome in rescuing Jewish children. These children were often placed in Catholic convents. (Marek Halter, *Stories of Deliverance: Speaking with Men and Women Who Rescued Jews from the Holocaust* [Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1997], pp.9–11.)

“Within the framework of our social duties, my friend Eva worked with the leaders of the Jewish community, who gave us the addresses of needy families, and I went there. Imagine: I went to homes of these people who had never seen me before, and announced that I could save their child. All of them asked the same question: could I guarantee that their son or daughter would survive? But there were no guarantees. I wasn’t even sure of getting out of the Ghetto alive. Certain parents were suspicious, and refused to let their child go. I would go back the next day in the hope of convincing them, and sometimes their flat was in ruins. The Nazis set it on fire just for the pleasure of seeing Jews burn. But more often they gave me their child. The father, the mother, and the grandparents would be crying, and I would lead the little one away.

What a tragedy, each time! The children, separated from their mothers, sobbed ceaselessly all along the road, and we were crying as well. To avoid alerting the Germans with their cries, our driver had found a solution: he brought a fierce dog in the ambulance. As the guards approached we made him walk and his barking covered the children's cries...

"With some friends, I arranged for four social assistance centers, where they could stay as long as necessary—days, weeks, whole months—to overcome the shock into which the situation had plunged them. We even had to teach them how to laugh again. Only then could we place them. Sometimes in welcoming families, but more often in convents, with the complicity of Mothers Superior. No one ever refused to take a child from me. I placed them with Sister Niepokalanski [niepokalanki—Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary], at the Visiting Sisters of Christ [?], and at the convent at Plody [Pludy, run by the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary]. We also had a house at 96 Lesno [Leszno] where we hid some of the mothers who had escaped from the Ghetto. It took a lot of money to sustain it all. Around 1942, the Germans started to control us more strictly, and we couldn't use social aid funds any more. Happily, in the autumn of that same year, Żegota [Żegota] was formed ... Żegota had access to funds supplied by the Polish government in exile in London."

Irena Sendler's story has been dramatized recently in a play, *Life in a Jar*, and a film, *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler*, which is based on Anna Mieszkowska's biography *Matka dzieci Holocaustu: Historia Ireny Sendlerowej* [Mother of the Children of the Holocaust: The Irena Sendler] (Warsaw: Muza, 2004).

Jadwiga Piotrowska, who cooperated with the aforementioned Jan Dobraczyński, devoted her life to the welfare of her Jewish charges and helped to place many Jewish children to convents. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, at pages 611–12.)

Jadwiga Piotrowska was a member of a devout Catholic family. During the occupation, Piotrowska lived with her parents in Warsaw and worked in the social services department at City Hall. Piotrowska, who faithfully assisted Jan Dobraczyński [Dobraczyński], who was responsible for street children in the same department, happened to find herself in the Warsaw ghetto in her professional capacity, where she witnessed the hardships of the Jewish children firsthand. In the framework of her work, Piotrowska made contact in the ghetto with people who cared for children, including Janusz Korczak, whom she considered, as she put it, "a saint, although he was not a Christian." In time, Piotrowska joined Żegota [Żegota] and helped smuggle children out of the ghetto and save them on the Aryan side of the city. Piotrowska was one [of] Żegota's most active members and personally cared for many Jews who came over to the Aryan side without any address or money. She provided them with places to hide and financial support. Her home served as a transit station for Jews, both adults and children, and they found respite there from the terrible anxiety and fear they endured. She helped prepare them for their life on the Aryan side of the city. She personally took a number of Jewish children to hide with Polish families and in convents. Among those she saved were Pola and Mieczysław [Mieczysław] Monar, their two children, their niece, Halina Złotnicka [Złotnicka], Josek Buschbaum, a youth who stayed in her home from 1943 to 1946 (who she considered adopting), the Rapaczynski [Rapaczyński] family, the girls Maria and Joanna Majerczyk, and others. Piotrowska considered the help she extended to Jews her moral duty and the saving of their lives both a patriotic and a religious calling.

Another participant in this rescue network was Magdalena Grodzka-Guzkowska (née Rusinek), a teenager when she joined the Polish underground, who collected children from the Warsaw ghetto, cared for them, and took them to their places of refuge with Polish families or in convents. ("Ceremony Honoring Magdalena Grodzka-Guzkowska from Poland as Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem," Internet: <http://www1.yadvashem.org.il/about_yad/what_new/data_whats_new/grodzka.html>.)

Magdalena Grodzka-Guzkowska (née Rusinek) was 15 years old when she joined the Polish Underground against the Germans. In 1943, she met Jadwiga Piotrowska, later recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations, and joined her in rescuing Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto. Magdalena collected the children, cared for them and escorted them to their places of refuge with Polish families or in convents. She displayed enormous dedication and love, although she was placing her own life at serious risk. Before bringing the children to their hiding places, she taught them Christian customs in an effort to disguise their Jewish identity.

One such rescue activity saw Magdalena save the life of a six-year-old Jewish boy called Adas [Adaś], who had been severely injured by local thugs. Magdalena took the boy for medical care at the hospital, and then moved him to a hiding place in a monastery. She also saved the life of five-year-old Włodzio [Włodzio or Włodzimierz] Berg. In spring 1943 his

parents managed to smuggle him out of the ghetto and bring him to an elderly couple. Someone denounced the family, and a new place had to be found for the child. Magdalena brought him to a safe place. She brought him food every day, as well as colors with which to draw pictures. Eventually he was brought to a convent [of the Daughters of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary] in Otwock. Włodzio Berg, now called William Donat, survived the Holocaust and requested that Yad Vashem recognize his rescuer as Righteous Among the Nations.

Five Jewish boys were sheltered in the orphanage for boys run by the Daughters of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Otwock near Warsaw. According to one Jew, who expressed his thanks to the director “for her Christian and humanitarian care of the children,” the institution was “poverty stricken” and had to rely on outside donations to make ends meet. Some additional Jewish children were assisted in the children’s home after the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto.²³

Another vital member of this network who worked closely with Catholic Church and lay institutions to rescue Jews was the journalist Irena Schultz. During the occupation she worked in the social affairs department of the Warsaw municipality together with Jan Dobraczyński, Irena Sendler and Jadwiga Piotrowska. (“Schultz, Irena,” Internet: <<http://www.savingjews.org/righteous/sv.htm>>.)

Irena Schultz worked already before the war in the Social Welfare Department of Warsaw. This Department also cared for poor Jews, providing ca. 3,000 of them with inexpensive meals, medicine, clothing and money. After the closing of the ghetto, 90% of Jews found themselves walled in it. Irena Sendler procured for herself and for Irena Schultz a work permit of the sanitary task group for fighting infectious diseases. This enabled them to enter the ghetto freely, beginning in January 1943. They made contact with the organization CENTOS, a relief organization for Jewish children, and with Ewa Reichtman. They also renewed old contacts with their charges and made new ones. The two, Irena Schultz especially, entered the ghetto sometimes two and three times daily, bringing with them food, clothing, medicine and money. They delivered ca. 1,000 vaccines against typhoid fever. Other workers of the sanitary task group secretly brought a further 6,000 vaccines. Irena specialized in getting Jewish children out of the ghetto, either by the underground corridors of the court building on Leszno Street, or through the tram depot in Muranów. In the court building, the janitors received a small reward, “because of the risk.” Those children were placed with Polish families who received, if needed, a certain amount of money for their expenses from Żegota; others were placed in the Boduen orphanage, directed by Dr. Maria Propokowicz-Wierzbowska and operated by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. To make it impossible to place in it Jewish children, Germans made a rule that the children could be placed there only with police approval and escort. Once, when a young Jewish mother wishing to go for work in Germany appeared with a newborn baby, the baby was presented at the police post as the child of the janitor, whose wife often left him to go to the country. And so the baby, called Feliks, was accepted in the orphanage. On another occasion, Irena Schultz extricated from a manhole a small Jewish girl who had a note pinned to her garment giving her age only. The girl was in such lamentable state that nobody would take her in and it was necessary to put her in the Boduen orphanage. The little girl had fair hair and blue eyes, so nobody suspected that she was Jewish. At the police station Irena was suspected of being an unnatural mother who brought her daughter to such a terrible state and tried in this way to get rid of her. Fortunately in that orphanage there were some people to whom the truth could be told. The orphanage advised the police that it found the mother of the girl on their own and so Irena was free of the suspicion of abusing her child. In spite of those difficulties, the Boduen orphanage accepted ca. 200 Jewish children, part of the several hundreds already there. A Blue policeman warned one of its doctors, Dr. Helena Słomczyńska, “You are accepting too many children, it is not good.” Irena saved many people especially from the medical world. In 1942 she went to Lwów and obtained from priest [Władysław] Pokiziak [of St. Nicholas parish] many birth certificate forms, supposedly from a church that had burnt down.²⁴ They served later as the basis to get “Kennkarten” (German identity cards). Irena Sendler said that “what was impossible for others, Irena Schultz always achieved with success.”

²³ The children were not required to undergo baptism despite the claim levelled by one of them, Włodzimierz Berg, now William Donat, born in 1938, who declared his desire to be baptized only *after* the Germans had left that area and was thus no longer in imminent danger. See *Żeńskie zgromadzenia zakonne w Polsce 1939–1947*, vol. 6 (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1991), pp.226–27; Sylwia Szymańska, *Ludność żydowska w Otwocku podczas Drugiej wojny światowej* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2002), p.85; Alexander Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom: A Memoir* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1965), pp.341–54; Emily Taitz, ed., *Holocaust Survivors: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 2007), vol. 1, pp.96–97.

²⁴ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.478.

See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, at page 700, which provides the following additional information:

Early in the occupation, Schultz, together with Irena Sendler, began helping Jews in the ghetto by providing them with medicine, money, and clothing and was one of the first members of Żegota [Żegota]. Schultz's job involved frequent visits to the ghetto, occasions she exploited to cooperate with CENTOS, a relief organization for Jewish children. On the eve of the ghetto's liquidation, Schultz, as a member of Żegota, help smuggle children out of the ghetto to the Aryan side of the city. Schultz became an expert in the field, so much so that her co-workers later testified that no one could smuggle children out of the ghetto as successfully as she. Schultz also let her home be used as a transit point and temporary shelter for Jewish fugitives until they found permanent shelter. At her own initiative, Schultz provided a number of Jewish intellectuals and doctors with forged documents and found them hiding places. Among those who owed her their lives were Helena Witwicka and her daughter, Mira Pazynska [Pażyńska], and Aleksander Dubieński [Dubieński] and his sister, Gizela Gebert.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary rescued more than 500 Jewish children and at least 150 adult Jews, and provided temporary assistance to many other Jews, in their homes and orphanages throughout Poland: Anin, Białoleka, Brwinów, Brzezinki, Izabelin, Kołomyja, Kostowiec, Krasnystaw, Łomna, Lwów, Międzylesie, Mirzec, Mszana Dolna, Nieborów, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Ostrówek, Pludy, Pustelnik, Podhajce, Sambor, Soplicowo, Turka, Warsaw, and Wola Gołkowska. Among the sisters who stand out for their role in this vast rescue mission are: Mother Matylda Getter, the provincial superior in Warsaw, the only Sister decorated by Yad Vashem; Mother Ludwika Lis (Lisówna), the superior general, and Mother Janina Wirball, the vicar general in Lwów; Sister Apolonia Sawicka, the superior in Anin; Sister Bernarda Lemańska in Izabelin; Sister Tekla (Anna) Budnowska in Łomna; Sister Aniela Stawowiak in Pludy; Sister Helena Dobiecka in Pustelnik; Sister Celina Kędzierska in Sambor; and Sisters Olga Schwarc and Teresa Stępówna in Warsaw. Various nuns such as Sisters Janina Kruszewska, Apolonia Lorenc and Stefania Miałkiewicz were charged with transporting Jewish children from one institution to another. Baptismal certificates for the Jewish charges were obtained from various Warsaw parishes: St. Barbara, St. Florian, Holy Cross, St. Adalbert, St. James and All Saints, as well as from parishes outside Warsaw, such as St. Anthony and St. Mary Magdalene in Lwów. Monsignor Marcelli Godlewski and Rev. Zygmunt Kaczyński were particularly helpful in this endeavour. Monsignor Godlewski brought about twenty Jewish boys out of the Warsaw ghetto and placed them in the orphanage in Anin. (Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," 6 Parts, *Nasz Dziennik*, March 8–9, March 12, March 15–16, March 19, March 26, April 4, 2008.) The following accounts are found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 234; Part 2, at pages 663–64, 702, 728, and 935–36.

[1] Matylda Getter (Mother Matylda) was head of the Franciscan order "Mary's Family" ... in the Warsaw district. In her capacity as Mother Superior, Matylda ran a number of children's homes and orphanages in the locality, where she hid many Jewish children during the occupation. In 1942–1943, Mother Matylda contacted the workers of Centos, an organization which arranged care for orphans and abandoned Jewish children in the Warsaw ghetto. Many of these children, after being smuggled out of the ghetto, were sent directly to Matylda's institutions. Although we do not know exactly how many Jewish children were saved by the institutions of "Mary's Family," we do know that about 40 Jewish girls—including Wanda Rozenbaum, Margareta Frydman [later Marguerite Acher], and Chana Zajtman—found refuge in the Pludy [Pludy] branch alone. All 40 survived. [Chana Zajtman first stayed for two months in a rest home run by the nuns, where all the residents were Jewish, before being moved to Pludy.] Mother Matylda was fond of saying that it was her duty to save those in trouble. Spurred by her religious faith, she never demanded payment for her services, although some parents, and a few relatives, paid for their children's upkeep. Despite the fact that most of the Jewish children were baptized while in the institutions, they all returned to Judaism after the liberation.

[2] Professor Stanisław [Stanisław] Popowski, a physician, was a well-known expert in children's diseases. During the occupation, he was the head of the children's municipal hospital in Warsaw and active in an underground organization of democratic and socialist doctors who helped save Jews who fled from the ghetto to the Aryan side of the city. In saving Jewish children, Popowski collaborated with Matylda Getter, the mother superior of a Franciscan convent in the area. ... Bianka Perlmutter, the daughter of a family of physicians [Arnold and Stefania Perlmutter] who had been friendly with the

Popowski family, ... was smuggled out of the ghetto during the large-scale deportation in the summer of 1942 and the Popowskis hid her in their home, where she was treated with warm devotion as if she were a member of the family. After a few months, Aryan papers were arranged for her and she was taken to the orphanage [on 53 Hoża Street] run by the Franciscan sisters, where she remained until the liberation.

[3] After the establishment of Zegota [Żegota], Irena Sendler, who lived in Warsaw, became one of its main activists. Her job in the Warsaw Municipality's social affairs department made it easier for her to carry out her clandestine assignments. In September 1943, Sendler was appointed director of Zegota's Department for the Care of Jewish Children. Sendler, whose underground name was Jolanta, exploited her contacts with orphanages and institutes for abandoned children, to send Jewish children there. Many of the children were sent to the Rodzina Marii (Family of Mary) Orphanage [on Hoża Street] in Warsaw and to religious institutions run by nuns in nearby Chomotow [Chomotów outside Warsaw] and in Turkowice near Lublin [the latter were run by the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived]. In late 1943, Sendler was arrested and sentenced to death, but underground activists managed to bribe officials to release her. After her release, even though she knew that the authorities were keeping an eye on her, Sendler continued her underground activities. The exact number of children saved by Sendler is unknown.

[4] The occupation did not curtail the friendship between Władysław Smólski [Władysław Smólski], a Polish author and playwright, and his many Jewish writer friends. On the contrary, he maintained contact with them and tried to help them to the best of his ability. As a member of Zegota [Żegota] in Warsaw, he provided a number of Jews with forged documents, found them hiding places on the Aryan side of the city, and offered them financial assistance. Among the Jews he helped were Bronisław [Bronisław] Elkana Anlen, Tadeusz Reinberg, Wanda Hac, Janina Reicher, Janina Wierzbicka, and Natalia Zwierzowa. Smólski's youngest charge was Jolanta Zabarnik (later Nowakowska), the daughter of friends of his, who was five when she first arrived. At first, Smólski hid her in his home and with relatives, until he found her a safer place in a convent in Chomotow [Chomotów—actually, with the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Pludy²⁵], near Warsaw.

[5] When the war broke out, Aleksander Zelwerowicz, a well-known Polish actor, was living in Warsaw with his daughter, Helena (later Orchon). At the end of August 1942, one of Helena's prewar friends, Helena Caspari, came to her with her 11-year-old daughter, Hania. They had managed to flee the ghetto and were looking for shelter. The Zelwerowicz's apartment was already serving as a hiding place for Miriam Nudel (Later Caspari). Nevertheless, Helena and her daughter were invited to stay with them for a few weeks and then after that with some friends of the Zelwerowicz's. All the while, Helena was looking for a permanent hiding place for the Jews. In the end, it was possible to hide them in a convent located in Izabelin, near Warsaw, where they were able to wait out the rest of the war. Miriam stayed with Helena—who provided for all her needs—until Warsaw was evacuated after the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising in October 1944. She moved in with Helena's father, Aleksander, who was a delegate of the Central Relief Council [RGO] in Sochaczew at that time. ... After the war, Helena and Hania Caspari, as well as Miriam Nudel, left for Israel.

Among the Jewish children sheltered at the convent on Hoża Street in Warsaw were Bianka Perlmutter (now Bianca Lerner), who spent a year and a half there, and the daughter of a lawyer from Poznań named Hofnung, who was brought there by the son of Hofnung's friend Pesakh Bergman, with whom he had left his child in Warsaw. (Bianca Lerner, "Humanity in the Midst of Death," in Peter Tarjan, ed., *Children Who Survived the Final Solution* [New York: iUniverse, 2004], pp. 212–18; Eugene Bergman, *Survival Artist: A Memoir of the Holocaust* [Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2009], p. 107.)

Whenever a Gestapo raid on one of the orphanages was believed imminent, Mother Matylda arranged to have children who looked too obviously Jewish taken to temporary shelter elsewhere. When there was not enough time to do this, those particularly Jewish-looking children would have their heads or faces bandaged as if they had been injured. The author Władysław Smólski, who took part in the rescue activities, described the Sisters' zeal and dedication. (Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, pp.190–91.)

It was only after the Germans had left that I learned the real number of Jewish children concealed in the orphanage at Pludy. It was revealed that of the 160 girls, about 40 were Jewish. The same Franciscan Sisters also maintained another home at Pludy, with 120 boys. The percentage of Jewish children harboured there was somewhat lower but this was more

²⁵ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.496.

than offset by the incomparably greater risk involved in hiding boys. [Jewish boys were circumcised, Christian boys were not.] ...

The Congregation of Sisters of the Family of Mary in Poland was divided administratively into three provinces. Since Warsaw province was running more than 20 orphanages, and an identical attitude towards Jews prevailed in all of them due to the influence of Matylda Getter, active in the provincial authorities, it may be safely stated that this province alone kept several hundred Jewish children through the war.

The moral attitude of the nuns was all the more admirable as their aim was not to win new converts but to save human lives. Baptism was seldom administered and then solely at the request of a few of the older children, after long catechetical preparation. I remember Sister Stefania's attitude towards these matters: how avid she was in rescue work, how eagerly she accepted every little Jew into the institution.

Some of the children had a very markedly Jewish appearance; those were not taken out for walks and, in case of an inspection by German authorities—of which the head of the village warned the sisters—those children were put in some hiding places or hidden in private homes, or else taken to the nearby home of Father [Marceli] Godlewski, former rector of the Roman Catholic parish in the ghetto who displayed truly incredible energy in aiding the Jews. The transport of children from one place to another was the worst problem—and such situations also occurred. In such cases, the sisters would bandage their heads to conceal a part of the face and make Semitic features less conspicuous. To protect their wards, the brave sisters resorted to all kinds of ruses and most hazardous undertakings!

Mother Matylda Getter also assisted adults and was instrumental in finding safe hiding places for Jews outside the convent, as illustrated by the following documented cases. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, pp.562, 660.)

[1] In early 1943, the commandant of the forced labor camp near Lwow [Lwów] informed the Jewish prisoners that they would soon be liquidated. Irena and Lazar Engelberg, prisoners in the camp, managed to escape, going to Warsaw in the hope of finding refuge there. Matylda Getter, a nun, found them a place to hide on the Szeligi estate, located near Warsaw. Ignoring the Engelbergs' obvious Jewish appearance and the danger to his life, the manager of the estate, Count Władysław [Władysław] Olizar, and his wife, Jadwiga, and Stanisław [Stanisław] and Aleksandra Zaryn [Żaryn] agreed to give Irena a job working on the farm and to find shelter for her husband, Lazar, on one of the neighboring farms. The Olizars and Zaryns soon realized that the work in the fields was too difficult for Irena and they hired her to care for Zaryns' children instead. ... Throughout the entire time that Irena remained under the care of the Olizars and Zaryns, they treated her warmly, guarding her personal safety and caring for her every need. ... The Engelbergs remained in hiding until the liberation of the area in January 1945 ...

[2] The Radziwills [Radziwiłł], scions of an aristocratic family in Poland, had Jewish friends, grew up in an atmosphere of tolerance toward Jews. During the occupation, their daughter, Izabella, was active in the RGO [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, a social welfare agency], and in the Red Cross and helped the poor and Polish prisoners of war who had been wounded in battle. One day in 1942, Matylda Getter, head of the Franciscan order in the Warsaw area, approached her with a request to look after 12 girls, including three Jews. Radziwiłł agreed and accommodated the girls, together with the nuns who looked after them, in a community center on a family estate in Nieborów [Nieborów] in the county of Łowicz [Łowicz], Łódź [Łódź] district, where she kept them at her own expense. One day, when Radziwiłł was warned that the identity of one of the girls had been discovered, she herself accompanied the girl to Getter in Warsaw, who hid her from her pursuers. After the Warsaw Uprising, Radziwiłł also hid Jerzy Einhorn and Nusbaum-Hilarowicz and his wife and daughter in her mansion. Even when German soldiers were billeted in Radziwiłł's mansion in Nieborów, Radziwiłł did all she could to help those who reached it, including Jewish refugees.

Two of the many Jewish children sheltered by the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Płudy outside Warsaw were Marguerite Acher (then Małgorzata or Margareta Frydman) and her sister, Irena. On September 9, 1942, the two young girls were taken from the Warsaw ghetto by a friend of their mother to see Mother Matylda Getter, who admitted them despite their pronounced Semitic looks. The following day, Sister Aniela Stawowiak took them to Płudy where she was the superior of a home which sheltered at least forty Jewish girls and ten adults. A small amount of money was paid for the upkeep of the two girls; first by friends, then by their mother, who fled from the ghetto in February 1943. The payments stopped when the mother was taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp in August 1944, but the two girls stayed on in the convent until May 1945, when their father returned to Poland from Hungary and their mother from Germany. (Halter, *Stories of Deliverance*, pp.16–17,

But little Margaret, only ten years old, posed a problem: it is difficult for a Polish family to shelter her temporarily, let alone hide her permanently. It is that she has, to use the correct words, a bad face. ... a Semitic face, immediately recognizable. ...

“To go out of the ghetto without risk of immediately being identified as a Jew, I would have to cover up with a hat along with a huge fur collar to disguise my hair and my nose. I could hide for a time at the house of the niece of the attorney general [Wacław Szyszkowski], my parents’ friend. ... I stayed there two or three weeks. ... Then my sister and I were taken into a convent near Warsaw, at Plody [Pludy]: the Convent of the Sisters of the Family of The Virgin Mary. ... At Plody, about forty Jewish children were already hidden. They were brought by different channels, through Irena Sendler’s network. But certain families came with their children. Sister Ludovica [Ludwika] told you: parents never showed themselves as such; they preferred to say they were the child’s aunt or uncle, and that they were here to give them to the convent. They gave the name of the child, then left quickly, taking cover along the way. The Sisters had to change the names and keep absolute secrecy. Every Jewish child knew that they were Jewish but did not know which others were Jews, in the community of several hundred ‘orphans,’ Jews and non-Jews. ...

“One day, a blue [i.e. a Polish policeman] came to the convent. He spoke to the Mother Superior and said to her: ‘I know you are hiding Jewish children and demand that you denounce them.’ The Mother Superior answered him: ‘Why don’t you do it yourself?’ Replied the blue: ‘No, I can’t. I am a Catholic, I was baptized here. I don’t want to go to Hell...’ And the Mother Superior retorted: ‘Why would you want me to go to Hell in your place?’ Ah well, that policeman never dared to denounce the convent to the Germans!” ...

For sister Ludovica, who speaks with simplicity, everything came, she said, from the interior:

“I was very happy that these children were able to survive, that they were able to get away. It gives me great satisfaction, yes ... But, what I did was from the heart. The adults, in principle, could shift for themselves—children, no. So, all the children who came here were accepted. We never knew how it would all finish. We did all we could so that they could survive, everything it was possible to do ... It was a heart’s demand, a cry from inside.”

She explained how these things had been handled in the convent during the war: each Sister was responsible for a small group of children; she herself was in charge of thirty-five little Jewish girls. She told me: “today, some of them are in America, others in Israel, and others still in France. Regularly, one or another comes to see me. Besides that, I have many of their visiting cards. ... they were saved from death, and now they have children, and some of them are grandmothers!”

...

“All of them were collected [after the war] by their relatives, or friends, who knew they were here, hidden in the convent. Only one, whom nobody reclaimed, remained. Then someone came to take her to Palestine. ...

I ask Sister Ludovica: “I have been told that the Nazis came three times to inspect the convent?”

“They only saw Christian children,” she chuckled. “You see the little chapel in the grounds? We took the children there to pray. We put the little Jewish girls furthest from the door, right up by the crucifix, close to Jesus: like that when the Germans came, they could only see blond heads.”

(See also the memoir: Małgorzata-Maria Acher, *Niewłaściwa twarz: Wspomnienia ocalałej z warszawskiego getta* [Częstochowa: Święty Paweł, 2001].) Sister Ludwika described to Władysław Smólski in more detail the menacing visits paid to the orphanage by the Germans, and the help rendered by local Poles to protect the Sisters and their charges. Although there were 120–140 children in the institution, lay staff and visitors from outside, no one betrayed the Jews. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.349–51.)

‘And the Germans also came?’

‘Oh, lots of times! It was simply a divine miracle that they did not find anything. People of good will helped a lot, of course. The head of the village always warned us. We then placed the children with a more telling appearance at private homes or with Father [Marceli] Godlewski [of All Saints parish in Warsaw], who lived nearby. As we were taking them along, we would bandage the heads or faces of some to cover up their Semitic features.’

‘So in that way had you to conceal their suspicious appearances?’

‘Of course. Those above all sought refuge in the convent. And surely, we could not drive them away, could we? In my group of twenty girls at least one in two attracted attention by her appearance. ...

When the front drew nearer in the concluding months, already after the [Warsaw] uprising, Germans began bursting into the orphanage. One Gestapo officer was an especially frequent visitor. He roared like mad, stamped his boots and threatened us with death if he ever found a Jew in the institution. My Lord, if he only knew the actual facts, he would have to have us shot fifty times.’

'But he did not find any one?'

'Somehow the Lord had mercy upon us. But were those days terrible! Artillery shells kept exploding around the orphanage.'

'I do not fear bombs myself too much. And since there was indescribable filth and odour in the cellar where many people from Pludy took shelter with us, I kept my group of girls, about twenty Jews and a few Christians among them, in the corridor next to our dormitory. That was on the ground floor. The rabid Gestapo man burst in there many a time. Luckily enough, the Germans could never tell Semitic features from others. And then, too, the corridor was in semi-darkness.'

'But still, ... how often did he come?'

'In the concluding weeks he came nearly every day. Only he seemed to be in constant hurry then. One Sister, who had been resettled from the Poznań province and had a perfect command of German, always tried to outtalk him while we were hurriedly hiding those children whose appearance seemed most telling away. We were frightened. Our Mother Superior was most frightened of all because she was responsible above all others. Being an elderly person, critically ill with cancer, she seemed nearing a collapse. With adults we had even more trouble than with the children. During searches we hid one Jewish family inside an old dry well which stood in our garden. They descended a ladder and we put a heavy lid on the top. Somehow or other, it all went on without a single bad break. But no, there was one, caused by nervousness. But let me relate that story from the beginning.'

'Even at the beginning of 1943 Mother Getter brought a young woman with a ten-year-old daughter to Pludy. She gave them to me for safekeeping. Both looked all right and when the mother peroxided her hair you could not tell she was Jewish. But she had one weakness: she took fright easily. And small wonder it was, after all—just try to live so many years in constant danger! She was good-looking and bright, and knew a few languages. She taught English to our girls. She spent nights in the pavilion set aside for teachers but in daytime she came to me, to my group. She would say she felt safest with us. Well, we had a very narrow escape with Rena (that was her first name) in the last month of the occupation when once that rabid Gestapoman burst into the orphanage. He came just as we were sitting with the girls in the corridor. In all likelihood, he would not have done her any harm as a teacher. But her nerves let her down. She fled to the girls' dormitory where my bed stood behind a screen. All of a sudden I heard the officer roar. I jumped into the dorm and what did I see? The Gestapoman had glanced behind the screen and saw Rena there. She was there all right, covered with my quilt, a bonnet on her head. He turned to me and asked—I know some German—is she was a nun. Naturally I answered yes. Then he pulled the quilt and saw Rena's lay dress.'

'That was a moment in my life! I thought both of us were already done for. He called me a liar, pulled poor Rena by the hair and out into the yard where he had already rounded up several persons caught in Pludy and environs. When I ceased trembling I felt enormous pity for Rena even though she had let us down in such a foolish manner. I did not know one thing, though: did he take her on the assumption that she was Jewish or because she seemed to him politically suspected? But anyway, what could I do? I only prayed. ... A few minutes went by and ... I could not believe my eyes. Rena, safe and sound, reappeared in the corridor. Just imagine, there was such chaos that she actually slipped off and came back into the building. I do not now realize how it could all come off: it seemed part of a nightmare. And then, artillery shells started coming down again, too. It was a miracle that she escaped death. Forthwith I gave her a frock which, from that moment on, she never failed to put on whenever the rabid Gestapo man put his foot in the orphanage.'

Moving from one convent to another was a fairly frequent occurrence. After leaving the Warsaw ghetto in the early part of 1943, Janina Dawidowicz (later David), then 13 years old, assumed the identity of Danuta Teresa Markowska. She was cared for by the Sisters of the Family of Mary in Pludy outside of Warsaw from July 1943 to January 1944, and afterwards in an orphanage on Wolność Street, near the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto. Janina describes her experiences in those two convents in her memoir *A Touch of Earth*. She was treated well and even lovingly by the nuns, as well as by the priests who paid visits to the convent, including Father Cezary, a Franciscan. During the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 the orphanage was evacuated to Kostowiec, outside Warsaw and its residents took refuge in another convent there. Numerous nuns and priests cared for Janina Dawidowicz and other Jewish girls until after the Soviet entry in early 1945. (Janina David, *A Touch of Earth: A Wartime Childhood* [London: Hutchinson & Co., 1966; New York: Orion Press, 1966], *passim*, especially pp.22, 25, 27, 75–78, 94–95, 97, 99, 123, 161, 162, 185; Janina David, *A Square of Sky: Memoirs of Wartime Childhood* [London: Eland, 1992], *passim*.)

Sister Stanisława Kaniewska described the conditions at the “Zosinek” orphanage, also operated by the Sisters of the Family of Mary, in Międzyzlesie near Warsaw. (“Getter, Matylda, Mother,” Internet: <<http://www.savingjews.org/righteous/gv.htm>>, based on Władysław Smólski, *Za to groziła śmierć: Polacy z*

pomocą w czasie okupacji [Warsaw: Pax, 1981], pp.300–308.)

The orphanage counted ca. 70 children, of which 10 were Jewish. One of them was a nine-year-old girl who was so terrified. One of them was a nine-year-old girl who was so terrified by the sight of Germans that her fright immediately attracted their attention when some of them appeared at the orphanage and caused them to ask if the Sisters do not keep Jewish children. Stanisława Kaniewska, fluent in German, assured them that only Polish Catholic children are in the orphanage and another Sister, Maria Czechowicz, distracted them from that dangerous questioning by talking to them in French, which one of them knew. In the last days of July 1944, when Russians reached the River Vistula, they bombarded the city by artillery and from the air. Several people were killed, the chapel was destroyed, but nobody from the orphanage was harmed. On August 1st, 1944 (first day of the Warsaw Uprising), during lunch, for which there were only broad beans, the Germans suddenly stormed into the orphanage and ordered everybody to leave and to march toward Warsaw. Soon the other orphanage from Międzyzlesie, “Ulanówek”, with the youngest children, joined them. Those children remained at Grochów, while “Zosinek” went on to Saską Kępa, both in Warsaw. As the children had nothing to eat, Sister Stanisława asked the parish priest to announce their predicament in church and parishioners flocked with food. Sister Stanisława, realizing that this was not sufficient, returned with the older girls to Międzyzlesie for food. The Germans forbade them to go there but allowed them to go to Anin, where the Sisters had another orphanage. There they were bombarded again by artillery fire by both the Germans and Russians at the same time. On August 13, the Germans ordered the evacuation also of this second orphanage. Sister Stanisława explained the situation to the German command. At the beginning, the commanding officer refused any help, but finally agreed to give them horse carts for the children and food. After another bombing from the air by the Soviets, Sister Stanisława ordered the drivers to go not to Modlin, as indicated the Germans, but to Pludy, another of their orphanages, this time with 80 children and with the food. Having arrived there, she got some food for the children left at Saską Kępa. When she returned there, the children received her with tears. She fed them and they all went to Pludy. The conditions there were very difficult, as several orphanages were reunited there: altogether 500 children, of which a hundred (100) were Jewish. The Germans came continuously to search the house, especially one, particularly obnoxious fellow, returned every day for three weeks looking for Jewish children and for a Jewish priest, Father [Tadeusz] Puder, but as much as he searched he could not find them. He announced that if he discovers even one Jew, all would be shot. Despite continuous threats Sister Stanisława refused three times to leave the orphanage. The soldiers put her against the wall and under guard when they were expelling again all the children to Modlin. The superior, Sister Romualda, entreated the Germans to leave the two and three year olds as too young to walk so far, famished as they were. They acquiesced and allowed seven Sisters, among them Stanisława, to stay with them. On the third night there arrived a German doctor who was furious that not all the children had left; he demanded to see the German-speaking Sister. But when he saw the miserable state of children in the cellars, he was appalled. He promised her to reward her after the war for her heroism. She thanked him but told him that she does it not for German rewards but to save the Polish children and that they need food, as they have only rye grain to eat. He promised to send them all kinds of food and delicacies. At that moment a shell fell in the place where both of them were standing and killed some people. The German doctor and the Polish Sister were both knocked out. But the food never arrived: the Germans fled. The next day Polish soldiers from the Kościuszko Division (formed in Soviet Russia out of Poles deported to Siberia at the beginning of the war who did not manage to join the 2nd Polish Corps of General Anders) liberated them. One of the priests celebrated Mass in the cellar; everybody wept.

About 25 Jewish children were sheltered in the orphanage in Łomna near Turka (south of Lwów) which was run by the Sisters of the Family of Mary. The superior, Mother Tekla (Anna) Budnowska, wrote that all of the Sisters knew about the Jewish children. Many of the children were brought to Łomna from Warsaw by Sister Blanka Pięłowska, who maintained contact with trusted persons in Warsaw’s Social Services Department. Rescue often entailed moving charges across the country to convents, homes and institutions ready to receive them. Many of the children were brought to Łomna from Warsaw by Sister Blanka Pięłowska, who maintained contact with trusted persons in Warsaw’s Social Services Department. Lidia Kleinmann, who went by the name of Maryla Wołoszyńska, was entrusted by her father, a doctor, to Sisters who worked in the hospital in Turka. Lidia was taken to the Sisters’ provincial home in Lwów where she remained under the care of Mother Janina Wirball. From there, in 1942, she was sent to the orphanage in Łomna operated where she attended school. That institution was eventually transferred to Warsaw in 1943. After the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, the Sisters and children were evacuated to the Sisters’ home in Kostowiec outside Warsaw. One of the teachers there was the fondly remembered Father Czesław Baran. (Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* [Toronto: Key Porter, 2003], pp.56–57.)

In Turka [a small city south of Lwów], on the eve of the deportation of the Jews in August 1942, Sister Jadwiga, a nun who was also the head nurse at the local hospital, hid twelve-year-old Lidia Kleiman in one of the cubicles of the men's washroom, which was used as a broom closet. Lidia stayed hidden in the hospital for several weeks. Sister Jadwiga then took her to her own home and taught her Christian prayers in preparation for placing her in a Catholic orphanage in Lvov [Lwów] under the assumed name of Marysia Borowska. There she was put in the care of Sister Blanka Pigłowska, who knew that she was Jewish. When a suspicion arose in the orphanage that Lidia might be Jewish, it was Sister Blanka who obtained new false papers for her, with a new name, Maria Wołoszynska [Wołoszyńska]. She then transferred the girl to another orphanage, at the convent in the village of Łomna [Łomna near Sambor], where the Mother Superior, Sister Tekla Budnowska, was hiding many Jewish girls.

In the early autumn of 1943, after an attack by Ukrainian nationalists, Sister Budnowska received permission to transfer her girls to Warsaw, and to establish an orphanage in an abandoned building in the former ghetto. In Warsaw, she accepted yet more Jewish children. After the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944 [which lasted until October], the orphanage relocated to Kostowiec, fifteen miles south-west of Warsaw.

Lidia's mother had been denounced to the Gestapo while travelling on false papers, arrested and killed; but her father had been hidden by a Russian [Eastern] Orthodox priest, and survived. Father and daughter were reunited after liberation.

Lidia Kleinmann wrote the following testimonial about her stay in Łomna (Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," Parts 2 and 4, *Nasz Dziennik*, March 12, 2008 and March 19, 2008):

When Sister Blanka [Pigłowska] brought me to Łomna in 1942 I was 10 years old and had a package of experiences that I cannot recollect calmly to this day. Thanks to a group of generous persons who extended a helping hand to me and many others, I survived the war. I feel a deep love and gratefulness for Mother Tekla [Budnowska], Sister Zofia and Sister Blanka [Pigłowska] for their assistance, goodness and understanding and for my companions from Łomna, since they were then my family.

Sister Tekla Budnowska recalled those times, in June 1984 (Kurek, *My Life Is Worth Yours*, pp.139–41):

During the war I was mother superior of a home in Łomna [Łomna]. I had 115 children in the orphanage, of which twenty-three were Jewish—one boy, the rest girls, for the orphanage was for girls. Only later did I get boys.

Sometimes there was a note with the child saying that it was Jewish, but most of the time the children came to us with birth certificates. Some of the girls said openly: I am a Jew. Others did not admit to their Jewish background, and that's the way it stayed. For instance, Teresa B. She did not look Jewish; nothing betrayed her. One day an older [Jewish] girl came to me, her name was Glancman, and she said:

"Mother Superior, Teresa B. is a Jew."

"She is no Jew," I replied. "Blue eyes, the nose and everything; she does not look like a Jew."

"I tell you, Mother Superior, she is! I can feel it!" Literally: I can feel it.

The fact is these children could somehow tell. For example, if some older Jewish girl was cleaning up, then the younger Jewish girls were immediately drawn to her. They didn't help anyone but the Jewish girl.

Returning to Teresa B.: Teresa came to us when she was eleven. Certainly, she had a [baptismal] certificate. As it turned out later, she had not been baptized. However, she was receiving the sacraments all the time. She was a rather pious, practicing Catholic. Only after the Warsaw Uprising in 1944—she had probably taken some oath—did she turn to an old nun and ask to be baptized. We baptized her in secret, so that nobody knew.

When the Germans would come, the Jewish children would be the first to go to the chapel, for they were afraid of them. They had a certain feeling, an instinct of self-preservation. They did not exhibit exceptional piety. They probably just felt safe, and that was the reason for their normality, as far as matters of faith were concerned. We took great pains so that the children would not lack for anything. When the children in Łomna went out, I always reminded the sisters to make sure that no Germans or strangers were standing by the chapel.

Once the following thing happened: The children were going out, everyone was looking at them, including a German officer, who finally said to me:

"There are a lot of different faces in your group, sister!"

"What else do you expect," I answered him in German. "Do you want them all to look like you?" Everyone has a different mother and father."

I gave him a look, and that was the end of that. The officer did not think any more of the matter.

I also remember the daughter of a doctor from Turka. He was needed by the Germans for something, so he was kept alive and walked around with the Star of David. His daughter [Lidia Kleinmann] was being hidden by our sisters in Lwow [Lwów], but they feared keeping her, for she was too well known. So I told them: "Give her to us; we already have many, so one more won't make a difference."

The little girl had very long tresses, so I said to her: "You have to make a sacrifice, my child."

I cut off her tresses, and we found a birth certificate for her. A sister went to St. Antoni's [Anthony's] Church in Lwow; the priest gave her a baptismal book, and after a two-day search she finally found a girl whose age coincided with the age of the doctor's daughter. The priest wrote out a certificate in the name of O., a name which was used after the war by the father of the child also.

Not one of the Jewish children we had was killed. The majority of our children are grateful, and maintain contact with us.

We received children mostly from Warsaw. All the sisters at Lomna knew about the Jewish children, but no one was allowed to differentiate between the children, and no one did. At most, the children did so among themselves.

One day Sister Paulina arrived with some children, and a boy came over to me, and said:

"I beg your pardon, Mother Superior, Sister Paulina has brought some children from Warsaw, all of them Jews!"

"They are not Jews, but all are baptized children, so there are no Jews here!" I replied.

We tried to create an atmosphere where the children would feel safe and secure. After the Ukrainian attacks [on Polish settlements] in 1943, we left Lomna, and together with the children moved to Warsaw. In Warsaw we lived in a small place on Wolna [Wolności] St., until the uprising. All of us left Warsaw in August of 1944.

The children came from Warsaw in groups. There were situations where the [train] conductor, seeing our nuns with a group of children, among which he could see Jewish children, closed the compartment and drew the curtains to assure the safety of the sisters and children. These conductors were Polish, but one time a German conductor did this also.

After the uprising, we stayed for some time in Kostowiec, then in Wegrocia [?]; finally we found ourselves in Lublin Kujawski.

Reclaiming Jewish children started as early as 1945. When someone called at the convent, they gave a name and collected a child. But sometimes it was different. ...

Anna Henrietta Kretz (later Daniszewska), born in 1934, was one of a dozen Jewish and three Gypsy children sheltered by the Sisters of the Family of Mary in their orphanage in Sambor, under the care of their superior, Sister Celina Kędzierska. After the family's betrayal by a fellow Jew, miraculously Anna managed to run away from the German executioners. She approached the orphanage with caution because part of the building was occupied by German soldiers who used the courtyard as their field kitchen. When she arrived at the orphanage Anna turned to Sister Celina with these words: "Sister, be my mother; I don't have parents anymore." When Anna's uncle came to claim her after the war, Sister Celina, then seriously ill, said to Anna on parting: "Remember, be a good person." Those words forever left an impression in Anna's heart. In October 1993, Anna Kretz penned the following testimonial:

In memory of the Sister superior and other Sisters who, risking their own lives and in those terrible conditions, cared for me and other Jewish children and helped to instil in us faith in people, which we could have lost forever together with our lives. May the memory of their deed never fade, because by their deeds they showed that love of one's neighbour could lead to the highest form of generosity and heroism. I will never forget that. May I be worthy of it.

Among several Jewish infants at the orphanage in Sambor was Jerzy Bander, who was placed there by Mrs. Wahułka, a secretary of a local school. Janina Shosh Ronis was sheltered in the convent of the Sisters of the Family of Mary in Lwów, where she went by the name of Janina Ryszarda Glińska. She was placed there by her mother in 1942, and returned to her mother after the war. (Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," Part 6, *Nasz Dziennik*, April 4, 2008; Ewa Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach: Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce w latach 1939–1945* [Lublin: Clio, 2001], pp.178–79.)

Mina Deutsch (née Kimmel) recalled the assistance she, her husband Leon and their young daughter Eva received from many persons, including Sisters of the Family of Mary in Dźwiniaczka, near Borszczów, where her husband

had worked for the Germans as a doctor. (Mina Deutsch, *Mina's Story: A Doctor's Memoir of the Holocaust* [Toronto: CW Press, 1994], p.48.)

We used to hide from time to time in a nearby convent where the nuns were quite nice to us and asked us to come to them when there was an urgent need. After being there for a day or two a few times, the Sister Superior suggested that we leave our daughter with them ...

After escaping from the ghetto in Warsaw, two young sisters—Batya (Barbara) and Esther Faktor-Pichotka—wandered in the Siedlce area begging for food and shelter. Villagers cared for the girls but became frightened, as they were widely suspected of being Jewish. Sister Stanisława learned of Batya's plight and asked her superior, Mother Beata (Bronisława Hryniewicz), for permission to admit her into the orphanage run by the Daughters of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Skórzec. In her testimony (Yad Vashem File 6166), Batya recalled: "The nuns welcomed me warmly, cleaned off the dirt which clung to me during the many months of wandering, tended my wounds, and fed me." Batya then fell ill for several months, and was tenderly cared for by Mother Superior Hryniewicz. Batya's sister Esther moved into the orphanage later, even though she was well treated by the Świątek family with whom she was staying. After the war, the two girls were reunited with their elder sister Regina who searched for them and found them. These two nuns—Bronisława Hryniewicz and Stanisława Józwickowska—were eventually recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. (Gilbert, *The Righteous*, pp.107–108.)

In the village of Czerniejew, in the Siedlce district east of Warsaw, it was another poor peasant woman, Stanisława [Stanisława] Cabaj, a widow, who gave shelter to two Jewish girls, Batja and Ester, sisters who had escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and wandered for several months through the Polish countryside. ...

Fearing betrayals, Stanisława Cabaj took Ester, aged eleven, and Batja, a mere five-year-old, for sanctuary to Sister Stanisława Jozwickowska [Stanisława Józwickowska], in the Heart of Jesus convent near the village of Skórzec. 'I was dirty, ill, weak, full of lice,' Batja later recalled. 'The nuns washed me thoroughly, put me into soft pyjamas, and put me in a clean bed.' The Mother Superior, Beata Bronisława [Bronisława] Hryniewicz, nursed her back to health. 'She fed me, she strengthened me.' After she recovered, the young girl attended the local school, as did her sister. 'Once the headmaster checked my file and did not find my baptism confirmation. He asked my sister about it. My sister claimed that the church we had been baptized in, Bielany, a northern suburb of Warsaw, had been bombed, and hoped her answer would be acceptable. But the headmaster was a Polish nationalist, he did not give up,' He informed the local Polish police chief, and also the Mother Superior, 'who summoned my sister to the monastery and questioned her. Finally my sister confessed that we are Jewish. Ester knew that Mother Superior Beata Bronisława Hryniewicz loved me a lot and she also would do everything not to harm us.'

At the time, half the convent was occupied by German soldiers. The Mother Superior, determined to strengthen the young girl's self-confidence, sent Ester on 'various tasks in the afternoon—precisely when the Germans were active around—as to deliver something to other nuns, to feed chickens, to watch bees, etc.'

Nobody knew the two girls were Jewish except for the Mother Superior and Sister Stanisława Jozwickowska, who had brought them in. [This is rather unlikely given the children's state and the fact that they would not have been familiar with Christian prayers and rituals. Their origin, if not known, would have been suspected by the other nuns, the Poles who helped them, and other children in the orphanage.—Ed.] After the war, the Jewish organization which found the girls wanted to pay the convent for having looked after them, but Beata refused to take the money, saying: 'I did my duty as a Christian, and not for money.' Sixty years after having been given shelter, Batja reflected: 'Mother Superior Beata Bronisława Hryniewicz healed me; she recovered my soul by great love; she pampered me as her own child; she dressed me nice and neat; she combed my hair and tied ribbons in my plaits; she taught me manners (she was from an aristocratic noble family). She was strict, but fair with my duties; to pray, to study, to work on my character, to obey, etc., but every step was with love, love!' On liberation, Batja refused to leave the Mother Superior Beata, 'but I was forced to. In autumn when I was nine—in 1945—I left the monastery.' At that moment, separated from her rescuer, 'I lost my childhood forever and pure human love.' From 1946 until the Mother Superior dies in 1969, they were in correspondence. 'I always longed for Mother Superior and even wanted to go back to her ... Years after her death I told my story, and she got the medal of Righteous Among the Nations, in Warsaw. Sister Stanisława Jozwickowska died on 7 December 1984, she also got the medal. Mother Superior Beata Bronisława Hryniewicz is always in my heart, and I still miss her very much.'

Another account from the Yad Vashem archives provides somewhat different reasons for taking the children into

the convent and an indication of the community's awareness of their Jewish origin. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, pp.317–18.)

In the summer of 1942, 11-year-old Estera Faktor and her five-year-old sister, Batia, escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and wandered through fields and villages until they arrived at the Kaluszyn [Kaluszyn] ghetto, where they were reunited with their brother, Janek, and their sisters, Halina and Regina. A few days before the liquidation of the ghetto and the deportation of its inhabitants to Treblinka, all five Faktor children escaped from the ghetto. Two of them—Janek and Regina—never made it to the Aryan side of the city. Halina, who did not look Jewish, was employed on a local farm, while Estera and little Batia reached the village of Skorzec. After introducing themselves as Christian orphans, they were sent by the village mayor to the home of an elderly, childless couple who lived in abject poverty. Despite their willingness to help, the elderly couple was unable to provide for the two girls. Ester and Batia, therefore, turned to the nun Stanisława Jozwikowska for help. Stanisława consulted with the Mother Superior, Beata-Bronisława Hryniewicz, who next day arranged for the sisters to be transferred to the Dom Serca Jezusowego (Sacred Heart) convent in Skorzec, without knowing they were Jewish. When the headmistress of their school asked them for their birth and baptism certificates, the girls had no choice but to inform the nuns of their true identity. The nuns, far from abandoning them, were more concerned than ever for their well-being, particularly Mother Beata-Bronisława and Sister Stanisława, who perceived helping Jews as a sacred duty. After the war, the convent transferred the Faktor sisters to the care of the Jewish community in the nearby city of Siedlce. When members of the Jewish Committee heard their story, they raised money to buy a present for the two nuns, but Mother Beata refused, saying: "I simply did my Christian duty, without any thought of reward."

The Sisters Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (popularly referred to as *sercanki*) opened their orphanage in Przemyśl to children of all faiths. Among the nuns involved in the rescue mission were Sister Emilia (Józefa Małkowska), the Mother Superior, who initiated the rescue, Sister Longina (Leokadia Juśkiewicz), Sister Ligorina (Anna Grenda), Sister Bernarda (Rozalia Domicella Sidelko), and Sister Alfonsa (Eugenia Wąsowska), who was made responsible for the Jewish children. The latter four nuns were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. Thirteen Jewish children—ten girls and three boys—found shelter there until the city's liberation in July 1944, whereupon they were turned over to the newly constituted Jewish committee. Children were often received under dramatic circumstances, on occasion simply left at the gate of the orphanage. Sister Alfonsa saw to it that the children did not lack food or clothing, and often ventured out to collect alms in order to support the young charges. The following account is recorded in Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, 1993), at pages 219–22.

Hedy Rosen (a four-year-old child in the summer of 1942) and her mother had wandered through the woods for two years, seeking shelter from the fury of the Nazi Final Solution. One day they arrived outside the walls of a convent in Przemyśl in southern Poland. Panting for breath and on the verge of collapse, Hedy's mother looked into her daughter's eyes and told her quietly: "You have no choice. From now on your name is Jadwiga Kozowska and you are a Christian Pole." After repeating with her several verses of a Catholic prayer, she placed Hedy near the convent's entrance and disappeared behind a tree. Hedy stood there alone and wept. Her cries alerted the nuns, who opened the gates and fetched the child inside. There she stayed for two full years. She was the first Jewish child to be admitted. Twelve others followed in her wake.

St. Joseph's Heart was a children's orphanage with main offices in Cracow [Kraków]. In 1942, Sister Alfonsa (Eugenia Wąsowska) was sent from Cracow to the Przemyśl convent to help the other five nuns and one priest to care for the forty-seven orphaned Catholic children. With the approval of her Cracow superiors, the Przemyśl mother superior decided to give shelter to Jewish children; she then suddenly took ill and expired. When her successor in turn fell ill, Sister Alfonsa was made responsible for the "Jewish Section" of the Catholic orphanage. Under her stewardship, a total of thirteen Jewish children (ten girls and three boys) were sheltered in the orphanage until the city's liberation in July 1944.

Przemyśl had a Jewish population of 20,000 at the start of the war. When the city was liberated in 1944, only some 250 Jews had survived the Nazi terror.

Hedy's mother had in the meantime found work in a nearby village, under a new identity, and on occasion brought food to the orphanage for her daughter's sake. "I was forbidden to show the slightest sign that I knew her," relates Hedy, "for fear of the other children. I had to disregard her completely." The fear of detection was a constant threat to the children and the orphanage as well. Various tactics were used. One was to tell the Jewish boys "that if a stranger comes to the convent and asks a boy what he wants to be when he grows up, he should say a priest," Sister Alfonsa relates, adding, "We took the children to church along with Polish children, not because we were trying to make them Catholics but just so

nobody would suspect they were Jews.”

Sister Alfonsa was committed, soul and heart, to her charges. She saw to it that the children did not lack food or clothing during those years of dearth and want for the local population. Not able to repress the severe traumatic experience which had preceded their placement in the orphanage, the Jewish children were prone to sudden bursts of hysterical weeping. “Sometimes at mealtime a child would cry and throw his food on the floor,” Sister Alfonsa recalls. Miriam Klein remembers some of the children screaming at night and wetting their beds. “Sister Alfonsa always knew how to calm us. Sleeping with us in the small room she was alert to every noise and often got up at night to place an additional blanket on the frightened children.”

Immediately upon the city’s liberation, Sister Alfonsa took the thirteen Jewish children to the newly constituted Jewish Committee in Przemyśl and promptly turned them over. “They were Jewish children and belonged with Jews,” Sister Alfonsa emphasized. In one case, a father who was a shoemaker, made a pair of new shoes for Sister Alfonsa as a sign of his appreciation.

... Recalling her stay at the orphanage, Miriam Klein remarks, “I was privileged to experience calm and mental relaxation, and there I discovered the best and most beautiful of women.”

Miriam (Maria) Klain’s account is found in Elżbieta Isakiewicz, *Harmonica: Jews Relate How Poles Saved Them from the Holocaust* (Warsaw: Polska Agencja Informacyjna, 2001), at pages 191–98.

My father was very well liked among the Polish population, he belonged to the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), which was valued in the Polish intellectual community, and he also was on good terms with Kedyw [the diversionary command of the Polish Home Army] ...

... he tried to find another place of shelter [for me]. It was a convent of the order of the Sacred Heart in Przemyśl, in Mickiewicz Street, where they also ran an orphanage. One of my father’s acquaintances dealt in cattle and knew the Mother Superior of the convent, who was a descendant of the Czartoryskis—Sister Emilia Malkowska. She herself had brought up the subject in a conversation and stated that she was going to rescue Jewish children. There were already Jewish children at the convent, but not from Przemyśl, only from Wołyń [Volhynia].. I said that I wasn’t going to any convent. Then my father took me up to the attic where there was a small window—there was an operation taking place right then. They [the Germans] were catching children and killing them. I saw how, on Mikołaja Street, they were taking these children by the legs and smashing their heads against the walls. I saw how they were burning dead bodies mixed up with living ones and layers of wood. They set fire to these heaps with petrol or something of the kind, I don’t know what, but the whole town was saturated with the smell afterwards and the wind made the ashes fly in the air. What else did I see? People hanged with dogs. ... So my father said, ‘You’re thinking about death? Look, that’s what it looks like. If you don’t go to the convent, the same will happen to you.’

So I went, thank God I went. It was a bandage for my soul. A soothing compress. Something wonderful.

The nuns occupied a two-storey building. There were six of them, the best nuns in the world. Conditions were the pits, but the nuns were the best in the world. One of them [Sister Alfonsa] begged for food for us, going from house to house. The Polish woman who took me out of the ghetto brought milk. She was called Kazimiera Romankiewicz. ...

There were fourteen Jewish children in the nuns’ orphanage and the rest were Polish orphans, dirty, pitiful, flea-ridden, sickly, whose parents had been killed, among others, by members of Bandera’s [nationalist] Ukrainian groups. There were, for example, girls there who had had their stomachs cut open. They were no different to us, the Jewish girls. They had the same scared-looking eyes. We all looked the same. When I arrived with Mrs. Kazia, I was introduced to the Mother Superior. Later Sister Malkowska’s heart could no longer bear the life of continual tension and fear—she died. But that was later. Then the nuns introduced me to Hania, a Jewish girl who had been there for some time. I knew who she was because she was the daughter of a friend of my father’s, but I didn’t let on, as though I had never seen her before in my life. ‘Show Marysia where the toilet is,’ she said, ‘and where her bed is, introduce her to the life of the day-nursery.’

When we got down to the toilet, we hugged, kissed each other and burst into tears. Then other girls joined in too: Zosia, Basia, and others. In this secret way, a get-together took place, so that nobody would suspect that we knew each other. ...

There were three circumcised boys among us. One of them was a toddler. We took great care that nobody saw us changing his nappies, that was why either the nuns or the older Jewish girls did it. ...

Once the Ukrainian police, who were co-operating with the Germans, occupied the first floor of our house—we were terrified. ...

I had never had anything to do with Christianity. My father was a member of the PPS, my uncle was a traditional Jew ...

When I came to the convent, I didn’t know how to pray or make the sign of the cross, I knew nothing. Sister Jakuba told me to kneel down. I objected. ‘I’m Jewish,’ I said, ‘I don’t know whether life is worth changing your personality for.’ Then Sister Jakuba suggested that I kneel at the end of the chapel and just make miming movements with my mouth so that it

would just seem like I was praying. I pretended like that for a month or more. But I was never punished; I never heard a bad word, or any anti-Semitic allusions. On the contrary, it was I who asked questions; I was too clever by half. I wanted to know what God was like, why he treated us in this way.

They were patient. They were good. Whenever they had a crumb of extra food—sometimes the priest brought a piece of cake—they gave it to us. I kept hearing, ‘Marysia, open wide, I have something for you.’

The nuns took us under their protection and clasped us to their breasts. I remember them all: Sister Ligoria Grenda, Sister Bernarda, Sister Longina, Sister Jakuba and Sister Leokadia—a probationer nun who only took her vows after the war, because it was not possible during the war. And also Sister Alfonsa ...

So, it is hard to say when the process of conversion began, under the influence of their personal example, their love. After a certain time, I decided that I wanted to be christened. But the nuns said, ‘No, you have parents and you’ll go back to them; faith is not some sort of pendulum.

Then Przemyśl was bombed. I knelt before the priest and kissed his hands, I begged him to christen me. The priest said, ‘If a bomb lands here, you’ll be christened.’

No bomb fell.

When the liberation came in 1944, I did not want to return to my parents. The nuns reminded me that amongst the Ten Commandments there was also this one: Honour thy father and thy mother. ‘You are sinning by not returning to your parents,’ they repeated. And of course I did not want to sin. I went back. But when I went to church for mass, my father would beat me. I went about with a swollen face. It was hell within hell, the two together. ...

I was very happy in Poland, I studied, I played the piano. I was the only Jew in the class, everything was working out wonderfully, except that when there was a retreat, my parents would take me away and I couldn’t receive any of the holy sacraments. I waged war with my father for four years about the Church. But I never gave up hope.

Then in 1948 we moved to Sweden ...

The accounts of the nuns themselves—Sister Bernarda, Sister Ligoria and Sister Alfonsa—are found in John J. Hartman and Jacek Krochmal, eds., *I Remember Every Day...: The Fates of the Jews of Przemyśl during World War II* (Przemyśl: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk w Przemyślu; Ann Arbor, Michigan: Remembrance & Reconciliation Inc., 2002), at pages 211–18. The account of Hedy Rosen (Tugendhaft) is also there, at pages 163–64.

Account of Hedy Rosen:

I was born in Cracow in 1936. When the war broke out in 1939 and the Germans captured Cracow my father was immediately taken away ... No one knows where he was taken, but he was never seen again.

My mother and I fled and went to Katowice and then to various towns. We lived for almost two years in the countryside—in dog kennels and horse stables with barely enough to eat. By this time my mother managed to get “Aryan” papers, as she did not look Jewish. I did look Jewish and so she had trouble getting papers for me. We went from town to town until we came to Przemyśl.

My mother heard about a convent there that was taking Jewish children to save them from the Germans. My mother was dressed in peasant clothes and left me at the St. Joseph orphanage run by nuns from the order of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. My mother instructed me to say that my aunt from another city could not take care of me and that my parents were lost. The Mother Superior accepted this story and for along time the nuns did not know that I was Jewish. I was the first Jewish child they took and after me they took more until there were about thirteen Jewish children

The Mother Superior was Sister Amelia [Emilia] Małkowska and the orphanage was at 80 Mickiewicza Street. There was Sister Ligoria, and Sister Bernarda. Sister Alfonsa was a third nun who left the order [after the war] and moved to Australia and married a Jewish man.

The nuns did not try to convert us. There was one girl, Hania, who refused to go with her uncle from the United States after the war. She remained with the nuns and was eventually baptized, married a Polish man, and lives in Przemyśl. Many of the children like myself went to Israel and have lived there. Miriam, my friend in the orphanage, is a neighbour in Israel to this day.

I remember a time when German soldiers came to stay in the orphanage and they played with the little boy, Staś. One day a woman wanted to take him with her when she left with the German soldiers. One of the nuns rescued him. He was circumcised and would have been discovered. Interestingly, he could only ask two of the older Jewish girls to change his diaper so that no one would discover that he was circumcised. Somehow he knew this even though he was only two or three years old. ...

During this time my mother remained in the area as a Polish peasant woman. She brought food to the orphanage for the nuns and for the children. I was in the orphanage in 1943 and 1944 until the Russians liberated Przemyśl. My mother left for Budapest, Hungary. I was very sick. I had pneumonia and rickets. I was in a hospital for about six months but survived these illnesses.

We made our way to Australia and then to Israel. ...

The little boy Staś whose last name was Korn lives now in Israel. His father was a lawyer and a prominent man in Przemyśl.

Testimony of Sister Bernarda:

I was in Przemyśl three or four years, 1942 to 1945. I was in the order of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. We had in our orphanage thirteen Jewish children and about forty Polish children. It was located at 80 Mickiewicza Street. It was across the street from a church and we could see the altar from our windows. Before this we had an orphanage that was destroyed by a bomb. The City gave us this building which had been previously owned by Jews who had been forced into the Ghetto. This was a two-storey home in disrepair. We conducted also a preschool and there were rooms for games and play.

Sister Emilia-Józefa Małkowska was the Mother Superior of our order. I worked with Sister Ligoria Grenda. Some women delivered some of the Jewish children. I did not know her. Sister Superior did not tell us any particulars in order not to endanger us with this knowledge. The less we knew the better. But I knew that some of the boys were circumcised and from the shooting in town I knew we had Jewish children.

Conditions were very hard at this time. We had little food and there was terrible hunger. We scraped the bottom of the barrel for any remnants of marmalade for the children. The Germans were right next door, behind the wall, and we all lived in fear that they would discover the Jewish children. These children were very afraid of the Germans. One little boy, Edek, slept with me in my bed and in the middle of the night would cry out, "Auntie, Auntie, save me! They will shoot me!"

One child was named Hania and she was twelve. Before she came to us she was hiding in a chimney. She was terribly malnourished. Her parents who lived in Zasanie had been shot by the Germans.

My job in the orphanage was to wash laundry and scrub floors. I would dress the children in clean underwear and they would get it dirty very quickly. I was sixteen years old and so the children did not confide in me too much. There was a lot of work just to keep the children clothed. I patched and sewed and picked lice off the children. My own clothing I made into clothing for the children. There was little food. We made sugar from red beets. Bread was made with sawdust. We had no coal to heat the house. We bathed four or five children in the same water. We did not know any last names. There was Bronek, Julek, etc. Maybe Sister Superior knew the last names. We knitted sweaters and sold them for food. We knitted until two o'clock in the morning. Five children slept under one cover. We made our own soap. We had no vitamins. The children were hungry and we filled them with potatoes.

There was a Mr. Walczak who would buy wounded horses and give us meat and fat. The children ate soup made from beets and horse fat. We would go on quests for food. I was not used to this from my upbringing but we would go out to collect money for the children. The children did not starve and no one died of hunger. They did catch colds due to lack of vitamins and sufficient clothing. You could not keep them on a leash. They would run around in the garden and play.

The children were dirty and brought lice with them in their clothing. Most had scabies. The wounds were very deep in their skin and the wounds festered and as they hardened they would scratch because it itched them a lot. Eventually I got a recipe for a salve. I had to get some grey stone crystals, grind them up and I mixed it with horse fat and sulphur which became a salve. I applied it twice and the itching went away. If someone knew what I had done I would have gone to jail. Their skin was so delicate. It all ended well. One had to stand on her head to do what one could for these children. None of the children died and no one was discovered by the Germans.

There was a Polish organization, RGO [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza—Central Welfare Council] it was called, that helped us quite a bit especially near the end of the war. There was also a man who would bring us money, medicine, and clothing. I did not know who he was. We grew some vegetables and fruit in our garden but conditions were very tough.

We did not christen the children. Because we had some Ukrainian and Polish children, the Jewish children went to church. I gave Maria the key to the church across the street and showed her the place she and the other Jewish children should hide if the Germans came to the orphanage in search of Jewish children. It was in a secret place in the altar where the holy relics were kept. The children were well-trained and would not say anything unnecessary, and if they were awakened in the night by the Germans they would still do very well. How much terror these children experienced! Fear, hard work, this was our reward. We had no employment possibilities. Our work was for the Lord and we made sacrifices for the sake of the children. Our aim was to save human beings. We did not do it for compensation. After all the Jews had nothing. They were begging for food, begging to live.

After the war, the children went in different directions. Some were picked up by relatives and friends. Most went to Israel. Hania did not want to go with relatives. She wanted to convert to Catholicism. She eventually did, married, and lives in Przemyśl. I correspond with many of the "children." We reminisce about the war very seldom. The stresses are gone and it is very hard to return to them. For them these years were hell, they suffered very much. Maria was constantly praying, "Please, God, let my parents return and not be shot." She wanted to convert but the priest would not agree as she was only 14 years old. Eventually she did convert after the war.

The youngest child was Stasiu and he was only two and a half. His name now is Gabriel Koren and he lives in Israel. Whenever I would wash him he would move his bowels on the floor. The memories of this time have been paid for in nervousness, bad health, and bombings. The children were very aware of what was happening. Stasiu had a game in which he would throw his hat in the air and when it came down he would yell, "Bomb!"

We did our best not to scare the children. They were scared enough and so were we.

Testimony of Sister Ligoria:

I stayed in Przemyśl from the winter of 1943 till 1956. The orphanage was established when transports of refugees from Volhynia [fleeing massacres by Ukrainian nationalists] started coming. The Germans would bring adults and very many children. All of them were put in the camp at Bakończyce in Przemyśl. Rada Główna Opiekuńcza (RGO) turned to Mother Superior Emilia Małkowska, a great child lover and orphan protector about organizing an orphanage. The RGO arranged a house in Mickiewicza Street, opposite the church at Błonie. It was a very primitive building in bad condition. The RGO would take children out of the camp and put them in our shelter. At first, no one had even considered admitting Jewish children. The kids were mostly Polish. A lot of them did not know their own names. They were sad and apathetic. No wonder, some had witnessed the death of their parents.

We were terribly poor, even though the RGO did their best to help. At least the children did not cry of hunger. After some time also Jewish children started appearing. Those cases were handled by Mother Superior only. She did not let us in on the secret for safety reasons. There was always somebody involved in the "deliveries." I particularly remember one name. It was Mrs Romankiewicz, who lived near the Ghetto. Some children came to us by themselves. Among them was a small, eighteen-month-old boy. The children's surnames were changed. Usually they had no documents. If anybody knew anything about their background, it was Mother Superior. She tried to get rid of any similarities. We only knew about some of those Jewish children, not all of them. It was Providence that saved them, not us. It was so very dangerous. The house, the backyard, the garden could be seen easily—we never locked the children up.

We kept about thirteen Jewish kids, boys and girls. I was the go-between for the RGO and the orphanage. My job was catering. I used to go to the Town Council where one could always get something by begging.

The one who took more care of the children was sister Bernarda. She did what she could: she would sew and change the clothes from her own outfit. The children from the camp were in a terrible hygienic condition, some of them were injured. We had to help one another as there were only a few of us: five sisters and thirty children. Of course, I also looked after the kids. I remember very well carrying little Staś in my arms. He was a pretty boy. Everybody loved him! He was the youngest one. I couldn't recognize him when I saw him fifty years later. I have the closest contact with Marynia, Maria Klein (Miriam). She writes to me in Polish. After the war I used to receive many letters, some "children" visited me in Cracow with their parents. I am not in touch with them any more. [This account is from October 1998—Ed.] Only with Marysia, always twice a year. And with Staś. All of them survived. I always say that it was nothing but the great Divine Providence over those children and us all. I tell them: "You should thank God, not us, we didn't save you."

One day, a car full of men stopped opposite our house. They got out and looked at the building. I was afraid that they had discovered somebody and were going to enter the orphanage any minute. I was scared! Sister Superior was already very ill at that time (she died on 12. 04. 1944). I couldn't even pray. Suddenly they got back into the car and drove away. I don't really know what they were after, but it was a frightening moment for all of us.

Our house was never searched by the Gestapo. There was one more orphanage in Przemyśl, run by the Sisters of the Order of Providence [in Zasanie]. We learned that somebody had given them away. The Germans went there and decided that the nuns had not known one of the kids was Jewish. They took the child away and that was it.

In our house a group of military officers occupied one or two apartments. They were not German, they were soldiers of some other nationality. Somebody told me that our children would visit their place sometimes, including Staś. They took to him very much. Staś was circumcised and he would often pee in his pants. But he never did it while at their place. A miracle? Just think if they had started changing his clothes!

Those medals, awards, they shouldn't be for us. It was God who chose to save those children. It was His great protection, Divine Providence. I am positive about it.

Our children were, among others, Marysia, two Jadzias, Irenka, Stasiu, Edziu ... I can't remember many names. [The

account is from October 1998—Ed.] Ah, yes, there was also Zosia. I remember, when I went to the RGO one day, there came a thirteen-year-old girl and asked to be taken under protection. The president of the RGO asked me:

“Will you take her, sister?”

“Well, yes, I will.”

And Zosia, the Jewish girl, came with me.

We tried to organize their time. There were different age groups. The eldest child was fourteen. They were all very apathetic. Well, they had been through terrible things. We couldn't make them smile. They just sat there and stared ahead. We tried to keep them busy, to prevent them from thinking. We organized physical exercise for them. They would go to church with us and learn to pray. Sister Bernarda used to make them stand at the back of the church for other children not to see that they didn't know how to pray. They learned with time. They were very worried when the front was approaching. The older girls asked to be baptized, but we didn't do it. Later they recalled it like this: “For me the church was heaven and rescue, while being Jewish meant the Germans and death.” Such were their associations.

At the end, when parents and families started collecting their children, they didn't want to leave. Stasiu stretched out his arms and screamed: “Tyćka Gina Tyćka Gin!” He meant Sister Longina who worked in the kitchen and loved him very much. The children used to call us “mateczki” (mothers), hence “Tyćka.”

Apart from Sister Longina, Sister Bernarda and myself, there was also Sister Alfonsa Wąsowska. ... There was also Sister Jakuba. And, of course, our Mother Superior, Sister Emilia from Warsaw, a good and noble person, mother of the orphans.

Testimony of Sister Alfonsa:

I was born in Węgrów, Poland. My father was a farmer. I had four brothers and sisters. My father bought animals for butchering, and he often did business with Jewish people. Jews were often in our home.

When I was thirteen I was badly hurt in a farm accident and was in a coma. My father promised God that if I lived he would give me to the Catholic Church. I recovered and in June of 1939, my father kept his promise and I became a nun. In August I joined the convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and took the name Sister Alfonsa.

Mother Superior, Emilia Malkowska, thought I would do well with children and sent me to the St. Joseph Orphanage in Przemyśl. We had about forty children, ages two to twelve, two of them we knew to be Jewish. Mother Superior decided we should save the Jewish children. ... One day a little girl came to the orphanage crying. She said her name was Maria and that she was Catholic. I saw a couple in the woods some distance away. I suspected they were Jewish and I felt we had to save these children. Soon more children came. The parents were preparing to go to the death camps and wanted their children to survive. Each child had a Polish name and some knew some prayers. We treated them as Catholics so as not to arouse the suspicions of the other children or the Polish people who visited the orphanage. We knew we were risking our lives because we knew the Germans killed people who helped Jews, but what kind of Christians would we be if we put our own safety first?

We had to make-do in terrible conditions. I was very young myself, a teenager, but I had to learn how to nurse and how to make clothes. I made medicine out of foxglove and made valerian herbal tea to relax the children. We could never risk calling a doctor because two of the Jewish boys were circumcised. Maria contracted pneumonia and was close to death. I applied leeches and finally she opened her eyes and recovered.

Most of the time the children were quiet and nervous. They cried at night about missing their parents. We had no news of them, of course. Sometimes a child at a meal time would cry and throw food on the floor. We used psychology and acted as if nothing had happened, talking to the child gently until he felt better.

We told one of the Jewish boys who wanted to be a rabbi that if a stranger comes to the convent and asks what he wants to be when he grows up, he should say a priest. We took the Jewish children to church not to convert them but so that no one would know they were Jews. The Germans did come but they found nothing suspicious.

We had no heat, no toilets, and food was very scarce. We had to go out begging or scavenging for food. We cooked lollies which we exchanged with Ukrainian farmers for food. In my nun's habit I could go places where other people could not go. Once I went to the big German army hospital to ask for sauerkraut which was good for the treatment of worms. The German officers called me names and insulted me. I told them I was working only for God. I left without anything. A little while later a German soldier brought a huge barrel of sauerkraut to the orphanage. We had enough to share with other orphanages and poor people.

In 1944 we were liberated by the Red Army. ... In one case the parents came back and claimed a child. They could not find words to thank us. The father who was a shoemaker made me a pair of shoes to show his appreciation. The other Jewish children I took to the Jewish Orphanage that was set up by the surviving Jewish community. Most of the children went to Israel.

See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, at page 852, which provides the following additional information:

The nuns' rescue operation began one day in July 1942, when they found an abandoned infant crying piercingly at the convent gate. Because Aktionen and deportations from the Przemyśl [Przemyśl] ghetto were occurring at this time, additional Jewish children were taken to the convent—several directly by their parents, some by Catholic go-betweens such as Kazika Romankiewicz, and others placed at the convent entrance with a note attached to their clothing. As devout Catholics, the nuns rescued the Jewish children even though they were aware of the personal risk. The children received devoted and loving care and the nuns kept them fed and clothed despite the state of deprivation at the convent. As part of the nuns' precautions, the Jewish youngsters were not issued official ration cards and Sister Alfonsa unhesitatingly begged and solicited donations for the convent children. Notably, the four nuns [awarded by Yad Vashem] had no missionary motive in their rescue effort and never attempted to convert the young wards. In November 1944, after Przemyśl was liberated, the nuns at their own initiative delivered the 13 Jewish children whom they had saved to the Jewish Committee that had been established in the town.

Jewish families with children were also kept by the Felician Sisters in their convent of St. Hedwig (Jadwiga) on Waygart Street, in Przemyśl, under the care of Mother Superior Maria Honorata (Irena Bielawska). The Felician Sisters also gave shelter to Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish children in their second house on Szczytowa Street run by Sister Maria Klara (Aniela Kotowska). The rescue efforts of these two nuns, who were recognized by Yad Vashem as “Righteous Among the Nations,” is described in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, at page 89.

In October 1942, Bożena Zlamal [Bożena Zlamal] helped the Wittman [Weitman?] family (father Abraham, mother Ela, son Jakub, and daughter Bilha) escape from the ghetto in Przemyśl [Przemyśl] and find shelter on the Aryan side of town. Bożena contacted two Polish nuns—Aniela Kotowska (Sister Klara) and Irena Bielawska (Sister Honorata)—and asked them to help rescue a Jewish family. Both nuns, each from a different convent in Przemyśl, agreed to hide the Wittmans. [The parents stayed in a cell-like room, whereas the two children, born in 1936 and 1939, were in separate locations.] Abraham Wittman later wrote about Kotowska that she was “an angel in a human body,” emphasizing her goodness and compassion towards her [dozen Jewish] wards. [When he no longer had enough money to pay for food and board, his fears were stilled by Sister Klara: ‘Don’t worry; we shall keep you until the war’s end.’] During the war, Bielawska (Sister Honorata) also hid a Jewish couple named Fuller as well as a five-year-old Jewish girl called Lila Rosenthal (later Lea Fried). Both nuns acted without reward, receiving only small sums of money from their charges that covered the cost of their food. After the war, the Wittmans emigrated to Sweden. The fate of the Fuller couple is unknown.

The Carmelite Sisters of the Infant Jesus sheltered a number of Jewish children in the orphanage they opened for homeless children in Sosnowiec during the war. Their help was widely known among the local population. One of the Jewish children and her grandmother had been directed to the sisters by Rev. Mieczysław Zawadzki of Będzin.²⁶ The superior, Mother Teresa of St. Joseph (Janina Kierocińska), was awarded by Yad Vashem posthumously in 1992. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, pp.346–47.)

Mother Teresa-Janina Kierocińska [Kierocińska] was mother superior of the ... Carmelite Sisters Convent in the town of Sosnowiec. On her orders and instructions, some local Jews were hidden in the convent. Among them were a Jewish woman, Pinkus, and her granddaughter, who was “christened” Marysia Wilczyńska [Wilczyńska]. They stayed at the convent until the area was liberated in January 1945. Teresa Jabłowska [Jabłowska], a Jewish girl who escaped the liquidation of the Sosnowiec ghetto, stayed with the nuns until after the war, when her mother came to reclaim her. In 1943, a Jewish baby was brought to the convent from the town of Szydłowiec [Szydłowiec]. On Kierocińska's express orders, the nuns took care of the little baby, passing him off as a Polish orphan called Józef [Józef] Bombecki. It was only after the war that the child discovered his Jewish origins. Mother Teresa-Janina also sheltered Andrzej Siemiątkowski [Siemiątkowski], whose mother, a convert to Christianity, had perished in Auschwitz. The survivors of the Sosnowiec

²⁶ “Przechowywanie Żydów przez Matkę Teresę od św. Józefa–Janinę Kierocińską (1885–1946), współzałożycielkę Zgromadzenia Sióstr Karmelitanek Dzieciątka Jezus w Sosnowcu,” Internet: <http://archidiecezja.lodz.pl/azkarmel/mT_wiecej.html>.

convent later remembered Mother Teresa-Janina as someone of exceptional humanity whose love of mankind was rooted in deep religious faith.

One of the Jewish charges, then a boy, recalled:

As a Jewish child I encountered exceptional care and protection. The Sisters created for us family conditions and took care of us with the greatest open-heartedness. This was heroism! Their heroic attitude I attribute above all to Mother Teresa.

(“Sprawiedliwa wśród Narodów Świata: Rozmowa z siostrą Bogdaną Batog, karmelitanką Dzieciątka Jezus o Matce Teresie Kierocińskiej. Rozmawiał ojciec Bartłomiej Kucharski OCD,” *Głos Karmelu*, no. 4 (2006), Internet: <<http://www.karmel.pl/rozmowy/rozmowa39.html>>.)

In Klimontów, a small town near Sandomierz, the Sisters of the Most Holy Name of Jesus under the Protection of the Virgin Mary Help of the Faithful sheltered three Jewish girls in their orphanage, among them Eva Nisencwajg and Maria Ropelewska, and a Jewish man in their convent. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, p.797.)

Wiktoria and Stanislaw [Stanisław] Szumielewicz lived in the village of Rytwiany near Staszow [Staszów] in the Kielce district during the war. In the summer of 1942, they sheltered Eva, the five-year-old daughter of prewar friends Moshe and Hena Nisencwajg. The Szumielewicz, who had moved to the area from Bydgoszcz upon the outbreak of the war, introduced Eva as “Iwonka, our orphaned niece.” Being a teacher by profession, Wiktoria provided Eva with an education. Some time afterwards, the Szumielewicz also sheltered Eva’s cousins, Lucy and Janek Nisencwajg. When someone informed on them and the children were in danger, Wiktoria decided to move them to the cloister orphanage. Janek did not go to the orphanage; instead he returned to his parents. A few days later, Lucy also ran away from the cloister and joined her family. ...Eva stayed in the orphanage in Klimatow [actually, Klimontów] for a year. When the cloister was bombed during an Allied [actually, by the Germans] air raid, Wiktoria located Eva and sheltered her once more. After the liberation, the Szumielewicz, along with Eva, returned to Bydgoszcz. There Eva was found by her uncle Henryk Nisencwajg and taken to Cracow. ... In 1947, Eva (later Bergstein) was sent to her mother’s sister in Canada.

Assistance was often unorganized and random. Krystyna Kalata-Olejn timer recalls how, in April 1943, as a young child, she was plucked off the streets of Warsaw and whisked to safety by a nun, a stranger she met entirely by chance. She was taken to a home for orphans in Ignaców near Mińsk Mazowiecki, run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, where a number of Jews, both adults and children, were sheltered. (Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, p.280.)

I was born in Warsaw, but my autobiography actually begins the moment I stepped out of a sewer canal onto the Aryan side during the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. Sister Julia Sosnowska, no longer alive today, a nun from a nearby order on Nowolipie Street, was passing by near the canal. She spotted a little girl with dark hair and helped her get out of the sewer. And that, indeed, was me. She decided to help and traveled with me to the children’s home in Ignaców near Mińsk Mazowiecki. In precisely this home [run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul], where I was being hidden, I stayed until the end of the war. I supposedly had a small slip of paper with the name: Krystyna Olejnik, age 4. I stayed there until October 1945.

Julia Sosnowska, the nun who rescued Krystyna Kalata-Olejnik, was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. Her story is related in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, at page 741.

In April 1943, Julia Sosnowska, a nun, noticed a young child in a tattered and torn dress crawling out of the sewer near the border of the Warsaw ghetto. Shocked by the spectacle, Julia picked up the girl, who was in a state of near exhaustion, and, guided by Christian love, took her back to her room in the house that she shared with other nuns. Julia learned that the foundling had tried to escape from the ghetto, but being too weak to stand had only managed to crawl as far as the sewer opening. Julia washed the girl, fed her, and looked after her devotedly until October 1943, when she placed her in an educational establishment in Ignacow [Ignaców], near Minsk [Mińsk] Mazowiecki, in the Warsaw district. The little girl, registered as Krystyna Olejnik in the Aryan papers that Sister Julia obtained for her, remained in the institution until

the area was liberated. After the war, she was officially adopted by a Polish family and stayed on in Poland under the name of Krystyna Kalata.

Other accounts testifying to the rescue activities in Ignaców by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul are found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, at pages 230–31; Part 2, at page 668.

[1] Jan Gawrych lived with his wife and their four children in a small house adjacent to the Wolka Czarnińska [Wólka Czarnińska] estate near the town of Stanisławów, which is near Minsk [Mińsk] Mazowiecki in the Warsaw district. ... Jan Gawrych worked there as a forester. ... In 1942, when a young girl named Fryda Szpringer escaped from the ghetto in Minsk Mazowiecki, which was about to be liquidated, she went straight to the house of the Gawrychs, who did not hesitate to accept her unconditionally into their home. They treated her kindly, gave her help, and told anyone who asked about her identity that she was a relative. In September 1942, the Stanisławów ghetto was liquidated and its inhabitants were taken to the extermination camp in Treblinka. Three of them—Chaskiel Paper, Tirza Zylberberg, and Moshe Aronson—escaped from the transport and after wandering through fields and villages arrived at the home of Jan and Aleksandra Gawrych, who at great risk took them in too and gave them food and lodging. ... On March 8, 1943, after somebody informed on them, German policemen raided the Gawrych home. The Jews hiding there tried to escape, but except for Szpringer they were all shot to death. The Gawrych home was burned down, Jan was arrested and transferred to the Gestapo in Minsk Mazowiecki, where he was tortured and murdered. Szpringer managed to flee the massacre and after wandering through the neighboring villages found shelter in a convent in Ignacow [Ignaców], where she remained until the liberation of the area in the summer of 1944. After the war she immigrated to Israel.

[2] In August 1942, during the liquidation of the Minsk [Mińsk] Mazowiecki ghetto in the Warsaw district, three girls—Irena Romano, Frania Aronson, and Miriam Sada—escaped. After wandering through the area, the three reached St. Anthony's Convent ... in the nearby village of Ignacow [Ignaców], where they were welcomed by Marianna Reszko, the mother superior. Although she realized they were Jewish refugees, Reszko took them in and put them to work as kitchen hands and maids. Joanna Mistera, a nun who was also let in on the secret, looked after them devotedly and watched out for their safety, especially when Germans visited the convent. The three Jewish girls stayed in the convent until September 1944, when the area was liberated and after the war immigrated to Israel.

Mother Marianna Reszko and Sister Joanna Mistera were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. (See also the testimony of Franciszka A. (Frania Aronson) and Irit R. (Irena Romano) in Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, pp.171–77, 191–97.)

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul maintained a number of institutions in Warsaw where they extended help to Jews. They also provided their services at the Father Boduen Home for infant foundlings (Dom Małych Dzieci im. Ks. Gabriela Piotra Baudouina), located at 75 Nowogrodzka Street, together with lay personnel. Several hundred Jewish children are believed to have passed through that home. The director, Dr. Maria Wierzbowska, was recognized by Yad Vashem on behalf of all of the home's dedicated staff. Among the former Jewish charges who attended the award ceremony in Warsaw in February 2007 were Krystyna Kalata, Teresa Lisiewska, Katarzyna Moloch, Joanna Sobolewska-Pyz, Debora Stocker, Barbara Schmid, Anna Szpanowska, Michał Głowiński, Stan Kol, and Aaron Seidenberg.²⁷ The following accounts, which describe the activities of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, are from Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, at pages 427–28, 430, 435, 435–36, 459, 494; Part 2, at pages 606, 645, 820. Although some of the summaries claim the nuns did not about their charges' Jewish origin, that information is not very credible as they likely suspected as much, if only because of the children's lack of knowledge of religious matters.

[1] In 1938, soon after Eleonora Hopfenstand gave birth to her daughter, Juliana, Marianna Bronik [Kurkowska-Bronik] began working in her Warsaw home as a nursemaid, remaining there until the city's Jews were interned in the local ghetto.

²⁷ Anna Sierpińska, "Uroczystość nadania tytułu 'Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata' ... w Domu Małych Dzieci im. Ks. G.P. Baudouina w Warszawie, 22 lutego 2007 r.,"
Internet: <http://dzieciholocaustu.org.pl/szab13.php?s=aktualnosci004_01.php>.

Bronik would often go into the ghetto, taking great risks, to bring Hopfenstand various foodstuffs. In July 1942, during the large-scale Aktion in the ghetto, Hopfenstand succeeded in smuggling Juliana out to the Aryan side of the city, where, as they had agreed in advance, Kurkowska-Bronik received her. From that day on, Kurkowska looked after Juliana as if she were her own daughter, telling anyone who asked that she was a relative whose parents had been deported to Germany. In Kurkowska's home, the child was given loving care, until one of the neighbors began to suspect that she was Jewish. It turned out afterwards that the neighbor was an agent of the Gestapo, who was later executed in her apartment by members of the Polish underground. But Kurkowska, whose experience had made her wary, preferred to place Juliana in an institution for children [on Czerniakowska Street²⁸] run by nuns (Siostry Szartyki), without revealing that she was Jewish. The Jewish child remained there even after the children of the institution were deported with all the city's residents after the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, and it was there that her mother found her after the liberation in January 1945.

[2] In 1943, after countless ordeals, Zuzanna Ronen and her four-year-old daughter, Wera, arrived in Warsaw from one of the neighboring towns. Exhausted and hungry, lacking shelter or any means of livelihood, the two walked around the city streets until Bogusław [Bogusław] Jan Kuryłowicz [Kuryłowicz] suddenly came up to them. Before the war, Kuryłowicz had managed a business together with Ronen's husband and had become friends with him and his family. Kuryłowicz realized how desperate the two Jewish refugees were and, despite the risk to his life, invited them to his spacious home in the center of the city, where he lived with his wife, Zofia. Ronen and her daughter were warmly welcomed into the Kuryłowicz's home. After the two rested for a few days and received devoted care, Zofia succeeded in placing Wera in a home for children run by nuns, where she passed her off as a relative. At the same time, Bogusław Jan took steps to save Ronen, soon obtaining for her Aryan papers, a room to live in, and employment as a clerk. After the Warsaw Uprising was suppressed in October 1944, Ronen managed to move to nearby Milanówek [Milanówek], with Kuryłowicz's help, while her daughter Wera was transferred, along with all the other girls in the institution where she had been placed, to a location far from Warsaw. Ronen and her daughter were liberated in January 1945 and after the war immigrated to Israel. Deeply grateful, they never forgot the Kuryłowicz's, who saved their lives without receiving anything in return, motivated solely their human compassion.

Vera Frister, born in Lwów in 1937 as Vera Hefter, described her stay at the orphanage on Czerniakowska Street run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, where she was known as Janka Michalska and was cared for lovingly by Sister Teresa, in her account of May 27, 2006, titled "Aniele... stróżu moj..." ("My Guardian Angel"), published in *Świecie Nasz-Comiesięczny Magazyn Polonii*, Internet: <<http://artographix.net/sn/index.php?id=48e0f92>>. After the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944, the Sisters and their charges were forced to leave Warsaw along with the rest of the population. After several days' journey in the countryside, marching from village to village with large numbers of evacuees, Vera's mother found her. Vera spent the rest of the war hiding with her mother. Mrs. Kuryłowicz, a devout Catholic, believed that it was her duty to help those in need, regardless of their religion.

[3] When the Warsaw ghetto was sealed, Maria Kwiatkowska came to the aid of Jews interned in it. She smuggled foodstuffs and medications to them, and also helped some of her acquaintances to flee to the Aryan side of the city. In December 1942, when Żegota [Żegota] was established, Kwiatkowska became active in the organization. Without asking for anything in return, simply because she felt it was her moral duty to help Jews persecuted by a common enemy, Kwiatkowska became one of Żegota's most courageous and outstanding couriers. Risking her own life, Kwiatkowska helped Dr. Józef [Józef] Fuswerk and his wife, Maria née Adler (who perished in the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1944), escape from the ghetto and housed them in her mother's apartment until she was able to find a permanent shelter for them. With Kwiatkowska's active assistance, Stefania Staszewska also fled the ghetto. Kwiatkowska obtained Aryan papers for her and employed her as a housekeeper in her home. After the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, Kwiatkowska transferred Staszewska to Zakopane, where she was liberated in January 1945. Kwiatkowska also saved Jewish children by taking them to Christian orphanages, in particular to the Father Boduen children's home, where she was known and her activity was greatly valued. [She placed Elżbieta, the daughter of Barbara P. there, with the assistance of her cousin, Helena Michalak, a nun who worked there.²⁹] Kwiatkowska's apartment in the center of Warsaw was an address for Jews who fled from the ghetto and those seeking shelter on the Aryan side. Among the Jews whose lives were saved thanks to

²⁸ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.286.

²⁹ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.289.

Kwiatkowska's help were Hipolit Bajer and Zygmunt Rukalski, who left Poland after the war.

[4] While still a youngster, Wanda Kwiatkowska was active in the PPS [Polish Socialist Party] in Warsaw. In 1940, Kwiatkowska met Jonas Benon in the home of a party activist who was married to a Jewish woman. In the summer of 1942, during the large-scale deportations from the Warsaw ghetto, Benon turned to Kwiatkowska, asking her to help him and his family find a hiding place on the Aryan side of the city. Kwiatkowska did as requested and managed to get Aryan papers and accommodations in Warsaw for Jonas, his wife, Bronislawa [Bronislawa], and their two sons, nine-year-old Andrzej and two-year-old Stanislaw [Stanisław]. After a while, Barbara Palatynska [Palatyńska], Bronislawa's sister, also escaped with her two-year-old daughter, Elzbieta [Elżbieta]. Palatynska paid a Polish woman to look after her daughter while she herself moved in with her sister. Jonas, who found separate accommodations, worked to provide for the family. When, in the spring of 1943, neighbors became suspicious of the two sisters, they were forced to separate. Once again Kwiatkowska came to the rescue. She arranged for the Benons' older boy to move in with acquaintances, where he stayed until the end of the war, while Kwiatkowska arranged for Bronislawa to move in with her cousin, Zofia Prager, who lived in Ozarow [Ożarów] Mazowiecki, near Warsaw. Although Prager realized that Bronislawa was Jewish, she agreed to let her stay for about a year and a half, until January 1945, when the area was liberated by the Red Army, after which she was reunited with her family. Palatynska, who, thanks to her Aryan looks, managed to survive numerous hardships after leaving her sister, found work but was unable to find a long-term arrangement for her little girl. Kwiatkowska once again came to the rescue and with the help of a relative who was a nun working in Father Boduen's orphanage in Warsaw arranged for Elzbieta to be admitted to the orphanage, where she remained until the end of the war.

[5] Daniela Szykret was four years old in 1942, when a Polish acquaintance of her parents took her out of the Warsaw ghetto and handed her over to a family of Jewish refugees who were living outside the ghetto under false identities. Later, when someone informed on them to the authorities, the family that adopted Daniela was arrested and executed. Daniela was saved thanks to the intervention of Wladyslaw [Władysław] and Stefania Lipski, who despite the danger to their lives testified that Daniela was not Jewish. They placed her, as a Christian, in an orphanage run by nuns (Siostry Szarytki), where she remained until the end of the war, after which she immigrated to Israel ... The Lipskis continued to save Jewish children and early in 1943 sheltered Lola Lew, a Jewish girl who had escaped from the ghetto, in their apartment and passed her off as a relative whose parents had been arrested by the Germans. Although Lola looked Jewish, Danuta, the Lipskis' daughter, would take walks with her in the street to cheer her up and dispel her feelings of loneliness. Lola remained in the Lipskis' home, although they received no payment from her, and all the members of the family, out of purely humanitarian feelings, treated her with great devotion. After they were expelled from the city following the Warsaw Uprising in late summer 1944, the Lipskis continued to look after the girl they were sheltering and did not part from her until their liberation in January 1945. After the war, Lola emigrated from Poland to France ...

[6] During the occupation, Wladyslawa [Władysława] Marynowska worked as a children's nursemaid in an orphanage for abandoned children named after the priest Boduen. Active in the underground and working in close cooperation with Irena Schultz, an underground activist who worked in the social affairs department of the city of Warsaw, Marynowska took advantage of her position in the orphanage to take in Jewish children in need of asylum under assumed identities, most of whom were sent from CENTOS children's institution in the ghetto. Despite the constant danger to her life and the life of her young son, Marynowska did everything she could to safeguard the young children from the constant checks conducted by the Gestapo, who would periodically visit the orphanage and search for hidden Jewish children. Most of the charges left the orphanage after shelter was found for them with foster families in the city and outside it, in an operation that Marynowska participated in using her connections in the underground. The number of children who were saved thanks to Marynowska's efforts is unknown, both because records were not kept and because the children who were saved left Poland after the war for localities all over the world.

[7] Shmuel Kenigswein, a well-known boxer, met Zygmunt Pietak [Piętak] when both were involved in the smuggling of food into the Warsaw ghetto. In the summer of 1942, during the large-scale deportation of the Jews of Warsaw to Treblinka, Kenigswein asked Pietak to help him escape together with his family and find a place to hide on the Aryan side of the city. Pietak immediately agreed to help his friend despite the great danger involved, and demonstrating considerable resourcefulness smuggled Shmuel and Regina Kenigswein and their three young children out of the ghetto. Pietak placed the youngest child, still a baby, in the foundling home run by Father Boduen and hid the other four members of the family in a hiding place in an apartment which he had prepared for them ahead of time and where they hid until late 1943. Throughout that entire period, Pietak was the Jewish family's only contact with the outside world, visiting them frequently and bringing them provisions and other necessities. When the hiding place became too dangerous and it was feared that

they would be discovered, Pietak moved the four fugitives to the care of Jan Zabinski [Żabiński], the manager of a zoo, who hid them in the zoo for two months. After that, the Kenigswein family hid with Feliks Cywinski [Cywiński], and until the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1944, Pietak kept in constant touch with them, giving them moral support and caring for all their needs. Kenigswein participated in the Warsaw Uprising as a platoon commander and all five members of the Kenigswein family were saved.

[8] Before the war, Apolonia Przybojewska lived in Warsaw in the same apartment house as the Guz and Szarfsztein families and they became good friends. After the occupation of the city and the establishment of the Warsaw ghetto, the two Jewish families moved to Minsk [Mińsk] Mazowiecki. Przybojewska kept in touch with them and helped them transfer funds and keep in touch with their relatives imprisoned in other ghettos. One evening in November 1942, Sura Guz suddenly appeared on Przybojewska's doorstep holding the baby girl she had given birth to just days before outside the forced labor camp in which she had been imprisoned together with her husband. Guz asked Przybojewska to find a way to save the baby, and the very next day Przybojewska staged the discovery of an abandoned baby on her doorstep for her neighbors. This enabled her to hand the baby over to the orphanage run by Father Boduen in Warsaw. After she brought the baby to the orphanage, she continued to visit her frequently and maintained contact between her and her mother, who was hiding on the Aryan side of the city. In late 1942, Przybojewska's other Jewish friends, who were imprisoned in a forced labor camp near Minsk Mazowiecki, asked her to help them live on the Aryan side of Warsaw. ... Przybojewska arranged Aryan papers for them and rented a suitable apartment for them. ... The seven Jewish fugitives and the Guz family's infant daughter were saved thanks to Przybojewska's devoted help and courageous resourcefulness, whose efforts to save them were motivated by her humanitarian principles, for which she never asked for or received anything in return.

[9] Genowefa and Jozef [Józef] Tomczyk lived in Wlochy [Włochy], near Warsaw, during the war. In the summer of 1942, they accepted Anna Jasinska [Jasińska] as a domestic worker after she was sent to them by an employment agency. Anna had managed to leave the Warsaw ghetto with her 15-month-old baby girl. When she was on the Aryan side of the city it occurred to her that she would not be able to find work if she was burdened with a child. She managed to place the child in an orphanage on Nowogrodzka Street [the Father Boduen Home?] and then began to look for work. She found the Tomczyks through the employment agency and soon afterwards began working for them. Almost immediately, the Tomczyks' neighbors accused them of hiding a Jew. Genowefa asked Anna about her origins and Anna answered that she was a Jew. She also offered to leave if the Tomczyks preferred her to do so. After consulting with her husband, Genowefa decided to let Anna stay. The neighbors were told that Anna was a prewar friend of the family. Jozef arranged a Kennkarte for Anna and the neighbors seemed satisfied with the Tomczyk's story. "The Tomczyks lived in difficult circumstances ... despite that, I received from them food, medicine, and even money for travel, since every Sunday I visited my daughter, who had been taken to a monastery [run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul] in Klarysew, near Warsaw. ... The food and medicine I brought saved my daughter's life and helped many sick children in the monastery," wrote Anna in her testimony to Yad Vashem. After the war, Anna brought her daughter to the Tomczyks and they stayed there until both families were able to organize their new lives.

Ilonka Fajnberg (later Róża Maria Górka), born in 1939, was one of several Jewish children sheltered by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the Warsaw suburb of Kamionek, where she went under the name of Marysia Kołakowska. The superior of the convent, Sister Maria Pietkiewicz, has been recognized by Yad Vashem. (Account of Ilonka Fajnberg, "I Found My Roots," in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, volume 2, p.40.)

In the spring of 1943 I found myself in the Sisters of Charity convent in Kamionek. From that time on, my guardian was the mother superior in this convent, Sister Maria Pietkiewicz, a woman of great heart, which she, however, tried not to show. She was stiff and unapproachable and aroused fear and respect, not only among the girls in her care.

At the convent I was the only fully orphaned child, left without even an extended family. It was very sad for me when families took the other children on Sundays and holidays, and I had to remain alone. When I grew up a bit, I complained about this to Mother Superior, and she became angry, "What do you mean you have no family; we're your family!"

And that's how it was left.

The situation for children, especially Jewish ones, was particularly tragic after the failed Warsaw Uprising of August 1944. Hena Kuczer, who assumed the name Krystyna Budnicka, recalls her experience as an 11-year-old girl who was taken in by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. After being rescued by some Poles from the

ruins of the ghetto, she was sheltered by a Polish family, but soon they too found themselves homeless and dispossessed and so they turned to the sisters for help. (Testimony of Krystyna Budnicka, August 2003, Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>>.)

My name is Krystyna Budnicka, my true family name is Kuczer, Hena Kuczer. I first used my Polish name when Mr. Budnicki, a Pole, who had been looking after me, handed me over to some nuns who ran an orphanage as we were leaving a burning Warsaw after the Uprising in October 1944. When the nuns asked my name I didn't hesitate for long. Krystyna Budnicka, I said. And it stuck. ...

I couldn't show my face in public because I looked very Semitic. The next day a female liaison came in the morning, put a bandage around my head and took me by tram to Dobra Street. And that's how I found myself at the Budnickis'. Anka [her sister-in-law] was already there.

The Budnickis helped Jews; they were a middle-aged childless couple. I know that when the summer holidays started, Mrs. Budnicka went to a summer vacation spot with some Jewish children, somewhere in the Otwock area. When the Uprising broke out, she wasn't in Dobra Street. Anka cooked there. I recall that the Poles captured a heating plant somewhere nearby and there was great joy, euphoria. During the Uprising we would go down with everybody else to the cellar, the shelter. At that time I didn't hear a bad word directed at us. You could say that people felt a stronger solidarity with one another, all felt the same danger. We walked out of Warsaw on 6th September with the Budnickis. We crossed Warsaw, which was ablaze. I parted with Anka in Wola [a district of Warsaw]. First, there was a night stopover under the open sky, and in the morning selection for work duties.

Mr. Budnicki noticed some nuns, Grey Nuns [a mistranslation of "szarytki"— actually, Sisters of Charity, from the French "charité"] from Warsaw, from Ordynacka Street. He went up to the Mother Superior and told her that he had an orphan, that he wasn't her father. She said, 'You will come to get her after the war?' 'Yes, yes, of course.' said Budnicki. When the nun saw me, she asked, 'My child, what's your name?' I said, 'Krysia Budnicka'. I went with the children from the orphanage to the Pruszkow [Pruszków] transit camp. Later it turned out that out of eighteen children, six were Jewish.

...
At Pruszkow we spent only one night. I remember I was given an empty food can, with which I went to get soup. From Pruszkow the whole children's home was moved to Bobrowce near Mszczonow [Mszczonów]. The trek took several days. We were billeted in a school. A few of the girls were Jewish, but of course I knew nothing of that. We were all very poor, we had left Warsaw after the Uprising with nothing. The nuns scoured the villages and brought us bits of food and old clothes. I got a moth-eaten coat, I remember that was a luxury; the other children envied me. My looks were a big problem and the nuns protected me. When the other children went into the village to dig potatoes, the nuns kept me back. They told the other children that I had a wounded finger. I don't think I was very popular. Nobody taunted me for being Jewish, but the other children used to call me a creep because I was very obliging—probably because after the hell I'd been through I wanted to show my gratitude for being taken care of. We were in Bobrowce when the liberation came [the Russians entered Warsaw on January 17, 1945], and in February we were moved to Osuchow [Osuchów], to the abandoned palace of the Plater family. There I started going to school. I was 13. In May 1945 we were taken to a village called Szczaki Zlotoklos [Złotokłos], where we continued to go to school.

The nuns wanted to baptize me right away, in October 1944, but a priest said that he couldn't approve, that baptism could take place only in the event of a life-threatening emergency. 'We shall wait, the war will end soon, she is a big girl and she must decide for herself,' he said. I was baptized in Szczaki Zlotoklos. That was something I really wanted. I was very keen to fulfill all my religious duties conscientiously. Some men came to Szczaki Zlotoklos looking for Jewish children. The nuns brought them to me and I told them everything I remembered about my family. They said they would start looking, and that perhaps someone might have survived. I don't know what organization they can have been from. Six of us girls were Jewish. One was found by her father. I remember the tears. Another one was taken to Israel. She was very small, seven years old. First she was taken to the Jewish children's home, then to Cracow, and today she lives in Israel. They tried to persuade me to go as well, but I didn't want to, and I was old enough that they could hardly have forced me. The same people came to the children's home several times, and they carried on coming when we were back in Warsaw, too. [Editor's note: The children's home returned to Warsaw in 1946, and was located on Czerniakowska Street.] Once a man came to visit me claiming to be my cousin and telling me he was going to take me to Palestine. But I knew he was no relative of mine. I was very hurt that he tried to deceive me.

I stayed with the Grey Nuns for a very long time, up to my grammar school graduation, that is, until 1952.

After the failed insurrection in Warsaw (August to October 1944), Catholic institutions including convents and orphanages were forced to evacuate Warsaw and the surrounding areas. At great risk, nuns spirited their young

Jewish charges to shelters in other parts of the country. One such child was Necha Baranek. Her testimony is found in Mark Schutzman, ed., *Wierzbnik-Starachowitz: A Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Wierzbnik-Starachowitz Reflief Society in Israel and Abroad, 1973), at page 51.

I was born July 7th, 1940, in Wierzbnik, Poland. My parent, Zion and Sala Baranek.

In 1942 just before Hitler liquidated all Jews from Wierzbnik, my parents gave me away to a Polish couple in Warsaw and I took the identity of Zosha Murofska [Zosia Murawska]. I was two years of age and spoke perfect Polish.

Two days after my parents gave me away, they were taken to a labour camp in Wierzbnik, called Tartak. From Tartak, my parents communicated with the Pole who kept their child. He was to keep them informed about her health and they in turn would pay him at regular intervals—as agreed upon. ... When the Pole came, this person paid him and at that time asked him to take the son of Morty Maslowicz—a little boy who was hidden in the Tartak Camp with him. The Pole agreed and took the little boy to his home. This, I believe, was a very important step in my life—an actual turning point. The only recollection of this part of my childhood, was a little boy walking back and forth, back and forth, and me sitting crossed-legged like an India, for days on end. The Pole was arrested by the Germans and his wife, being in fear for her life, especially since she was hiding a Jewish boy, had no alternative and found us and took us to our new home—beside Warsaw. The Nuns were very good to us and tried to keep us alive with what little they had. I can remember the hours we spent on my knees in prayer, the Virgin Mary was taught to be our one and only Mother. I do not know the date, but I remember when again, I had to leave my home. The Germans made the Nuns evacuate their Home and we all had to get out within hours. Those who were healthy, had to walk the long journey to Zakopany [Zakopane]. Babies and the sick rode in buggies. It was winter and those who had no shoes had to walk barefoot in the snow. When we arrived in Zakopany it was Christmas and I will always remember the warmth and light of that very beautiful Christmas tree. My new home consisted of tables for beds, bread and milky soup once a day, and devoted prayers.

When the war ended, we were taken away from Zakopany, by a Jewish lady. There were five of us—three girls and two boys. It was a rainy night and I can remember being carried out to the horse and buggy that would take us to a new home. From the horse and buggy we went into trucks that had been waiting for us ... I recall being very sick for quite a long time, and at this point, we arrived at our new home—a Jewish orphanage in Bellevue, in the outskirts of Paris, France.

My father died in Mauthausen. My mother survived and in 1944 she began her long journey in search of her child.

Assistance came from the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, who ran a retirement home in Kraków, which was evacuated to Szczawnica, in southern Poland, and from their chaplain, Rev. Albin Małysiak, now auxiliary bishop of Kraków. Both Rev. Małysiak and Sister Bronisława Wilemska, the superior, were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. Rev. Małysiak recalled those events in an article he published in 1987 (“Zakład Helclów a ratowanie Żydów,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Kraków, March 15, 1987).

In the spring of 1944, the Germans transferred to Szczawnica the well-known Helcel Institute, a home for the aged in Kraków ... I was the chaplain of that institute. Along with Sister Bronisława Wilemska, the superior, we sheltered among the residents of the institute two Jewish woman and three Jewish men. Of course, it was necessary at the outset to obtain for them the so-called Kennkarte or identity documents. ...

All of the charges of the institute as well as the personnel [nuns and lay staff] knew that there were Jews hidden among us. It was impossible to conceal that fact, even though it was known what danger faced those who were responsible for sheltering Jews.

After the passage of weeks and months many of the residents of Szczawnica learned of the Jewish retirees. No one betrayed this to the Germans who were stationed in the immediate vicinity ...

The following account is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 487.

During the occupation, Reverend Albin Małysiak [Małysiak] and Sister Bronisława [Bronisława] Wilemska helped five Jews. At that time, Sister Bronisława was the head of the Helcel Home for the Aged and Retarded in Cracow, where Reverend Albin was chaplain. In 1943, five Jews came to the home and stayed there as wards: Katarzyna Styczeń [Styczeń], 45; Helena Kachel, 50; Zbigniew Koszanowski, who was in his forties; Henryk Juanski [Juński], who was in his thirties, and another man who was aged between 30 and 35. They were provided with forged papers, meals, and clothing. “We helped them for humanitarian reasons. Jesus Christ told us to love everybody,” wrote Reverend Albin in his

testimony to *Yad Vashem*. In the spring of 1944, all the tenants of the Home, including the sisters, nurses, and secular staff, were deported by the Germans to Szczawnica Zdroj [Zdrój], Nowy Sącz [Sącz] district. The five Jews also went along to Szczawnica as if they were regular residents of the home. "Nearly all those living in the Home knew that Sister Wilemska and I were hiding Jews," wrote Reverend Albin. Many of the residents of Szczawnica knew it too, but no one informed the authorities, despite the fact that there was a German police post in the neighborhood. Helena Kachel died in the fall of 1944. Soon afterwards, Katarzyna Styczen also died. The men survived until the liberation in January 1945. Katarzyna's daughter, Maria Rolicka, went to Szczawnica after receiving news of her mother's death. "I talked to the sisters and the reverend father who helped my mother and the four other Jews," she wrote. Reverend Albin told her that he and her mother had many "long talks and discussions. We used to walk in Gorny [Górny] Park in Szczawnica and discuss different problems of Jews, Poles, and humanity in general."

One of the Jews rescued at the Helcel Institute was the mother of Mary Rolicka, who wrote about her family's fate in "A Memoir of Survival in Poland," *Midstream*, April 1988, at pages 26–27.

My first encounter with Holocaust documentation was watching a scene from the movie Shoah, which, by chance, I saw on television. The scene struck me as unfair to the Poles, and I decided that I had an obligation to tell my side of the story. ...

Despite what Raul Hilberg has said in his book The Destruction of the European Jews, thousands of Jews escaped from the Warsaw ghetto, and thousands—not "several hundred"—were living in Warsaw. The people who escaped (Hilberg called it "evasion") either hid with the help of Poles, or became partisans, or, like me, lived openly by using Polish identities. The latter was possible only if one did not "look Jewish", and could blend with the Polish background, as far as language and behaviour are concerned.

This was a dangerous life; many did not make it. But living with Poles gave me an insight in the Polish way of thinking about the Jews and the Holocaust. I met all kinds of Poles; they did not know I was Jewish, nor anything of my personal background. My father founded the Zionist organization in Chmielnik; my grandfather, founder of a synagogue in Chmielnik, was a Zionist and taught his sons to follow his path.

In the scene of Shoah that I saw, a stupid-looking group of country folk was asked by Claude Lanzmann, the director of the film, why the Holocaust had happened. They replied that perhaps the Jews had their blood on their own hands, because they had killed Jesus Christ. I never heard this anti-Semitic statement during the Holocaust. The implication is that the idea comes from the Catholic Church, but in that case would the Church have helped the Jews?

I must state here positively that many Poles, and the Church too, helped the Jews, knowing that there was a death penalty for that. I do not say there was no anti-Semitism in Poland, or that there were no Polish blackmailers, or collaborators with the Gestapo, paid "per capita" for denouncing Jews. All of us passing as Poles had very painful encounters with such criminals. But how can one expect that there would be no criminals among the Poles? Is there any country in which criminals would not take advantage of the vulnerable? ...

Nazi propaganda described deportations from the ghettos as "resettlement for work." Many wanted to believe this: Jews are optimists, and the truth about deportations was difficult to believe for the Jewish victims in the ghettos, and for the West, where these facts were known. Clandestine data were brought to Chmielnik by Anielewicz, the hero of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; my mother believed him. She decided that the family had to flee, and got the necessary Polish documents. My grandfather was shot by the SS. My father was sent to Buchenwald. But four members of my family escaped in the last week before the deportation. My mother found shelter in Warsaw; it did not work out. She ran to Cracow [Kraków], to which I had gone directly from Chmielnik. A mother of my Polish friends recommended me to a woman who had a room to rent. My mother, however, had to rely on little hotels, boarding houses, and pensions, swamped by Jews escaping from the ghettos, where a witch hunt for Jews was going on. My mother went through a terrible ordeal: she stayed only a few days in each place. I kept finding new accommodations for her. She could barely survive.

But then a landlady recommended her to the Sisters of Charity, a group of Roman Catholic nuns. She found a safe haven in the Retirement Home in Szczawnica, where she survived the war with other Jewish "retirees"—as far from retirement age as she was. I met her in 1944 in Cracow, where she was brought by the Sisters. She could not find words to thank them. They gave her not only economic but moral support, without which she could not have survived the many months of anguish about my fate, especially the two months of the Warsaw Uprising [of August 1944]. Nothing is equal to what the Sisters did for my mother.

With this tale of survival in Poland, I hope to rectify some of the unjust treatment of Poles in historical accounts of the Holocaust.

The Daughters of Mary Immaculate extended help to Jews in various localities. The following accounts pertain to the towns of Hrubieszów and Lida. (Jan Żaryn, *Dzieje Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce (1944–1989)* [Warsaw:

Neriton and Instytut Historii PAN, 2003], pp.17–18; Jan Żaryn, “The Catholic Church Hierarchy vis-à-vis Polish-Jewish Relations Between 1945 and 1947,” in Łukasz Kamiński and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom* [Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance, 2006], p.83.)

[1] *Sisters in Hrubieszów aided Jews especially during the liquidation of the ghetto. Sister Błażeja Bednarczyk ... transported Jews and their belongings from the ghetto to the town square and she fulfilled their requests such as buying food, fruit and other items. On several occasions she thought that she would not manage to survive the ordeal, because the Gestapo had caught her red-handed [and was nearly shot].*

The Sisters also sheltered an 11-year-old girl in their convent in Hrubieszów. (Kurek, *Your Life is Worth Mine*, pp.125–26.)

[2] *‘One day, we found on the porch [in Lida] two small children of Jewish nationality aged one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half years old. The children were horribly neglected. One of the boys suffered from trachoma and the other had an enormous furuncle on his head. It was the war—one could not get necessary medicines, and there were no separate rooms for them so they had to sleep in a common room with the healthy children. Sister Konstancja [Bolejko] worked hard during the day and watched over the children during the night. She suffered all that hardship only to save the children and spare them from death. She baptized the boys, giving them both the name of Antoni. We kept it most secret from the other children that they were Jewish. But somehow somebody must have found out about it and informed the Germans since an automobile soon arrived at the house. The Germans asked to speak to the director and they immediately asked about the whereabouts of the Jewish children. I replied that there were no Jewish children in our place and asked Sister Nela to bring the children which had recently come to us. We had previously agreed that we would show Polish children whose nationality would be easy to prove, and that we would hide the small Jews. That time we succeeded and the Germans left empty-handed.’ ... One morning in the spring of 1944, two persons dressed in military uniforms and carrying rifles and rucksacks appeared and headed straight for our barn, where we hid with the children. ... The said that we are looking for our children, those who had been left on the porch. ... The parents were overjoyed to see their children.*

An unusual rescue was that of Dr. Olga Goldfein (Goldfajn), who twice took refuge in the convent of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Family in Prużana, in eastern Poland. Unable to remain there permanently, dressed in a nun’s habit, she made her way with Sister Dolorosa (Genowefa Czubak), to her benefactor’s family home near Łowicz, in central Poland. They were put up at many churches along the way—in Białowieża, Dąbrowa, Sokoły, and Małkinia. Genowefa Czubak was recognized as a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem. The following account was prepared in 1945, shortly after the events in question. (Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, eds., *The Black Book: The Ruthless Murder of Jews by German-Fascist Invaders Throughout the Temporarily-Occupied Regions of the Soviet Union and in the Death Camps of Poland During the War of 1941–1945* [New York: Holocaust Library, 1981], pp.206–12.)

The war caught me in the border town of Prużany [Prużana], where I was a doctor in the hospital. ...

At 5:00 A.M. on November 2, [1942] Gestapo men encircled the ghetto and announced that we would be evacuated. ...

On November 7, I received a note from a nun whom I knew—Sister Chubak [Genowefa Czubak]. She asked me to meet her. I went to the barbed-wire barrier and saw her. She gave a liter of vodka to the sentry, and we were permitted to talk. She gave me 300 marks to bribe the guards. I told her that I was exhausted and in no condition to struggle any further; I said it would be better if I left this life. When we separated, I decided to be rude to the guard so that he would shoot me. ... But the sergeant did not shoot me.

Then I went to Berestitsky, a barber friend of mine. I knew him to be a resolute person. I called him out into the alley and said: “I wanted to take poison, but poison didn’t work; I wanted to be shot, but German bullets won’t kill me. I asked him to help me. Berestitsky carefully raised the barbed wire; I crawled under it, crossed the street, the gardens, and the yards, and rushed to the convent. Soon I was with my acquaintance, the nun. She immediately gave me different clothes and hid me. I had three places to take refuge—in the cow shed, under the stairway, and between two cupboards. I sat locked up and constantly looked out of the window to see who was coming. All this time I had terrible toothaches, and I could not sleep at night, but I could not go to a dentist. The week passed in constant terror. In the daytime I hid in the room, and at night I would come out in the yard and listen to what was happening in the ghetto. It was dark and terrifying. Fires blazed around the ghetto, and machine guns and light tanks were stationed all around. Planes flew over the ghetto.

At the end of the fifth week of my stay in the convent a representative of the Judenrat came to me with letters from the

chairman of the Judenrat and my husband. They wrote that the Germans were interested in my health. (The Germans believed that I was still sick after the poisoning.) If I did not return, the ghetto would suffer because of me.

I did not take long to think the matter over: if the ghetto was in danger because of me, I would return. But I did not know how to enter the ghetto. The messenger said that he would disguise me as an employee of the commissar who was going to the ghetto to find good wool to knit him a sweater.

A few hours later I was in the ghetto. ...

At 5:00 A.M. of January 28, [1943] troops approached the ghetto, and at 7:00 an evacuation was declared. At 8:00 many carts were brought in to remove us from the ghetto. ... The first group of carts set off at 9:00 A.M., and I was one of the passengers.

It took us five hours to reach the Linovo [Linowo] station, where the Germans told us to get out of the carts. Everyone was beaten on the head with whips until he or she lost consciousness. I received two such blows, and my head buzzed like a telegraph pole. ... We were kept at the train station for three hours ... We were thrown into the cars like sacks of potatoes.

...

At the last minute, just before the car was to be sealed, I jumped out onto the tracks. My "badge" was covered with a large kerchief. I walked quickly down a street, came to a garden, and walked along a fence into a field. After that I walked only through fields, since there were Gestapo men on the road. ...

In this fashion I walked until 2:00 A.M. Finally I reached the town. I wandered around the outskirts of the town for two hours, afraid to meet anyone. I approached the convent with extreme caution and quietly knocked on the window. The mother-superior opened the door and immediately began to rub my hands. My friend, Sister Chubak, put me in her bed, and I fell asleep.

In the morning (January 29) I was awakened by crying. It was one of the nuns; it turned out that she was afraid that my return to the convent would doom the nuns. Sister Chubak tried to convince her that we would leave the following day ... At that point I broke into the conversation and said that if I had managed to jump from a death train, I would manage to leave this house without causing any unpleasantness.

Announcements appeared in town declaring that all barns, attics, cellars, and outhouses should be locked to keep the Jews out. Dogs were to be leashed. If a Jew was found in any house, the entire population would be killed.

The sixteen-year-old serving girl of the convent, Ranya Keyurski [Renia Wewiórska], walked twelve kilometers to the village to find a cart for me. She returned late that night and said that a cart would come in the morning.

The cart arrived at 10:00 A.M. I donned the habit of a nun and put on dark glasses. Sitting on the cart, I stared stubbornly at the bundle in my hands. Sister Chubak went ahead on foot. I left the town under the eyes of the Gestapo men. Kalinovsky [Kalinowska], a Polish woman whom I knew, came toward us and made a sign to Sister Chubak indicating that I was well disguised. This frightened me, because I was afraid that she would turn me in. My companion assured me that Kalinovsky sympathized deeply with the Jews in their misfortune. She had come out onto the road, because she had learned that there were plans to save me, and she wanted to be sure that everything went well.

We were on the road until 5:00. The horse was exhausted, and we decided to spend the night in the nearest village. My companion asked the village elder for permission to spend the night, but he declared that there was no room; twenty German gendarmes were spending the night in the village. We decided it would be better for us to leave, got back on the cart, and moved on. The exhausted horse could hardly walk. We entered an enormous forest—the Białowieża [Białowieża] Forest. Along the road we saw a small house. My companion went in and met a former pupil there. We were well received and spent the night in a warm place. We continued our journey at dawn. Finally we arrived at Białowieża and headed for the Catholic Church. Then we went to Chainovka [Hajnówka], from there to Belsk [Bielsk Podlaski], and from Belsk to Białystok [Białystok] by train. On the train we learned that the Germans had surrounded the ghetto on February 2 and that a slaughter was taking place there.

In Białystok we went to the main convent. I asked the mother-superior to hide me, but she was frightened and ordered us to leave immediately.³⁰ ...

That night we found ourselves on the street and did not know where to go. Then my companion remembered that she knew the address of the brother of one of the nuns. He was not home, but his wife received us gladly. At that moment the Jews of Białystok were being slaughtered. The town was full of Gestapo men, and all the residents were afraid that they might be suspected of being Jews. There were no tickets being sold at the train stations. We asked the head of the station to

³⁰ In all fairness it should be noted that when Goldfein arrived in Białystok, the ghetto was under siege and searches were underway for Jewish escapees. The convent in Białystok did provide food and other forms of assistance to Jews. See Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej: Polacy z pomocą Żydom 1939–1945*, 1st ed. (Kraków: Znak, 1966), pp.165–66; Zygmunt Zieliński, ed., *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945: Metropolie wileńska i lwowska, zakony* (Katowice: Unia, 1992), pp.48–49, 51–52, 55; Maria Halina Horn, *A Tragic Victory* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1988), p.82.

give us poor nuns, who were forced to beg for charity, a ticket without a pass. At first he refused, but then he gave in. ... In this fashion we left Bialystok on February 13 by train and went to the Lapy [Łapy] Station. From there we went by cart to various Catholic churches—Dombrovo [Dąbrowa], Sokoly [Sokoły], Mokiny [Malkinia]. From there we travelled to Warsaw by train. ... From Warsaw we went to Lowicz [Łowicz], where my companion's family lived. We spent sixteen months there; no one knew that I was a Jew. I worked as a nurse and had a large practice.

In May, 1944, we decided to move to Naleczów [Nałęczów], near the River Bug. ... On July 26, 1944, Naleczów was liberated by the red Army, and on July 29 I set out east—partly on foot, and partly by automobile. I eventually made my way to my home town of Pruzhany.

Pruzhany had been liberated on July 16. Of the 2,700 Jews who had taken refuge in the forest only about twenty young people returned to the town; all the rest perished. The local people were very happy at my return and my friends, acquaintances, and patients literally made pilgrimages to me.

That Dr. Goldfein and Sister Dolorosa (Genowefa Czubak) remained on the best of terms with the Mother Superior of the convent in Pruzana throughout this time, is borne out by the testimony of Joseph Elman, who returned to his hometown of Pruzana after the liberation as part of the Soviet forces. (Interview with Joseph Elman, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, May 19, 1998, pp.67–68.)

The doctor, which I mentioned, the neighbor of mine, that Olga Goldfein, arrived in Proushinna [Prużana]. She was saved—from the station at night and she came to Proushinna to the—to that convent ... And she was befriended with a nun and her name ... is DellaRosa [Sister Dolorosa]. Because, she came with her in Proushinna, when I was in Proushinna [after the liberation]. ... And she escaped from the wagons and she followed 10 kilometers and she came to Proushinna to the nun. The nun gave her ... she got the clothes and she put a cross on her. But ... she told me—this is after the liberation, now, she told me that ... the Mother Superior ... wasn't satisfied, she says better take her and go away with her, deep in Poland, where nobody knows. She was afraid that—you know, sometimes ... maybe somebody'll discover. You can't blame her, you know, they discover. So she took—you know, when she came in and the next day, you know, with the blessing with the Mother Superior, the blessing, she went the—she actually comes from the different town. She comes some—the towns near Łódź [Łódź]. And she—they travelled somehow with her—with the doctor. ... So when ... she came back, in Proushinna with this nun, ... of course I will help. So, I tried ... I was able to help this nun ... even the whole convent to supply, make sure they have enough food. It was ... still with the Russians. It's still ... 1944, still the war was going on and all that.³¹

Not all rescue efforts ended fortunately. A number of Jews found shelter at a convent in Kraków mistakenly identified as Benedictine (the Benedictine Sisters did not have a convent in that city), only to be seized by the Germans during a raid on the convent. This was likely a shelter on Krakowska Street run by the Albertine Sisters. Among those sheltered there were Anita Lobel (then known as Aneta Kempler), an eight-year-old girl with a noticeable Semitic appearance, and her six-year-old brother, who was disguised as a girl because the shelter accepted only girls. They lived there posing as the children of their Christian nanny. The story is told in Anita Lobel's memoirs, *No Pretty Pictures: A Child of War* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1998), at pages 54–56

³¹ There is no basis to question the authenticity of Dr. Goldfein's detailed account, provided in 1944, which is corroborated by another account she provided shortly after the war (Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Dr Goldfajn, Account 301/138) and by the account of Joseph Elman, a family friend. There is no question that her presence was known to the Sisters during her first stay at the convent, and that she left because she was summoned back to the ghetto. There is no question that she also left the convent on good terms after her second, shorter stay. Why else would Genowefa Czubak (Sister Dolorosa) have returned to the convent after the German occupation and Dr. Goldfein solicited help for the nuns living there? After her return to Pruzana, Czubak had a falling out with her religious order. The circumstances of that falling out are not clear, but were doubtless compounded by the invitation she and Dr. Goldfein received from Ilya Ehrenburg to go to Moscow to record their wartime experiences. Yad Vashem has disseminated a markedly different, and rather unlikely, version of these events, based on testimony by Genowefa Czubak provided many years later. According to Yad Vashem, "Czubak hid Goldfajn [Goldfein] in her convent cell without the Mother Superior's knowledge. After hiding in Czubak's cell for about a month, Goldfajn's presence was discovered and she was sent back to the ghetto, while Czubak was severely reprimanded. In January 1943, when the Germans destroyed the Pruzhany ghetto, Dr. Goldfajn managed to escape from the transport. Having nowhere else to go she returned to the convent, where once again she was turned away by the Mother Superior. Czubak, unable to accept the Mother Superior's decision, dressed Goldfajn in a nun's habit and left the convent, her—her home for 18 years—together with her. The two women wandered through the surrounding villages, staying in farmhouses and living off donations. Somehow or other they survived until the area was liberated in July 1944. After the war, Dr. Goldfajn emigrated to France, while Czubak, who was not allowed back into the convent, moved to Lodz [Łódź]." See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: Poland, Part 1, p.161.

and 74–77.

When Niania [nanny] came for us at the ghetto bridge, she had brought with her a piece of black cloth. As soon as we were out of danger, she made a makeshift bandage and wrapped it around my head, covering my right eye. "I have found a place to stay," Niania said. "We will be safe." She had found a shelter at a convent of Benedictine Sisters. The hospital across the street from the convent was run by the brothers of the same order. We needed to stay at the shelter so that I could see a doctor. I needed treatment for my eye, was the story Niania had told the nuns. I don't know what else she told them. The Benedictines let us in. ...

Life in the convent was good. The nuns were nice. ... When we didn't go to the little Benedictine chapel for mass, we went to kościół Mariacki (Church of St. Mary), the big church in the main square. ...

We were kneeling together with the nuns in the little chapel ... Over the mix of our voices, singing a hymn, we heard, "Alles raus!" ("Everyone out!") and then the heavy steps running up the stairs. "Juden! Wo sind die Juden?" ("Jews! Where are the Jews?") Rifles in their arms, the Nazis came crashing in. "Schnell! Alles raus! Schnell!" ("Fast! Everyone out! Fast!")

The mass had been interrupted just before the communion. The soldiers rushed up to my brother and me and Niania, guns pointing straight at us. "Raus! Raus!" Now they were behind us. I felt a rifle in my rib. The chapel stairs were not steep. There were only a few steps down. But I stumbled, almost fell. My brother was right behind me. And Niania was crying, "Nie, nie, nein! Moje dzieci! Sie sind ... moje dzieci." ("No, no, no! They are my children.") She was mixing the few German words she knew with Polish. The Nazis, ignoring Niania, were shouting at the nuns. 'Alle! Alle Juden hier.' ('All Jews over here.') Demanding they hand over all Jews. The nuns protested, were shoved aside. In no time everyone Jewish had been flushed out. They had caught up with us at last. It was Christmas Day.

They lined us up facing the wall. ... I was shaking and shivering. ... I was freezing. I wasn't scared. ... Niania was here. In the convent, among holy sisters, the Nazis could shout, but the Holy Mother would protect us.

Except for Niania, everybody who was not a Jew had stayed in the chapel. She sobbed and pleaded with the Germans in Polish. Insisted that we were her daughters. One of the Nazis began to laugh. He pushed my brother into a corner. He made him lift up his skirt and pull down his underpants. For a moment my brother's little circumcised penis flashed into view. "Und du, bist du auch ein Knab [Knabe]?" ("Are you a boy, too?") ...

I had never known that other Jewish people had been sheltered at the convent. There was a young man. A very pale, thin young woman I had never noticed before. A woman who walked with a limp. I had seen her on the soup line with her bowl and her cane. A woman and her teenaged son. I had seen them. Both of them had blond hair. I had never thought they were Jewish. The nuns had hidden us in broad daylight. We had all blended quietly into the life at the Benedictine shelter. A thought had time to cross my mind. I had never seen any of these people at mass. They were Juden. And I had become one of the Juden. ...

With the rest of their catch, the Nazis shoved my brother and me toward a canvas-covered truck that they had parked in front of the entrance to the courtyard of the convent. ... There were other people already in the truck. Both men and women. They must have been rounded up somewhere else. Shivering, silent, they stared with empty eyes at the newcomers.

Then we saw Niania running toward the truck with our coats and scarves. I was afraid the Nazis were going to shoot her. But they allowed her to throw our clothes into the truck. Still pleading and crying, she was shoved aside with the butt of a rifle. ...

As if they were closing a curtain, the Nazis pulled a canvas covering over the back of the truck. The engine started. The truck began to move. I had no idea where they were taking us.

Anita Lobel and her brother were sent to Płaszów, a concentration camp outside of Kraków. After the war they were reunited with their parents, who also survived, in Sweden. In Płaszów, their nanny managed to get extra food to the children with the assistance of another Polish woman and her fiancé who was employed at the camp. Their story is also recounted in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, at page 542.

Rozalia Natkaniec was a village girl who had worked in the home of the Gruenberg family in Cracow before the war. Immediately after the occupation, Natkaniec decided to remain with the Gruenberg family in order to repay them for their kind treatment and the concern they had shown for her while she worked for them. As the persecution of the Jews worsened, Natkaniec came to the assistance of her employers, but was only able to save their daughter, Ziuta, after the child's parents were seized and murdered. Ziuta hid with Natkaniec for two years until the liberation, and after the war she

immigrated to Israel. Natkaniec also saved Bernhard and Anita Kempler, Ziuta's cousins [children?], who were hiding under an assumed identity in a monastery in Cracow [actually, a shelter on Krakowska Street run by the Albertine nuns³²]. Unfortunately, their identity was discovered [during a raid shortly before the city was liberated by the Soviet army] and the Gestapo transported them to the Plaszow [Plaszów] concentration camp. When Natkaniec learned of this, she risked her life and smuggled them out of the camp and then hid them in her home. The Kemplers survived ...

The Jews sheltered in the Capuchin monastery in Kraków were more fortunate. The Capuchins had taken in hundreds of refugee including clergy expelled from Western Poland, as well as the sick. Brother Baltazar Cekus was particularly active in the rescue efforts. Among their charges were several Jews including Helena Manaster Ramer, who took refuge in Kraków together with her husband, Norbert Ramer, a medical doctor and rabbi from Lwów. Warned of a threat of denunciation they were able to escape safely and find other hiding places. (Jafa Wallach, *Bitter Freedom: Memoirs of a Holocaust Survivor* [Schuylkill Have, Pennsylvania: Hermitage, 2006], pp.184–87.)

The Polish papers we had previously secured and hidden with us all the time now proved valuable. I became Helena Dobrowski and Norbert, Tadeusz Dobrowski ... When we arrived in Krakow [Kraków] I was lost, but my husband had studied mathematics there and had many acquaintances and friends. We went at once to the home of one of these, a bachelor, and he took us in. After all these years I've forgotten his name, but he kept us with him for three days. Norbert got in touch with other friends and we made contact with the underground. We also managed to get a little money so that we could get by.

We were no longer Jews, however. We lived in different skins. Someone urged me to smile more and I did my best. We had to smile all the time, to remain above suspicion. ...

By this time it was February 1943 and I was pregnant. Still Norbert and I remained apart as much as possible to avoid suspicion. While I didn't look Jewish, Norbert had a more difficult time and had to spend much of his time indoors when he could. We found places to sleep but it was always harder to find places to spend the days and in the spring and summer the days were so long. We walked in the parks and in the stores and banks. We spent hours in the churches. We generally went to the churches to meet. Sometimes, too, we met in the waiting rooms of local doctors. Some people knew who we were and were even helpful to us.

At that time there was an 8 o'clock curfew and you had to be off the streets after that hour. All our efforts in the days were at finding places for the night. Sometimes we even found places where we could stay in the daytime too. Then we could bathe and get some food. ...

Then, one day I found myself in a difficult situation. I had an arrangement on that day to spend the following night with some people but I had nowhere to go that night. I couldn't wait until the following evening so I went to the people who were supposed to take me in the next night ...

They were having a party and I couldn't go inside because I didn't want to be seen by too many people so I sat in the hallway of the building ... There were two apartments in that hallway, one occupied by a university professor who was a known anti-Semite and I was very worried. At that time, many Poles were being executed by the Nazis in the east and there were many orphans. The professor's daughter, it turned out, was the head nurse of an organization that was engaged in rescuing these children. While I was sitting there she came out and saw me, pregnant, in the chair, in the middle of the night. I told her my husband lived in Hungary and that I had nowhere to go. Her face softened and she offered to help me. ... She took me to a monastery that night.

She took me to the Order of the Kaputzyn [Capuchins]. They had several buildings in Krakow and a vast garden. One of the buildings was being used to house refugees and the sick and they put me there. I stayed in that place for more than a year and that's where my son, Arthur, was born. ...

I arranged to go to the hospital when I was due to give birth and the manager of the refugees' house, a pious young man named M. Detz, took me. My son, Arthur, was born in October there but he took sick soon after I returned with him to the monastery and I had to take him back to the hospital for care several times. ... People at the monastery thought he might die and urged me to baptize him ... finally, I did. ... It was now July and I began to hope we would survive by remaining in the monastery. I got money from the underground but I spent very little and lived there for almost two years. ...

Later a more serious incident occurred. I found something that looked like a crudely made mezuzah, the little ornamental box containing a prayer that is put on the doorways of Jewish homes. It had been placed in the night on my doorpost. Someone was telling me that they knew what I was. It was then May 1944 and I had been in Krakow since February 1943. One evening, Mr. Detz, the manager, came to see me and said, "You can't stay here any longer. Two of

³² Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, pp.370–73.

our patients are going to denounce the Jews we are hiding here.”

This was the first time that I realized I was not the only Jew at the monastery. One of the older men there, a man who used to visit me quite often and tell me stories of how he always prayed to Jesus and the Virgin Mary and relied on their help for everything, was a Jew, too. Mr. Detz said I had to leave at once.

I had retained contact with the underground and one of them, a Miss Eiserle, took me in. Her father was a Polish officer in exile in England but her mother was a Jew in hiding. ... I now took Arthur from place to place in the six months remaining until the liberation in January 1945. We were here a week, there a week, in places the underground arranged for us.

Available sanctuary was not always taken up by the Jews. In the summer of 1942, during the large round-ups in the Warsaw Ghetto, the three remaining rabbis—David Szapiro, Manachem Zemba and Shimshon Stockhamer—received an offer of asylum from senior members of the Catholic clergy of the Warsaw archdiocese. This offer was declined—the rabbis decided that they could not abandon their co-religionists in their hour of adversity,³³ as was an offer to shelter several hundred Jewish children in Church institutions.³⁴ A similar offer was rejected by Rabbi Y. Pinner from the bishop of Łódź.³⁵ The meeting between the three Warsaw rabbis is described in the American newspaper *Forward* of March 1, 1947.

It is not known how much time the silence lasted. Perhaps a minute; perhaps hours. Reb Dovid, who was the youngest of the three, broke the silence and said, “I am younger than both of you. My words do not obligate you. It is obvious to all of us that it is not in our hands to help these people in any way. Nevertheless, by the very fact that we are with them, that we did not leave them, there is some encouragement for them—the only encouragement. I do not have the strength to leave these people—and there is no place bereft of Him. Will we hide from the Almighty? The same God who is found there is found here.”

The words came forth from the youngest rabbi and the silence continued. Then it was replaced by crying. Not one word was said. Only crying gushed forth from within the three hearts. Then they left the room and Reb Menachem said, “we are not to conduct any debate in this matter”.

The bishop of Sandomierz, Rev. Jan Kanty Lorek, had intervened on behalf of the Jews in September 1939 and he and other priests from his diocese continued to provide assistance to Jews during the occupation. Jews were hidden in the bell tower of the cathedral and in the cellars of the seminary. (Some of these activities were described earlier.) Some Jews turned to him with a request to shelter the revered Ostrowiec rabbi Yehiel Halevi Halshtok, who lived in Sandomierz. Rev. Lorek willingly agreed to do so. However, the rabbi declined the offer. (Simon Zuker, *The Unconquerable Spirit: Vignettes of the Jewish Religious Spirit the Nazis Could Not Destroy*, Second revised edition [New York: Zachor Institute, 1980/1981], p.26.)

“My own father,” the survivor who told us this story recalled, “had contacted the bishop of Tzozmir (Sandomierz) and

³³ See Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), p.126; Philip Friedman, ed., *Martyrs and Fighters* (Polish Jews, Inc., 1954), reprinted in Roselle K. Chartock and Jack Spencer, eds., *Can It Happen Again?: Chronicles of the Holocaust*, (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 1995), pp.248–49; (Reb) Moshe Shonfeld, *The Holocaust Victims Accuse: Documents and Testimony of Jewish War Criminals*, Part One (Brooklyn, New York: Neturei Karta of U.S.A., 1977), pp.34–35; Simon Zuker, comp., *The Unconquerable Spirit: Vignettes of the Jewish Religious Spirit the Nazis Could Not Destroy*, Second revised edition (New York: Zachor Institute, 1980/1981), p.78; Waław Zaj czkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One (Washington, D.C.: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), p.290 (Entry 724). According to one Jewish source, discussions took place in March 1942, with the offer of asylum coming from “the highest ranks of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.” According to a Polish source, the offer of assistance was inspired by Canon Roman Archutowski, the rector of the Archdiocesan Seminary. However, another rabbi by the name of Khane did accept an offer of shelter and was hidden in the archdiocesan library. See Franciszek  acki, *Dzie o mi osierdzia chry cija skiego: Polskie duchowie stwo katolickie a  ydzi w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej* (Warszawa: Chry cija skie Stowarzyszenie Spo eczne, 1968), pp.43–44.

³⁴ Ewa Kurek suggests that, since no church source mentions the proposal of saving children from the Warsaw ghetto, it may be that it was actually put forward, as other sources indicate, by Irena Sendler of the Social Welfare Department of the Warsaw Municipal Council, who worked closely with the Central Relief Council (RCO) in placing hundreds of Jewish children in religious institutions, primarily convents. See Ewa Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine: How Polish Nuns Saved Hundreds of Jewish Children in German-Occupied Poland, 1939–1945* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1997), pp.229–30.

³⁵ See (Reb) Moshe Shonfeld, *The Holocaust Victims Accuse: Documents and Testimony on Jewish War Criminals*, Part One (Brooklyn, New York: Neturei Karta of U.S.A., 1977), p.35.

begged him to hide the rabbi of Ostrowiec. The bishop had actually agreed to remove the rabbi from the ghetto and to give him shelter for the duration of the war, but when my father informed the rabbi of the bishop's offer, he said that he would not save his own skin while his community perished."

Another Jewish source confirms this information and mentions the favourable attitude of several other priests in the diocese of Sandomierz. (Eva Feldenkreis-Grinbal, ed., *Eth Ezkera—Whenever I Remember: Memorial Book of the Jewish Community in Tzoyzmir (Sandomierz)* [Tel Aviv: Association of Tzoyzmir Jews and Moreshet Publishing, 1993], pp.543, 553, 565–66.)

In the Sandomierz Judenstadt there also lived the well known revered Ostrowiec Rabbi, Yehiel Halevi Halshtok. It was said that people pleaded with the Sandomierz Bishop Jan Lorek to hide him, and the bishop was willing to do so. But the Rabbi refused, saying that he belonged with all Jews and did not wish to save his own life only. ...

One day, I met the priest Babsky [Ludwik Barski, the pastor of Ciepielów] who had been my classmate in the Government high-school in Sandomierz. After a few words of greeting, the priest told me that a farmer of his parish was in possession of a Torah Scroll which he had found and taken away the day the Jews were deported. ... Dr. Szymansky [Adam Szymański], Dean of the Priests' Seminary in Sandomierz ... was well known for his kindness and friendly attitude towards Jews. He was said to have supplied birth certificates to Jews who wished to leave town before the "Aktisia" holding Aryan papers. ...

A second Torah Scroll was also brought to the Wasser House where we lived at the time and given to us free of charge by the priest, Dr. Lagec [Michał Łagocki], a teacher at the Priests' Seminary. He had received the Torah Scroll from a farmer who had hidden it in order to return it after the war.

The rescue activities of Rev. Adam Szymański, who gathered sacred books to prevent them from being profaned by the Germans, issued false baptismal certificates to Jews, provided them with material assistance and agreed hide their property, are confirmed by other Jews from Sandomierz, such as Anna Dembowa.³⁶

While the decimated and beleaguered Catholic hierarchy in Poland had no possibility to protest the persecution of Jews, or of Polish Catholics—even the clergy—for that matter, representatives of the Church hierarchy in exile spoke out. Rev. Karol Radoński, the bishop of Włocławek, who fled Poland and took up residence in London, England, actively joined the efforts of the Polish government to inform the world of the crimes committed in occupied Poland. In a BBC radio address delivered on December 14, 1942, he said:

As concerns the Jewish populace, its suffering has exceeded everything that hatred and the bestiality of the oppressor is capable of inventing. The murders committed openly on Jews in Poland midst the blustering and jibes of the executioners and their vassals must evoke horror and disgust in the entire civilized world. ...

As a Polish bishop I condemn with all certainty [most categorically] the crime committed in Poland on the Jewish population. The words of the Front Odrodzenia Polski FOP (Front for the Rebirth of Poland) which have reached us from the Homeland, beating with a truly Christian spirit of brotherly love and human compassion are an expression of that which ever Pole and Christian feels.

("Przemówienie biskupa Radońskiego," Dziennik Polski, December 17, 1942. Reproduced in Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert, ed., Polacy–Żydzi, Polen–Juden, Poles–Jews, 1939–1941: Wybór źródeł, Quellenauswahl, Selection of Documents [Warsaw: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walki i Męczeństwa, Instytut Dziedzictwa Narodowego, and Rytm, 2001], pp.108–10.)

Remarkably, British historian Richard J. Evans claims that the Polish Catholic Church not only did not take a clear stance against the Germans' murderous policies towards Polish Jews, "if anything, the opposite was the case." (Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* [New York: The Penguin Press, 2009], p.64.) Unfortunately, such baseless charges are rather typical of Western literature on wartime Poland. Columbia University historian István Deák, an authority on the subject, remarked: "No issue in Holocaust literature is more burdened by misunderstanding, mendacity, and sheer racial prejudice than that of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II." (István Deák, "Memories of Hell," *The New York Review of Books*, June 26, 1997.)

³⁶ Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, Second revised and expanded edition (Kraków: Znak, 1969), p.535.

Before her involvement in Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka co-founded the conservative underground organization of lay Catholics known as *Front Odrodzenia Polski* (FOP—The Front for the Rebirth of Poland) in 1941, and became editor of its newspaper, *Prawda* (the Truth).³⁷ In August 1942, as the

³⁷ The underground Catholic organization *Front Odrodzenia Polski* (FOP—Front for the Rebirth of Poland), the precursor of the Council for Aid to Jews, was co-founded in 1941 by the prominent Catholic author Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and Rev. Edmund Krauze of the Missionary Fathers' Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw, and included in its members Rev. D. Nowicki and Rev. Jan Zieja. Its activities were well regarded by the Catholic hierarchy and supported by the clergy. See *Encyclopedia Katolicka* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1989), vol. 5, columns 726–27. According to Teresa Prekerowa: "By searching out and furnishing these kinds of identity documentation . . . the Church authorities provided an invaluable service to Jews who were hiding, including many who were charges of Żegota. In Warsaw, among the most helpful in this regard were the parishes of All Saints, Blessed Virgin Mary, Holy Cross, St. Anthony, Christ the Saviour and others. The Catholic FOP, an organization that formed part of the Council for Aid to Jews, had the broadest contacts with pastors, though members of Jewish underground organizations also frequently established [direct] contact with certain priests and nuns. Helena Merenholtz, for example, obtained many baptismal and marriage records from the parish in [suburban] Łomianki." See Teresa Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982), p.148. Further: "Catholic priests rendered an enormous service to Jews in hiding by supplying them with authentic baptismal and marriage certificates of the people who, by that time, were dead, or had vanished or were absent from the country (before and during World War II, church parishes in Poland performed functions of Registries)." See Teresa Prekerowa, "The Relief Council for Jews in Poland, 1942–1945," in Chimen Abramsky, Maciej Jachimczyk and Antony Polonsky, eds., *The Jews In Poland* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.166.

The authors of a biography of the famed Polish courier Jan Karski, who attempted to inform a disbelieving Western World about the realities of the Holocaust, and who was very closely connected with FOP, strongly suggest that FOP was attacked by the Catholic establishment for its support of the Jews: "Yet, in the name of Catholicism, the Front's members put their lives on the line to support the Jews. They encountered the hostility not only of the Germans, but also of elements within the Church establishment. A Vatican official who was in contact with Poland during the war wrote of the 'intense battle' waged by traditionalist priests against the FOP. The group's members, wrote the official, 'lacked any serious dogmatic foundation.' Their publications 'were crammed with false ideological propositions whose frank heresies made them really dangerous.' These people had no history of philo-Semitism, yet they took up the cause of Jewry in the face of major obstacles; something must have changed in their hearts." See E. Thomas Wood and Stanisław M. Jankowski, *Karski: How One Man Tried to Stop the Holocaust* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994), p.106. However, the sources these authors cite (discussed below) do not in any way corroborate the implied claim that the pro-Jewish activities of FOP were under attack by the Church establishment. The Vatican "official" referred to is Luciana Frassati, the Italian wife of the Polish diplomat Jan Gawroński. Frassati's book *Il destino passa per Varsavia* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1949; reissued by Milano: Bompiani, 1985) is quoted extensively in Carlo Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), pp.168–70. She writes: "[FOP's] members, in good or bad faith, lacked any serious dogmatic foundation. Their leaflets, entirely financed by the ZWZ [*Związek Walki Zbrojnej*—Union For Armed Struggle], were crammed with false ideological propositions whose frank heresies made them really dangerous. My interlocutor quoted a few extracts which justified distrust of the whole movement. [Falconi omits the impugned extracts cited by Frassati at pp.201–2 (1985 edition), which are all theological in nature and totally unrelated to the Jewish issue: "Natural ethics don't exist in practice. They don't exist even where there is no shadow of Christianity or Catholicism. The grace of redemption is the fountain of life. All that is good is caused and inspired by Grace. In Catholic life, Grace is the principle element for the development of life; natural ethics, therefore, for a Catholic cannot exist in any manner . . . The national instinct comes from the intimate nature of man; the religious one from the external nature."] The priest was very depressed and told me he had started an intense battle against these statements. But though his campaign seemed simple and just in appearance, in practice it was very hard-going by reason of the strange opposition, indirect though it was, brought by various Catholic authorities, including bishops and archbishops, as well as superiors of religious orders and communities. An active priest who was known for his pro-papal zeal and his tenacious and unbending opposition to these half-heresies, was transferred without explanation from Warsaw into the country [in the capacity of a private chaplain. Even though he presented to the responsible superior the reasons which did not permit him to abandon the city in such a critical moment, he did not secure a revocation of the order and had to leave.] Yet he did not give up: taking advantage of the peace and solitude of the country, he had written a violent pamphlet defending the Holy Father. And as he intended to print 10,000 copies of it, he was desperately looking around for the necessary money." Thus, according to Frassati, this priest's one-man campaign, based on purely theological grounds, against some statements made by FOP unrelated to Jews, was effectively silenced by his banishment to the countryside after it had met with the opposition of the Church leadership. This is a far cry from what Wood and Jankowski suggest was the prevailing situation. As for having had no history of philo-Semitism, the authors (Wood and Jankowski) are apparently unaware of Kossak-Szczucka's prewar writings, for example, her well-known memoir *Pożoga: Wspomnienia z Wołynia 1917–1919*, in which she described rivetingly the Ukrainian pogroms of Jews in Płoskirów (Proskurov), in Volhynia, which she witnessed with horror in February 1919.

Kossak-Szczucka's appeal ("The Protest") has been minutely "dissected" and widely criticized by pundits because of the author's anti-Semitic views and its supposed anti-Semitic content which, allegedly, had the effect of dampening, rather than increasing, societal support for the downtrodden Jews. As in the case of Father Maximilian Kolbe, that narrow approach is a misfocus because both of them espoused traditional, mainstream Catholic teachings and were to some extent a mirror image of traditional Jewish views about Christians. Tellingly, Władysław Bartoszewski, then a young idealist, recalls "The Protest" as his rallying call and its author as his beacon. See Witold Bereś and Jerzy Skoczylas, "Władysław Bartoszewski—świadek epoki," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, February 16, 2002. "The Protest" has been criticized for

Germans embarked on their first large-scale *Aktion* or deportation of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto, the FOP published an appeal authored by Kossak-Szczucka in an underground leaflet titled “The Protest,” which called the destruction of the Jews then in progress “the most terrible crime history has ever witnessed.” The leaflet continued:

In the face of crime, it is wrong to remain passive. Whoever is silent witnessing murder becomes a partner to the murder. Whoever does not condemn, condones.

... We have no means to actively counteract the German murders; we cannot help, nor can we rescue anybody. But we protest from the depths of our hearts filled with pity, indignation, and horror. This protest is demanded of us by God, who does not allow us to kill. It is demanded by our Christian conscience. Every being calling itself human has the right to the love of his fellow man. The blood of the defenceless victims is calling to the heavens for vengeance. Who does not support the protest with us, is not a Catholic.

We protest also as Poles. We do not believe that Poland could benefit from the horrible deeds of the Germans. ... The forced participation of the Polish nation as observers of the bloody spectacle taking place on Polish soil may breed indifference to injustice, sadism, and, above all, to the dangerous conviction that those close to us can be murdered with impunity.

appealing to the Poles’ Christian convictions rather than to their civic duty to come to the assistance of fellow citizens (i.e., the Jews). This charge seems particularly flimsy since its stated intention was to give primacy to universal Christian teachings over narrow nationalistic ambitions, however justified. Given the author’s personal involvement in the rescue of Jews, her sincerity has never been effectively challenged. Kossak-Szczucka also levelled harsh criticism at those Catholics who failed to see that the commandment to love one’s neighbour extended to the Jews in other publications such as the pamphlet entitled “Jesteś katolikiem ... Jakim?” (“What kind of Catholic are you?”). See Władysław Bartoszewski, “75 lat w XX wieku: pamiętnik mówiony (6)”, *Więź* (Warsaw, July 1997): pp.118–19. “The Protest” contains a passage referring to Jews as “political, economic and ideological enemies of Poland,” and states that despite the massive crimes perpetrated by the Germans, many Jews “hate us more than they hate the Germans, and ... make us responsible for their misfortune.” There is ample evidence for that charge in Jewish wartime and postwar writings. Emanuel Ringelblum noted, in his wartime journal, that hatred towards Polish Christians grew in the Warsaw ghetto because it was widely believed that the Poles were responsible for the economic restrictions that befell the Jews. See Emanuel Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego: Wrzesień 1939–styczeń 1943* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983), p.118. Jews played into this by spreading anti-Polish propaganda, going so far as to claim that the Poles were inciting the Germans. A wartime report from the Warsaw ghetto spoke of the author’s efforts to convince Jews “about the feelings in Polish society towards the Jews. They are inciting the occupier against the Jews, in order to save themselves by this stratagem.” He also questioned the sincerity of the Polish democratic opposition and preached about the “abject baseness of behavior among the Poles.” See Marian Małowist, “Assimilationists and Neophytes at the Time of War-Operations and in the Closed Jewish Ghetto,” in Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.”* [“Oneg Shabbath”] (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), pp.619–34, at 631, 633. A jealousy built on false premises and contempt set in. Many Jews could not comprehend why it was they, rather than the Poles, who were suffering the brunt of the German brutality. Stories spread in the ghetto that Poles were leading “normal lives” outside the ghetto: “Everything there is brimming with life. Everyone eats and drinks until they are full. ... On the other side, the houses are like palaces ... there is freedom to the full ... complete safety ... justice reigns.” See the diary of Jehoszua Albert cited in Marcin Urynowicz, “Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Warszawie w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” in Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006), p.563. A Jewish woman who survived in “Aryan” Warsaw declared, shortly after the war, that the Germans were *ordered* to hate the Jews and the Gestapo *had* to kill them, but she did not mince her words about the *true nature* of the Poles, whom she condemned as a whole: “Why did the Germans carry out this—unheard of in the history of crime—mass murder of the Jews precisely in Poland? It was not only because this was where the largest concentration of Jews was, but above all and mainly because they knew that in Poland they had the moral support of the majority of the population for this savagery, because they counted in advance on the approval of the lion’s share of the Poles ... That’s why the Germans found it worthwhile to transport Jews from the most distant countries of Europe to Auschwitz and Treblinka, to the General Government, because in no other country, on no other patch of land, could these their deeds be imaginable.” See the memoir of Maria Nowakowska in Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, p.532. Of course, there is absolutely no trace of any such rationale in official German documents from that period and reputable scholars have made short shrift of such views which were, to their discredit, rather widespread among Polish Jews. Yisrael Gutman, director of research at Yad Vashem and editor in chief of the four-volume work *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), has gone on record to state: “I should like to make two things clear here. First, all accusations against the Poles that they were responsible for what is referred to as the ‘Final Solution’ are not even worth mentioning. Secondly, there is no validity at all in the contention that ... Polish attitudes were the reason for the siting of the death camps in Poland. Poland was a completely occupied country. There was a difference in the kind of ‘occupation’ countries underwent in Europe. Each country experienced a different occupation and almost all had a certain amount of autonomy, limited and defined in various ways. This autonomy did not exist in Poland. No one asked the Poles how one should treat the Jews.” See *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 2 (1987): p.341.

Whoever does not understand this, and whoever dares to connect the future of the proud, free Poland, with the vile enjoyment of your fellow man's misfortune—is, therefore, not a Catholic and not a Pole.
(Kunert, *Polacy–Żydzi, Polen–Juden, Poles–Jews, 1939–1941*, pp.212–16.)

August Cardinal Hlond, the Primate of Poland, who was exiled in France, was similarly well informed. His report to the Vatican on the situation in occupied Poland, issued in Lyons at the beginning of 1943, contained information about the confinement of Jews in ghettos and the horrible conditions there, the deportation to Poland of Jews from other occupied countries, and the mass executions and gassings of Jews. These accounts came to him from the Polish government in London. Cardinal Hlond's report was published in the foremost French Christian journal of resistance, *Cahiers du témoignage chrétien*, nos. 13–14 (1943), and played an important role in spreading the news of the fate of Polish Jewry in the West. (The report in question, "O położeniu Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce po trzech latach okupacji hitlerowskiej, 1939–1942," was reprinted in *Chrześcijanin w świecie*, no. 70 [October 1978], pp.25–53; the relevant passage is found at p.33).

Finally, it should be mentioned that German-occupied Poland constitutes a ghetto to which all the Jews from Poland and Germany have been brought and Jews from other occupied countries are presently being transported. They are interned in ghettos which are found in all the larger towns. They are shot to death for escaping from the ghetto. They are exhausted and in many cases are worked or starved to death, or freeze to death. Sometimes Gestapo forces enter the ghettos and carry out massacres. Every day the Jews are shot in mass executions and killed in gas chambers. Thousands of them were killed in Przemyśl, Stanisławów and Rzeszów; some 55,000 Jews were killed in Lwów alone. In total, about 700,000 Jews were cruelly murdered on Polish territory. There can be no doubt about Hitler's plan of total and unequivocal annihilation of the Jews on the European continent.

Jewish sources confirm that, while in exile in Lourdes, France, Cardinal Hlond had provided Catholic documents to many Jews and placed Jewish children in monasteries.³⁸

Members of the Jewish underground would often meet at Catholic institutions on the "Aryan" side of Warsaw, as these were considered the safest meeting places. A popular venue was a kitchen run by the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Sewerynow Street. This quiet, secluded spot was a regular meeting place not only for Żegota, but for the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB). Vładka Meed (Feigele Peltel, later Miedzyrzecki), a member of the Jewish underground who had been brought out of the ghetto in December 1942 by Michał Klepfisz, provides the following description in her book *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), at pages 84–85.

Michał [Michał Klepfisz] informed me that Mikołaj [Mikołaj] Berezowski (his original name was Dr. Leon Feiner) wanted to see me. He was the Bund representative of the coordinating committee on the "Aryan side," and the central figure in the Jewish underground, and our liaison with the Polish underground. ...

I was to meet him at Sewerynow [Sewerynow] 6, between two and three in the afternoon, in a convent, which had a restaurant open to the public. It served as a rendezvous for our small circle of underground activists. Since our group had no steady meeting place, we had to use quiet public sites, and could not meet too often in the same locale.

Michał accompanied me to the convent, which was on a quiet lane where people rarely passed. Next to the kitchen were a small waiting room where one could smoke, a cloakroom, and two spacious halls. Our group usually lunched in one of these halls, which was screened by old green palms set near the window. A rare serenity prevailed here. The diners were predominantly office clerks and impoverished middle class people. Compared to other public kitchens, the prices here were very moderate.

Michał guided me to a vacant table, whispering instructions. Two men were dining at a table to the right. One of them was forty years old, with a crop of black hair, a somber face and unassuming black clothes. He looked like a minor Polish government official. (Dr. Adolf Berman, representative on the Aryan side of the Jewish National Committee, and leader of the Left Poale Zion). Beside him sat a blonde gentleman with a well-groomed moustache, calm and confident in bearing. This was Henryk (Salo Fishgrund), who had been a Bund activist in Cracow prior to the war. Our own Celek [Jankel Celemenski] was sitting by himself at a table opposite.

³⁸ Joseph Tenenbaum, *In Search of a Lost People: The Old and New Poland* (New York: Beechhurst Press, 1948), 236.

Shortly, a tall, elegant elderly man with silvery hair and an upturned moustache, bright eyes, and rosy cheeks—the image of a Polish country gentleman—entered. Like Henryk, he had an air of self-confidence. This was Mikolai. He took in the scene at a glance and, catching sight of Michal, joined us.

After exchanging pleasantries, we ordered our meal. Even-tempered, with a faint smile, Mikolai spoke to me with fatherly warmth. ...

“Our task is to get more volunteers,” he remarked. “But we must be very careful; if we make one mistake, we can get a lot of people into very bad trouble.”

“What will my assignment be?” I asked.

“As you are doubtless aware, our main tasks are to establish contact with Gentiles, find living quarters for women and children, assist Jews who are in hiding, and, in particular, to find sources of arms.”

Michal and I listened closely, as Mikolai continued his instructions in a low voice. ...

As the waitress approached, we stopped our discussion. After she had left, Mikolai asked me whether everything was clear to me. ...

Again, for the benefit of the waitress, we changed to comments on the weather and our delicious meal. When she had gone, we agreed that I would meet Henryk and Mikolai at this convent every day for lunch. All issues would have to be settled at this meeting-place. On special occasions, however, I was to visit Henryk at his home ...

This quiet conversation over lunch in a convent kitchen marked a turning-point in my life and activities. From now on I was to be an integral active part of the underground.

I started a new life. We carried on our activities in accordance with the quiet conversations we had had in the convent refectory where practically all the activists who could move about in public because of their Aryan looks converged.

Michael Zylberberg, another Jewish patron of the same kitchen run by the Sisters of the Resurrection, in his memoirs, *A Warsaw Diary, 1939–1945* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1969), at pages 120–21, notes that many Jews frequented that place and that this fact was likely no secret to the nuns.

Jews in hiding often met by chance in the streets, restaurants and churches. In Sewerynow [Sewerynow] Street you would find the Catholic Community Centre of St. Joseph, which had a well-patronised restaurant. The fact that it was in a quiet street and that the service by nuns was so pleasant attracted many Jews to that place. They came there for lunch and to meet friends, both Jews and Gentiles. It was known to nearly all Jews hidden in Warsaw, and offered an hour’s respite from the cruel outside. The atmosphere was peaceful; everyone knew everyone else and fear was temporarily at bay. I went to the restaurant every day for more than a year. On principle I avoided those whom I suspected of being Jewish; I always tried to sit with Poles. It turned out that these so very Catholic Poles were, in fact, Jews. Among the diners I often saw previous friends and pupils of mine. We glanced at each other but conversation was out of the question.

There was one diner who always attracted particular attention; a heavily-veiled woman in black who always wore widow’s weeds. No one ever saw her face. The heavy mourning garb, which she wore in summer and winter, and the thick veil were symbols of some great tragedy—and I was certain that she was Jewish too. One day I asked a fellow diner who she was. He told me she was Mrs. Basia Berman, the wife of the active Jewish underground worker Adolf Berman. She acted well, and sometimes overacted, the part of a veiled Catholic.

The Jewish underground was known to turn to the Catholic clergy for assistance. The Carmelite convent on Wolska Street in Warsaw, near the ghetto, was one of their meeting places. It also served as a storage place for arms destined for the ghetto fighters. A cot was kept behind the screen in the locutory of the cloister for Arie Wilner (“Jurek”), a liaison officer of the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa—ŻOB*) to sleep overnight if necessary. (Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, pp.189–90.)

... the Discalced Carmelites gave shelter to the especially endangered leaders of Jewish underground organizations. In their home at 27 Wolska Street in Warsaw, situated near the ghetto walls, help was given to refugees in various forms; this was one of the places where false documents were delivered to Jews; there, too, liaison men of the Jewish underground on the “Aryan” side—Arie Wilner, Tuwile Szejngut, and others—had their secret premises. In 1942 and 1943, the seventeen sisters lived under permanent danger of [death] but never declined their cooperation even in the most hazardous undertakings.

The spirit of those times was captured with unusual poignancy by Polish-Jewish journalist Hanna Krall who interviewed the mother superior of the convent for her book *Shielding the Flame: An Intimate Conversation with*

Dr. Marek Edelman, *the Last Surviving Leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), at pages 100–101.

I am sitting now in the same locutory on one side of a black iron bar, with the Mother Superior in a nook on the other side, at dusk, and we are talking about those arms transports for the Ghetto that went through the convent for almost a year. Didn't they have any misgivings? The Mother Superior does not understand ...

"After all, arms in such a place?"

"You mean, perhaps, that arms serve to kill people?" asks the Mother Superior. No, for some reason she had never thought about it that way. Her only thought was for the fact that Jurek would eventually be making use of these arms and that when his last hour came, it would be good if he managed to make an act of contrition and make his peace with God. She even asked him to promise this to her, and now she asks me what I think; did he remember the promise when he shot himself in the bunker, at Miła Street?

While Jurek and his friends were making use of those arms, the sky in this part of the town became red and this glow even reached into the convent's vestibule. That's why precisely there, and not in the chapel, the barefoot Carmelite nuns would gather each night and read psalms ("Yea, for Thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Awake! Why sleepest thou, oh Lord?"), and she prayed to God that Jurek Wilner might meet his death without fear.

The Jewish underground (Jewish Fighting Organization) received military training in a Catholic church in Aryan Warsaw, in preparation for the uprising in the ghetto. (Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, p.125.)

Mikolaj [Mikołaj, i.e., Leon Feiner] introduced Michal [i.e., Michał Klepfisz] to a Polish underground officer named Julian, who was an expert on explosives. Their first meeting took place at dusk in a church on Fabryczna Street. Michal soon learned the art of manufacturing grenades, bombs, and "Molotov cocktails." Silent but pleased, he would return from the church, loaded with leaflets and formulae, to sit up all night studying the material.

The main arms depot for the right-wing Jewish underground organization, the Jewish Military Union (*Żydowski Związek Walki—ZZW*), was located at St. Stanisław Hospital for Infectious Diseases located at 37 Wolska Street, a place that the Germans were reluctant to enter. The Polish underground organized a cell at that hospital comprised of medical staff, nurses—both nuns and lay personnel, and the hospital chaplain, Rev. Władysław Smyrski (*nom de guerre* "Jawor"), which worked closely with the Jewish underground. (Maciej Kledzik, "Białoczerwona opaska z gwiazdą Dawida," *Rzeczpospolita* (Warsaw), March 12, 2005; Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland 1939–1945* [Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963], p.40.)

The assistance rendered by Monsignor Marcelli Godlewski of All Saints parish in the Warsaw ghetto was already mentioned earlier. Chaim Lazar Litai records the following story of assistance by Catholic priests for the Jewish underground in Warsaw in his monograph *Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Rising* (Tel Aviv: Massada–P.E.C. Press, 1966), at pages 135–36 and 169–70:

A Catholic church served the Z.Z.W. [Żydowski Związek Walki—Jewish Military Union] as a highly-effective hideout.

There were in the ghetto at that time a considerable number of former Jews who had converted to Christianity; one of their centres was the Church of the Holy Virgin in Leszno St. ...

... One of these converts was a man called Fodor [Rev. Tadeusz Puder], a priest at the Church of the Holy Virgin and a close friend of Dr. Marcelli Godlewski, a leading Catholic Church dignitary. Fodor was later saved by Godlewski from deportation and hidden in the Aryan section of the city.³⁹

³⁹ The story of Rev. Puder being in the ghetto is a legend. In order to protect Rev. Tadeusz Puder, a Jewish convert with a marked Semitic appearance, in November 1939 Archbishop Stanisław Gall, the administrator of the Warsaw archdiocese, appointed him chaplain of a convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Białoleka near Warsaw, which was soon to become very active in rescuing Jewish children. Rev. Puder was arrested by the Gestapo in April 1941, but because of the intervention of nuns and friends he was placed in St. Sophia's hospital in Warsaw, near a convent of the Sisters of the Family of Mary, which was under the control of the Gestapo. In November 1942, an escape was arranged in which Rev. Puder slid down a rope made of bed sheets into a waiting horse-drawn wagon. He hid under some coal and, later, dressed as a nun with his head heavily bandaged, he was taken to stay with his mother, who had also converted to Catholicism before the war. Soon after, Sister Janina Kruszevska brought Rev. Puder, dressed as a nun, to Białoleka where he again took up his position as chaplain. Rev. Puder was subsequently transferred to another institution in Płudy run by the same sisters

In the course of their joint efforts, Father Godlewski became friendly with a number of Jews, among them Lopata [Lopata], one of the Betar leaders and a member of Betar. Very soon, Lopata was able to exert considerable influence on the priest. This gave rise to the idea of digging a tunnel leading from the ghetto to the church, through which Jewish children could be evacuated. The tunnel would also be used by the Jewish Military Organization for transferring men, supplies and arms, and as a means of communication with the Aryan side.

The tunnel was dug from a building near the church on Leszno St. under the crypt of the church, where a large bunker was excavated. A well-concealed aperture was made in the floor of the crypt to the bunker below (the floor of the crypt was actually the roof of the bunker). This aperture gave access from the bunker to the crypt, whence, by means of a ladder, one emerged through removable floorboards into the vestibule of the church, a few paces from the entrance. A short stairway led down to Leszno St. a busy thoroughfare open to Poles and Aryans, transversed by tramway from the west of the city to the eastern suburbs.

The bunker had another exit through a hole in the wall of the crypt. This led to an adjacent building which was occupied by nuns. In an emergency, an additional means of escape was afforded by the 'chimney', a narrow shaft in the hollow wall behind the church altar, which led down to the bunker. Built by engineers, members of the Z.Z.W., the bunker was fitted with electricity, an alarm system and other essential installations. ...

Gabriela "Bronka" Lajewska [Łajewska], a non-Jewish girl, maintained liaison between the A.K. [Armia Krajowa—Polish Home Army] and the Z.Z.W. headquarters. ... Her main task lay in helping the evacuation of Jewish children from the ghetto. As a rule she would take charge of the children at the mouth of the tunnel in the cemetery or near the All Saints Church and hand them into the care of Father Godlewski, the priest. The last time she was in the ghetto, shortly before the major Aktion [summer 1942], she was caught trying to get a group of children out through the passage near the Pawiak, and sent to prison. In July 1944 she was transferred from the prison to a camp at Ravensburg [Ravensbrück?]. ... In all, Gabriela rescued more than seventy children, many of whom she transferred to the Home for Blind Children [run by the Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross] in the town of Laski [near Warsaw].

The activities carried out on behalf of Jews, especially converts, in the three Catholic parishes located inside the Warsaw ghetto are described in Peter F. Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), at pages 59–61, 63–65, 107–8, 115, 121–22, 125–27, 129–30.

Before the war, there was no specific Jewish district in Warsaw. Jews lived in all districts, but there was a higher concentration of poor Jews in the northern part of what would be called in the United States the downtown area. Thus the Germans created the Jewish living quarter in that area, where up to 40 percent of the population consisted of non-Jews. When the Jewish living quarter became the ghetto, it contained three Roman Catholic parishes within its boundaries: Saint Augustine, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (henceforth B.V.M.), and All Saints. The Church the Nativity of the B.V.M. has been sometimes referred to by its former name of "the Carmelite church." ...

Before the ghetto was sealed off [in November 1940], all three Roman Catholic parish churches served as regular places of Catholic worship, for both the "Aryan" and "non-Aryan" Christians. In Saint Augustine Church on Nowolipki Street, the nominal pastor was Rev. Karol Niemira, auxiliary bishop of Pińsk. After 1939 [when Pińsk was occupied by the Soviet Union], he was appointed to the head of the parish. His second in command and acting head was Rev. Franciszek Garncarek, who followed church laws requiring the pastor to remain with the church as long as he could. The other assistants were Rev. Zygmunt Kowalski and Rev. Leon Więckowicz [actually Więckiewicz]. A postwar copy of the regularly kept church register ... bears the following marginal note, obviously written after the war: "Sometimes after the sealing off of the ghetto, the church functioned as a place of worship for the Catholics of Jewish origin who lived in the ghetto. There were about five thousand of them. The priests lived outside the ghetto and commuted to the church with permanent passes. After some time, however, they were forbidden to enter and the services in the church ceased. This is according to the statement made by Rev. Zygmunt Kowalski, then the assistant in Saint Augustine parish." In July 1941, after the church was deactivated, a well-known Jewish-Christian director, Marek Arensztajn, acting in Polish and Yiddish under the name of Andrzej Marek, organized a theater in the church hall. He was baptized in the ghetto. After the Aktion, the Germans

where he survived the war, cared for Sisters Romualda Stępak, Domicela Golik, and Janina Kruszevska. On January 23, 1945, walking in a street of destroyed Warsaw, Rev. Puder was hit by a Soviet truck and died four days later from a head injury. For many years the accident was considered a planned assassination by the Soviet secret police, but there is no evidence that this is true. See Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *Getto warszawskie: Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2001), pp.621–22; Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, pp.61–62; Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," Parts 3 and 4, *Nasz Dziennik*, March 15–16 and March 19, 2008.

turned the church into a furniture warehouse.

We know that Rev. Garncarek and his assistant were active in providing all sorts of help to the ghetto dwellers, but we do not have any details concerning this help. We know that Janusz Korczak (pseudonym of Dr. Henryk Goldszmit), the director of a large orphanage next to Saint Augustine Church, a renowned educator, physician, and writer, addressed a letter to Rev. Garncarek in February 1942: "[Since] Providence has thrust upon you a missionary role, I urge you to attend a meeting of the personnel of our orphanage to discuss ways of saving the lives of the children from destruction. [You could] perhaps offer some good advice, perhaps an ardent prayer." ... We also know that Dr. Korczak maintained a friendly relationship with the priests of All Saints as well. Two priests of Saint Augustine did not survive the war. Rev. Garncarek died on December 20, 1943, outside the ghetto; he was shot on the steps of the presbytery of another church. His assistant, Rev. Więckowicz [Więckiewicz], was arrested for helping Jews on December 3, 1942, and died in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp on August 4, 1944. ...

The other two parishes, the Nativity of the B.V.M. on Leszno Street (now Solidarność Street) and All Saints on Grzybowski Square, were functioning places of Catholic worship until the first days of the Aktion [in July 1942]. The Nativity Church was in the middle of the ghetto and the All Saints Church in the southeast corner. The church on Leszno was mentioned often by Jewish diarists of the ghetto, probably because it was more or less in the center of the closed quarter. All Saints, on the other hand, was mentioned more often by the Christians, because many of them lived in the vicinity. ...

Throughout the existence of the ghetto, the curate of the Nativity of the B.V.M. Church was Monsignor Seweryn Popławski, who was assisted by Rev. Henryk Komorowski, Rev. Teofil [in fact, Władysław] Głowacki, and Rev. [Aleksander] Zyberk-Plater. Rev. Popławski remained at his post even after the Aktion. Rev. Komorowski would be remembered as a charismatic, well-loved priest. He was in charge of the young people of the parish. From the fall of 1942 until the spring of 1943, when the church was on the southern tip of the residual ghetto, many people used its large basement as an escape route to the partly destroyed parts of the former ghetto. ...

The pastor at All Saints [on Grzybowski Square] was Monsignor Marcelli Godlewski. His assistant and second in command was Rev. Antoni Czarnecki. Rev. Tadeusz Nowotko also served in the parish. Rev. Godlewski lived outside the ghetto and came to his parish every day; Rev. Czarnecki lived permanently in the rectory of the church. He left a brief memorandum, "The All Saints Parish" ("Parafia Wszystkich Świętych") written in 1973. Obviously conscious that he was writing under an unfriendly political regime, he prudently cites published sources and concentrates on the pastoral aspect of his work. Rev. Czarnecki's caution was fully justified. Rev. Godlewski's successor at All Saints, Rev. Zygmunt Kaczyński, was arrested in 1949 and received a ten-year sentence for "political crimes." He was murdered in prison in 1953, and rehabilitated by the Communist regime in 1958. Despite its caution, Rev. Czarnecki's article is important for many details. He mentions the visits of Dr. Janusz Korczak and his orphans to the church grounds. He also writes briefly about baptisms in the ghetto and the reasons for them. His opinions here are quite realistic: "It is difficult to ascertain now how much these catechumens were inclined to embrace the teaching of Christ because of their desire for faith and their supernatural intention, or how much they were motivated by a secret hope that the Christian confession figuring in their identity card could save them from destruction in that inhuman epoch." ...

Rev. Godlewski was doubtless a key figure among the Christians in the ghetto. During the time of his ghetto activities, he was already an old man, having been born in 1865. ...

The All Saints parish was situated in a heavily Jewish neighborhood. Well before the war, Rev. Godlewski organized the housemaids in his parish and elsewhere, seeing to it that their employers, who were often Jews, paid the health insurance rates. He also organized the local artisans, who were often in conflict with the more numerous Jewish artisans. He was active in journalism and in Christian labor organizations. He founded an interest-free loan association, apparently using the Jewish Interest-Free Loan Association, as a model; he took its constitution and substituted the word "Jews" with "Poles." He was a nationalist and an "Endek," a member of the National Democratic Party (Stronictwo Narodowe Demokratyczne, or ND).

In Godlewski's activities, he often came into conflict with local Jews and Jewish organizations and as a result acquired a reputation as an anti-Semite. It is important to note that this idea of anti-Semitism was based on the economic competition between [the two groups, i.e. Jews and Poles]. ...

The complexity of what can collectively be called anti-Semitism can be seen from [Judenrat chairman] Czerniaków's entry for July 24, 1941. He writes about meeting a priest: "I returned a visit to Rev. Popławski who called on me at one time on the subject of assistance to the Christians of Jewish origins. He proceeded to tell me that he sees God's hand in being placed in the ghetto, [but] that after the war he would leave as much an anti-Semite as he was when he arrived there." But "anti-Semitic" meant many things. Monsignor Seweryn Popławski headed the Nativity of the B.V.M. parish between 1934 and 1944. He refused to leave the ghetto and is known to have helped the persecuted Jews and saved many of them, particularly children. Just before the Polish uprising, the Germans removed him from the church, which they used

for storage. He died at seventy-four years of age, during the fighting in August 1944, under the ruins of his church.

People like Rev. Poplawski and Rev. Godlewski were profoundly shocked by the Nazis' savage persecutions of the Jews, and of course by the fact that the Nazis considered the baptized Jews to be Jews at all. I fully agree with Rev. Czarnecki's judgment concerning Rev. Godlewski, and probably Rev. Poplawski: "Before the War [Rev. Godlewski] was known for his unfriendly [niechętnie] attitude toward Jews, but when he saw all the sufferings, he threw himself with all his heart into helping those people."

My personal experiences have convinced me that in the face of persecutions and horrors, the attitude toward the victim was, in the final analysis, dictated not so much by prewar political convictions as by the mysterious quality of human decency.

... one of the former residents of the parish buildings at All Saints, Dr. Louis Christophe Zaleski-Zamenhof, ... is the grandson of Dr. Ludwik Lazar Zamenhof (1859–1917), the creator of Esperanto; the main street of what used to be the northern ghetto bears his name. ...

When he was fifteen, Zaleski-Zamenhof lived in the ghetto with his mother, who had just been released from Pawiak prison. His mother was a widow; her husband had been executed in Palmiry (a forest near Warsaw, the site of numerous executions carried out by the Gestapo), at the beginning of the occupation. His sister, a medical doctor and also a recent widow, lived with them. They were invited to live in the All Saints parish hall by the pastor, Rev. Godlewski. Later, the pastor helped the young Zamenhof to escape from the ghetto and to find a humble factory job in suburban Anin. ...

Dr. Zaleski-Zamenhof speaks in glowing terms of Rev. Godlewski. He does not consider him as an anti-Semite: "He did not ask me what was my religion, but whether I was hungry." On the contrary, he maintains that even from a purely theological point of view, the ideas propagated by Rev. Godlewski in the Warsaw ghetto were forerunners of the new ecumenical view, later accepted by Vatican II, that Jews were not the "rejectors of Christ" but "the older brothers of the Christians." ...

The All Saints Church was situated in the southern part of the ghetto, sometimes referred to as the small ghetto. Some details about the parish life at All Saints can be found in the short and cautious article by Rev. Antoni Czarnecki ... He gives some of the names of those who lived in the parish hall. Besides Professor Ludwik Hirszfeld and his wife and daughter, there were Rudolf Hermelin (engineer) and his family, Polkiewicz (lawyer) and his family, Feliks Drutowski (engineer) with his mother and sister, Zygmunt Pfau and his wife (Bronisława) and daughter, Dr. Fedorowski and his parents, Dr. Gelbard (later known as Gadowski), the Grynbergs, the Zamenhofs, and others. ... (Henryk) Nowogródzki, a lawyer, and Dr. Jakub Weinkiper-Antonowicz.

Rev. Czarnecki remembers that many people who were moved into the ghetto found homes by exchanging apartments in the vicinity of All Saints, "so that ... a considerable part of the population there was constituted by Catholics or Christians of other denomination, or of sympathizers with the Church. The great majority of the new parishioners belonged to the intelligentsia: they were scientists, doctors, artists and lawyers." Given this membership, the parish council naturally included members of the intelligentsia and "outstanding personalities such as Dr. Antonowicz, Dr. Górecki, Dr. Grausam, the lawyer Ettinger, the engineer Hermelin, Mrs. Bronisława Pfau and others." ...

Dr. Ludwik Hirszfeld is the most knowledgeable informant about the Christians in the ghetto and about many aspects of the daily life of the ghetto dwellers. His autobiography, *The Story of a Life* (2000) is the most important document by a Christian about the Christians of the Warsaw ghetto and about the Church of All Saints. ...

Hirszfeld's activities during his next year and a half in the ghetto were of two kinds: he offered [Judenrat chairman] Czerniaków his services as an expert on combating typhus, and he participated in organizing and offering important courses for medical practitioners (doctors, pharmacists, and dentists) and also collaborated in a semiclandestine course for medical students ... in fact it was a program of the first two years in medical school. ... His motivation was frankly spiritual and, as we have seen, often expressed in a clearly religious language. ...

His first lecture for medical practitioners met with some resistance because of his mekhes [convert] status: "The Chairman [Czerniaków] is present, evidently to prevent any demonstrations against me by the Jewish nationalists. At the door a woman doctor, a nationalist, urges the boycott of my lecture. ... My first words are a call to maintain dignity." ...

In the chapter entitled "In the Shadow of the All Saints Church," Hirszfeld describes Jewish Christian life in the ghetto. In August 1941 the Hirszfelds obtained living quarters at All Saints in the large church building containing the rectory and a church hall. After almost seven months of living on Twarda Street, in the midst of noise and filth and with constant exposure to the terrible street scenes, they found themselves in an oasis of relative peace. Hirszfeld describes this new place in terms similar to those Alina Brodzka Wald used about the Church of the Nativity of the B.V.M.: "The windows of our very small dwelling were facing a small but beautiful garden. These gardens surrounded by walls have a strange charm. We had an impression of finding ourselves in a recess of meditation, silence and goodwill, a recess preserved in the midst of hell. And the priest of this recess was Monsignor Godlewski."

Hirszfeld praises Rev. Godlewski in the highest terms. We have already seen the same homage offered by another

survivor of the rectory of All Saints, Dr. Zaleski-Zamenhof. Hirszfeld, who insisted that he was not endowed with literary talent, always speaks lyrically about the Monsignor. ... "Monsignor Godlewski. When I pronounce this name, I am seized with emotion. Passion and love dwelling in one soul. Once upon a time he was an anti-Semite ... But when fate made him encounter bottomless misery, he abandoned his previous attitudes and turned all the ardor of his priestly heart toward helping the Jews." ...

Hirszfeld says that his admiration for the pastor of the All Saints parish was shared by many: "Whenever his beautiful white-haired head ... appeared, the other heads bowed in admiration and love. We all loved him: children or old people fought for a moment of conversation. He did not spare himself. He taught catechism to the children. He was the head of Caritas for the whole ghetto, and ordered that soup be given whether the hungry person was a Christian or a Jew." Hirszfeld insists that this love and respect was shared by people outside the Jewish Christian group as well: "We [Christian Jews] were not alone in the appreciation of Rev. Godlewski. I would like to transmit to future generations the opinion of the Head of the Jewish Council [Czerniaków]. During a meeting that Dr. [Juliusz] Zweibaum called to observe the first anniversary of the medical courses, the Head of the Council told us how this Monsignor wept in his office when he spoke about the misery of the Jews, and how he tried to alleviate this misery. Czerniaków stressed the great assistance rendered by this former anti-Semite."

Rev. Godlewski lived in Anin, a nearby suburb of Warsaw, and commuted to the ghetto every day using a permanent pass. His relative freedom of movement was extremely important for making contacts, for smuggling small quantities of food and medicine, and, according to a well-established tradition, for smuggling out little children hidden in the fold of his large cassock. His assistant and second in command at All Saints was, as we know, a much younger Rev. Czarnecki, who lived permanently in the rectory and who apparently was not touched by prewar anti-Semitism. Hirszfeld speaks about him also in high terms: "The helper and deputy of the Monsignor was Rev. Antoni Czarnecki. He was a young priest, who did not have the same passionate approach to life as the Monsignor, but he was certainly endowed with a gentleness and goodness worthy of a priest. He was liked and respected by all. His pleasant and loving ways [sposób bycia] had a soothing and comforting effect."

This chapter is the only one in which Hirszfeld speaks about the Christian Jews as a group: "On Sunday all the Christians, not only the Catholics, attended Mass. Everybody was there: doctors, lawyers, those whose baptism was an expression of faith, those for whom it was a [Polish] national symbol, and those who, at a certain moment, accepted their baptism to further their own self-interests. But all felt the need to gather at least once a week in the church and to participate in the service." ...

Hirszfeld's reflections contradict the views of those Jewish writers who saw in the ghetto baptisms nothing but a search for some kind of material profit. ...

What struck me in reading these pages for the first time—many years ago—was the insistence on patriotism, on an inalienable union of God and Country. I remember that during the war in Poland this was precisely the common, accepted, and indisputable view.

Accounts gathered by Yad Vashem, which has recognized Rev. Władysław Głowacki as a Righteous Gentile, attest to the following. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.239.)

From October 1940 to August 1942, Władysław Głowacki [Władysław Głowacki] exploited his position as priest of the Leszno Street church [of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary] in the Warsaw ghetto to provide a number of Jews, including Amelia and Rudolf Arcichowski, Aleksander Bender, Tadeusz Seidenbeutel, and his father, Maksymilian, with Aryan papers. Głowacki also sheltered Helena Labeledz in his apartment [in the parish rectory in the suburb of Służewiec where he was transferred in August 1942⁴⁰] from the summer of 1942 until January 1945, when the area was liberated.

One of the parishioners of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin was Alina Brodzka Wald, who lived in the Warsaw ghetto from November 1940 until her escape to the Aryan side, at age twelve, on July 22, 1942. Her story is told in Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, at pages 108–10.

She was baptized early in her life, following her mother's wishes. Her godfather was Stanisław Wiesel (or Wizel), a convert of long standing. ... Alina's parents went to the ghetto in November 1940 because of their deep attachment to their own parents, who were old and had refused to go into hiding, although they could have done so because their Polish was fluent and faultless. Salomon and Gustawa Brodzki died peacefully in the ghetto, before the Aktion ... One of Alina's aunts,

⁴⁰ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.155.

Eugenia Brodzka Jakubowicz, was baptized in the ghetto ... As a little girl, Alina felt the antipathy of the ghetto population: "We were not loved, we were strangers."

The day that Alina's family arrived in the [Warsaw] ghetto he father took her to the Church of the Nativity of the B.V.M. For the next almost twenty months, she went to the parish every day to attend the school, taught by priests as well as lay teachers. She remembers the horror of those trips. Daily life in the ghetto was rendered particularly difficult because, among other things, of the incredibly crowded conditions in the streets. One especially dreaded street was the narrow Karmelicka, the only passage, until the fall of 1941, from the southern part (small ghetto) to the northern part (larger ghetto). Alina had to take this passage to reach the church on Leszno Street from her home on Orla Street. ...

For Alina, entering the small door into the church garden, after the horrors of Leszno and Karmelicka Streets, was like entering another world, a world of green nature, one of tranquillity and a sense of security. She knew the head of the parish, Monsignor [Seweryn] Popławski, Rev. Teofil [Władysław] Głowacki, and Rev. [Aleksander] Zyberk-Plater, whom she remembers as the "intellectuals of the parish." Alina belonged to the parish children's group, which had several dozen members. The leader of this group was Rev. Henryk Komorowski, the priest whom Alina remembers best. He played volleyball with "his" children, and Alina's most cherished souvenir that she managed to bring from the ghetto is a photograph of the parish volleyball team dedicated to her by Rev. Komorowski as "his dear player." He was truly a charismatic person, not only respected but loved. He enjoyed the total trust of his wards.

The school offered the usual subjects as well as a course of studies in the Christian tradition. Besides sports, the parish offered dancing and rhythmic gymnastics lessons given by Irena Prusicka. The parish had run an elementary school since the inception of the ghetto. At first it was a clandestine operation, but in October 1941 it became a legal Catholic school. Regular religious education was offered both in the school and outside it.

We know that the gardens of both the Nativity and All Saints churches were greatly admired, desired, and envied as the only islands of green in the sea of overcrowded and noisy streets. The Nativity parish garden was more substantial than the garden of All Saints or the deactivated Saint Augustine. ... the elite among the converts used to meet in the garden of the Nativity Church: doctors, professors, engineers, and teachers. ...

Alina left the ghetto on the first day of the Aktion, July 22, 1942, she simply walked through the checkpoint with slightly falsified papers, in which the Jewish name Brodzka was modified to the more "Aryan" spelling Brocka. But nobody asked her for papers. She explains it as a combination of luck, youth, and her "Slavic" looks. ...

Alina's first protectors was Jadwiga Bielecka, the wife of a well-known "Endek" [National Democrat] who was at that time a prisoner of war in Germany. Alina spent the rest of the German occupation with the Sisters of the Family of Mary, and then with the Sisters of the Resurrection in Warsaw. After the Polish uprising, during which this fourteen-year-old girl worked in a hospital, Alina was sent with the Sisters to Częstochowa in the western part of Poland. Both Alina's parents survived on the "Other Side." Her older brother, who left the ghetto well before her, was an active AK [Home Army] member and took part in the Polish uprising. ...

"I have received nothing but kindness from people. Who am I to speak about the Shoah? I do, of course, speak about the Shoah—I do not hide my past experiences. But I have received the grace and the good fortune to be always with good people. No blackmailer [szmalcownik] was ever on my trail."

Rev. Karol Niemira, the auxiliary bishop of Pińsk, was forced to evacuate his home diocese in September 1939 after the Soviet invasion of Eastern Poland. He returned to Warsaw where he had earlier been a parish priest at St. Augustine's church, now within the confines of the walled ghetto. Bishop Niemira worked closely with the Security Corps (*Korpus Bezpieczeństwa*), an underground military organization of the Home Army which maintained numerous contacts with the Jewish Military Union. Some of his activities were described in Andrzej Chciuk, ed., *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945* (Clayton, Victoria: Wilke and Company, 1969), at page 50. (This is one of several accounts about Bishop Niemira.)

Henryk Szladkowski (Slade) ... was assisted by the Catholic Bishop Niemira of Warsaw. When the Jews were being ordered into the Ghetto he rang the diocesan offices and asked for "Mr. Bishop Niemira". The Bishop supplied him with a Certificate of Baptism and other falsified documents and before parting asked Mr. Szladkowski to refer to him any Jew who may need financial or other assistance.

Halina Gorcewicz was 13 years old when the war broke out. Her mother was a Polish Catholic and her father a Jew, who had nominally converted to Catholicism to marry her mother, but retained a strong identification with his Jewish tradition. Forced to live in the Warsaw ghetto, they were parishioners of St. Augustine's church on Nowoliki Street. Although the parish was formally closed, some priests remained, including Bishop Karol

Niemira, the nominal pastor, and Rev. Franciszek Garncarek, the acting head of the parish. The priests of this parish were active in smuggling Jews, especially converts, out of the ghetto. Their work was continued later at the church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also within the ghetto, which remained open longer. It is there that Halina Gorcewicz went for help after the revolt in the ghetto was finally crushed by the Germans in early May of 1943. (Halina Gorcewicz, *Why, Oh God, Why?*, Internet: <<http://www.books-reborn.org/klinger/why/Why.html>>. See the chapters titled: “Ghetto, end of September 1940,” “Ghetto, the last days of April & May, 1943,” and “Warsaw, end of May, 1943.”)

Early the next morning Mama went outside the wall on a special mission to the nuns ...

She had not been able to arrange anything with the nuns. The Germans had extended their attentions even to them. So she went to the Church of St. Augustyn [Augustine] at Nowolipki and found there not only the parish priest but also His Excellency, Bishop Niemira. She explained our situation to them. It was agreed that they would take the children. So she was comforted in this respect ...

We decided to ask engineer [Joachim] Jachimowicz what possibilities there were for the boys. Especially since they could be exposed to danger without Polish documents. They must accept that risk. And, of course, the condition that they take a vow not to give away how they found themselves on the other side.

Because I was still unable to give the boys any help I stood guard in the evening when they managed to get the children through the passage-way to the other side. Mosze came back happy and delighted, announcing that everything went off fine and the children were in a shelter beneath the church.

“So many children, oh boy!” he added. “I thought they wouldn’t have room for ours. The nuns took them away at once. I told them I’d come for them when the storm had passed over our place. You know, Hana, that tall, older one ... well, I’ve forgotten his name. You know, that ... sort of rabbi of yours ... you know ...”

“Ah, you mean Bishop Niemira?” I put in.

“That’s him!” Mosze picked up. “He patted me on the arm and said: ‘I’ve heard about you! I’ve heard what a brave boy you are. Remember—we’ll find a place for you here as well in case of need. Just come to me.’ I thanked him as best I knew how and ran off because there wasn’t much time left to get back through the passage-way.” ...

On my way back to my room I looked in on Mama. ... She told me that she was very worried about the next day, especially about me and the boys. ... She began to explain further:

“Lala, my dear. For a long time now I’ve been trying to get papers—not only for you, but also for others—but it is not easy. ... Remember one thing always. In case of anything, sometime, about some need, or at a difficult moment—your last chance is to reach His Excellency Bishop Niemira. You are to remember that. But as long as I am by you and with you and I do whatever is within my means, it is not yet time to go to him. He has problems of helping others on his mind at the moment and the most important thing is to tear out of this hell at least some of the youngest children who can be saved.”

...

[May 1943]: I was at Nowolipie and from here it was not far to the church [of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary] at Leszno. ... That was my one and only chance of escape. My old church of St. Augustyn at Nowolipki had ceased to exist as a church long since. ...

And so I moved off, alone and deserted, over holes, craters and burial grounds of embers and rubble in which people lay buried. ...

In this way I covered a good distance from the place of slaughter. Somewhere beyond the corner of Karmelicka St. I found a half-buried cellar. I did not know what I might find there. But it was from there that, in 1939, tunnels led to a larger shelter—and from there right under the church. I did not have a torch or light of any kind. The question was—would I find the way? Had the tunnels collapsed or been filled in? ...

A small hole at the entrance. I just managed to squeeze through. ... So, very carefully, I lowered myself bit by bit, finally to touch the ground with my feet. ...

Complete silence—a deathly hush. But suddenly it seemed to me that I could hear a murmur above this ceiling. I could not believe my ears. Should I call out? Try to find out if there was someone there? No, better not risk it. I had no weapon with which to defend myself if it came to that. ...

Using both my hands and my head, I exerted all my strength to find out whether this flap really could not be moved. It did move a little and I even saw a weak ray of light through the gap, but I did not have sufficient strength to lift the flap clear. It was heavy. ...

Finding one more cross-piece, I climbed higher by using it, bending down as I felt the flap against my head. ... I had to open it completely. But what if it fell with a crash? I could feel cold air coming through. Perhaps this really was a prison dungeon? Such thoughts raced through my brain. ... I could not go back—back to what? Where? So it was God’s will.

Whether to die there among the corpses in the dark—or here. Surely better here, even if it was a prison. ...

So ... One, Two, Three! The flap fell to the floor with a crash which echoed in all directions. I disentangled my arms and legs from the ladder. A weak ray of light was coming as if from a candle shimmering in the distance. It helped me to find a grip and pull myself up. ... Suddenly I felt someone's warm hand touch mine and help to pull me up. For a second I lacked the strength to look up and see who this could be. ... Stretched out on the floor, I saw a man's gray head leaning over me, the body draped in a dress reaching the ground. A warm voice—such a warm voice!—spoke to me quietly:

“Dear child, how did you get here? Are there many with you? We've waited so long!”

When the initial impression wore off I could not believe that I was alive, that my eyes were seeing a man who was a priest—and that the place I had reached was a church.

He put his protective arms round me and led me to the other end of the second cellar where the small candle was burning, asking about others for whom he had been waiting, who were supposed to come here. That was why the entrance had been blocked, because they knew the password which they were to use so that he would open the flap. ...

He was surprised by my appearance and although I was very tired I told him as concisely as I could how I had got there. I mentioned the bodies lying there, which I could not see in the darkness. ...

He stroked my hand and told me to sit down in a soft armchair. He excused himself for a moment, saying he would bring me some warm [grain] coffee. When he had gone I saw in the candlelight that the place was not large, but there was an altar. It was a small chapel in which this priest had sat waiting for those people from below the ground. He must have been a good man.

Deep in thought, I did not sit in the indicated armchair because I was too dirty. I knelt before the small altar, empty but for a Sacred Cross and the one candle. I lost myself in a prayer of thanksgiving ... I also prayed for those who had remained in that “Dante's Inferno” on earth and for all those who had not reached here. ...

I felt a soft touch on my arm although I had not heard approaching footsteps. And these words:

“Come, child. You need a wash and you must be hungry! And you are surely tired, so must rest.

“You are in a reasonably safe place, but not to the extent that you can feel completely free. Here is our other underground chamber.”

I turned and saw two men in clerical clothes. I looked at them and rubbed my eyes, unable to believe what I was seeing. I fell on my knees again, saying:

“Praise be to our Lord. Is that His Excellency, Bishop Niemira?”

“Yes, child,” came the reply. “We were arrested by the Gestapo at one time because of the children we rescued. But they released us. We have our chambers upstairs. They do not know about this hideaway, fortunately. That is why the new father, whom you did not know, is keeping vigil here. We only come here occasionally. It is not safe for us to be away from upstairs for long, or the Germans might discover this place.

“We have been waiting for several days for a larger group of those heroic ghetto fighters, then you came alone. Fr. Sebastian has told me everything. I have forgotten your name, child. I know you and your parents. Wait—just a minute, just a minute—especially your Mama. Ah, I know! After that Gestapo investigation my brain has dimmed a little. Yes, you're from Pawia, right? Oh yes, Mme. Zuzanna is your mother. A splendid woman!”

“Does your Excellency perhaps know something about my Mama? Is she alive?”

“Oh, yes. She has been very ill. She is with Mme. Oziembowska [Oziembowska] at present. She gazes at the burning ghetto in which she has long since buried you—and you are alive, thank God!”

“Yes,” I replied. “Only thanks to the merciful Almighty, that is true, was I able to reach here. And for this favour I am grateful with all my heart.”

“You will have to change your clothes before you can get out of here. Father Sebastian will give you anything at his disposal. I have, however, something in mind which I want to suggest to you, dear child. You were given the name Halina at your christening. That is not a Catholic name. I saw, however, how you prayed. ... Have you been confirmed?”

“No,” I answered.

“Then, I will confirm you myself. But not today, only tomorrow—and not in the morning but here, at night. Later you will leave here with God and go to your mother. It is a great pity that those for whom we've waited have not reached here. And now goodnight with God, darling. Father Sebastian will tell the rest.”

His Excellency Niemira blessed me, raising his worthy hands above my head, whispering a prayer. When he finished, he whispered:

“I am proud of you! You are a brave girl. May God be praised.”

“Amen,” I replied. I rose from my knees, but with such difficulty that if Fr. Sebastian had not supported me, I would have found myself on the floor. I had no strength left.

Fr. Sebastian led me down a similar shaft to the one which had brought me here to another, lower underground chamber. These were mattresses there and blankets for those who had been expected. There was a basin with water and a

little soap, also a wash cloth and a lot of women's and men's clothing on a chair in the corner.

Fr. Sebastian told me to have a wash, choose something for myself from among the underwear and clothes to change into. When ready, I was to pull on a string in the corner which would ring a bell letting him know. He would then provide me with a meal. I now felt acutely how tired and hungry I was. There was a wooden ladder here coming down. There was a small shelf on one wall on which stood a Crucifix and a small candle shone. So it was not dark. ...

A few moments later Fr. Sebastian came down, carrying a tray with a modest meal. Hot grain coffee, one slice of black, clay-like bread and an army biscuit. ...

"Eat, dear child, with a good appetite," said Fr. Sebastian. "There's not much of it, but our circumstances also are such that we must ration ourselves. And this is not supper, but breakfast—for it is morning now. You would not know it here, without a window. This is a special hideaway. ... You must sleep, for you are very tired. It is quiet here. Should anything unexpected happen I will wake you and let you know. Here are some matches. I will douse the candle as I go out. ... Good-night! Stay with God!"

... when I opened my eyes the candle burning on the shelf with the Crucifix again cast its soft light, penetrating the darkness. Father Sebastian was sitting by me, stroking my cheek.

"Come, child, get up! Before you get another meal you must offer yourself to God. Everything is ready for your confirmation, which His Excellency Niemira will administer to you himself. Here you are—here is a rosary if you would like to pray first. The ceremony will be upstairs."

"And my confession?" I asked.

Father Sebastian replied:

"Last night you confessed to us both the finest deeds of your life. You need not add anything more. You are as pure as snow and may you remain so always. I am going upstairs. You pray and come up right away. It is still and quiet underground now because it is night. ..."

I wanted to pray, say at least part of that rosary, but I could not. ...In place of prayer, my lips whispered once more: "What for? Why, oh God, why? I live, I have survived and they are all dead. Why?"

From upstairs came Fr. Sebastian's voice:

"Come up now, dear!"

I smoothed down my hair and my dress and went up. Fr. Sebastian was waiting and he led me to the altar before which I had knelt yesterday. Waiting there was His Excellency Bishop Niemira.

Although he administered the confirmation sacrament to me, my thoughts, strangely, were not here where I had received help, kind words, where I was fed, clothed and where I slept safely. I was still with all those ghetto fighters who had fallen.

...

Bishop Niemira's words broke into my thoughts:

"I name you Maria-Magdalena, who is your patron saint from this moment and through who you will address yourself to God." ...

Following Bishop Niemira's blessing I kissed the ring on his finger with great reverence. This was a very fine man, not only as a spiritual person, but in himself—a great man. I was very pleased that it was through him that I received the confirmation sacrament. Although I did not know it then, that was the last time I saw him alive.

That same night I was given a new pass from the PCK school and also the pass which I lost during the memorable fur search, confirming my employment in the Out-patient Clinic of the dept. of Social Security. No longer Smulikowski St., but now at Praga, at 34, Jagiellońska [Jagiellońska] St. I was to continue my work with Dr. Cetkowski, who was now employed there.

In the morning, after curfew, I was led out by Fr. Sebastian through a different section of underground passages with which I was not familiar to a tram stop. I was going to take a tram to Praga in order to reach Szeroka St., where my Mama was living with friends. Fr. Sebastian gave me money for the fare. While saying goodbye to me he became very emotional and could not control himself. Blessing me on my further, new, journey he told me:

"You must contact your old friend, the helpful dr. Cetkowski, at once. Give him my regards. Go on being yourself as you have been up to now. Remember, Maria-Magdalena!"

"Yes, Father," I replied.

A tram came up and Fr. Sebastian told me to take it. I kissed him sincerely. What a pity that I did not know his full name. The name Sebastian was probably also not his own, only adopted with his priest's vows—possibly even that was different now? What a warm heart he had shown me. ...

Following the direction given to me by Fr. Sebastian I reached Szeroka St. at Praga safely and proceeded to the indicated address where my mother was staying. ...

During this initial period I continued to use the false documents provided by Fr. Sebastian. ...

Towards the end, I should stress the fact that the Polish Community—those true Poles—gave self-sacrificing help to the

people locked in the ghetto. It is not relevant whether they did so altruistically (some did) or for large sums of money (they were risking their own lives and those of their families). But the fact itself that such help existed and that through it the lives of many Jews and Jewish children were saved—that should always be remembered.

It should also be stressed with what great self-sacrifice and devotion the convent sisterhood operated, as well as many priests. Among those who gave the greatest assistance were the clergy with His Excellency Bishop Niemira at the head, from the Church of St. Augustyn at Nowolipki. In the first phase many hundreds of Jewish children (the tiniest ones, the small ones and those older ones) went through their hands. ... Also the clergy from the ... Church of the Holiest Virgin Mary—and many, many others.

Miriam Chasson (née Finkielsztajn) survived the Warsaw ghetto uprising and was able to pass as Irena Lewandowska, with the help of a number of Poles including a village priest in Belchów near Łowicz, on the strength of a false baptismal certificate her mother obtained for her from the Carmelite Sisters in Warsaw. She survived the war and moved to Israel. (Polish Righteous, Internet: <<http://www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl>>.)

In the late spring 1943 the family named Laska in the Belchów village (powiat Łowicz, voivodship Łódź) took in a ten-year-old girl, who introduced herself as Irena Lewandowska, an orphan from Przemyśl.

Miriam Chasson, nee Finkielsztajn, the only daughter of Roza [Róża] and Gustaw Finkielsztajn ... In the fall of 1941 the Jewish population of the town [of Łowicz] was resettled by Germans to the Warsaw ghetto.

In 1942 Gustaw was caught in a street round-up and taken to Umschlagplatz; he was killed in Treblinka. Roza managed to arrange for a fake baptismal certificate for her daughter with the help of Carmelite nuns from the convent bordering on the ghetto at Bonifraterska street. In spite of the famine they managed to survive until the April ghetto uprising. The sought shelter in one of the bunkers with 30 other people. On May 4, 1943, the Germans brought them all outside.

Ten-year-old Miriam showed her baptismal certificate to one of the German policemen and told him that her name was Irena Lewandowska, and that she was a Christian girl who found herself in the ghetto by accident. She was taken to a Gestapo station while all the others – including her mother – went to Umschlagplatz. In the general confusion the girl managed to leave the station and cross to the “Aryan side”.

She does not remember any more how she got Mr. Bobotek’s address in Nieborów. Her aunt, who had escaped from the ghetto during the uprising and was hiding at the “Aryan side”, could not take her in, but gave her some money. Miriam bought a small cross and a train ticket. When she reached Mr. Bobotek’s house and asked for help he placed her as a nanny with a family with four children.

Miriam did not complain, but she was not comfortable there. “... I took care of their children, but one beautiful day I went for a walk in that village. There was a farm of Stanisław Laska. Here was Nieborów, then a highway, the grass-covered fields. ... Belchów was two, maybe three kilometres further. And they were somewhere in the middle, just that house. They had orchards. I thought: ‘what’s there to lose? I’ll try.’ I went in and asked if maybe they need some help with the cows or pigs. Because they had a big farm.”

Józef and Marianna Laska, and their four children, worked their own farm in Belchów near Nieborów. They had four children. “... there was Stanisław, he was still a young man, 26 years old,” remembers Miriam Chasson. “Then there was his mother, Marianna, and his grandmother. There was his sister Helka and another one, Julka, born after Helka. The oldest one was Stacha, married to a railman, but she didn’t live with them, she had a small house, close to them, but not together. There was no father, because he had also been a railman and died in a railway accident.” ...

“First they asked me if I was hungry. I said yes and at once they gave me something to eat, potatoes and sour milk, and they told me: ‘You can stay, if you like’. ... So I went back to that Mr. Bobotek and told him: ‘You know, I was really unhappy with those people [family with 4 children]. I was just walking around and I dropped in to Mr. Laska, and they need someone to help with the cows and housework. Could I move in with them? And he said ‘yes’, and I went to them.”

They accepted her as Irena Lewandowska, orphan from the Zamojskie [Zamość] district.

“At that time they took those children in the Zamojskie district, and she came from there. She had the certificate.” recalls Stanisław Laska. His memory of her arrival differs from Miriam’s story: “She was brought by a lady who lived in Łowicz, they had a house there, she came here and brought that little Jewish girl,” he says.

Miriam gets emotional when she remembers her stay with the Laskas: “they took me in, put me in a tub, because I had lice from that bunker and everything ... and then I went to bed, the same as Helka. They didn’t treat me as if I dropped down from Mars or another planet. They were the people ... there are no such people in the whole world ... I found a home. ... I worked because everyone worked there. I slept together with Helka.” ...

“After a while I started going to school in the village. I attended religious instruction lessons. I was a good student and the priest even praised me from the pulpit. And they [the Laskas] were very proud of me.” Irena took her First Communion: “She was keen to do it because she had a friend and they took Communion together,” says Stanisław.

The girl told about her origin only to the priest [Rev. Zenon Ziemecki] during confession. The Laskas were guessing she was Jewish but it did not matter to them.

"I had quite forgotten I was Jewish," remembers Miriam. "... when we were sitting together in winter weaving linen, there was talk about Jews. ... they talked about my grandpa. They had known him, bought ploughs from him and other staff ... those relatives of mine, Finkielsztajn-Adler, were very well known in Łowicz ... of course, I didn't say anything ...

They never asked me about that certificate. I told them that Germans had killed my parents ... They never asked."
Miriam-Irena stayed with the Laskas for two years.

After the failed revolt and liquidation of the ghetto in Warsaw in April and May 1943, the Polish underground attempted to rescue the small number of Jews who managed to escape deportation and remained hidden in bunkers and cellars in the ruins of the ghetto. The Polish underground turned to Catholic priests for assistance in hiding the fugitives. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, pp.806–807.)

Zdzisław [Zdzisław] Szymczak and his wife, Jadwiga, lived in Warsaw during the war. In 1941, he began helping Jews. His brother, Józef [Józef], also actively assisted him in this endeavor. One of the many Jews who received help from the Szymczak brothers was Mieczysław [Mieczysław] Karol Dubiński [Dubiński], a schoolmate of Zdzisław's from the Warsaw Polytechnic. They were also both involved in the Socialist Student Union group known as "Life" (OMS "Życie" ["Życie]). They had met again at the turn of 1941, when Zdzisław helped Dubiński find a hiding in Piaseczno (near Warsaw) for a few days. At the same time, Jehuda Leibel (later Roman Malinowski)—who was also a prewar schoolmate from the Polytechnic—approached Zdzisław. In November 1942, the Szymczak brothers arranged the escape of Maria Malinowski from the Tarnów [Tarnów] ghetto. Maria (Rachel Markus) was Roman's wife. The brothers brought her to Warsaw and helped her establish herself on the Aryan side. Zdzisław also hid Benjamin Leibel (Roman's father) in his apartment for one week. He eventually found a hiding place for Roman's father-in-law, Moshe Markus, as well. In December 1942, the Szymczak brothers helped Rachel's sister, Felicia Markus (Izabelle Minz), escape from the Tarnów ghetto. They took her to Warsaw and put her up for a few days in their mother's apartment. They also arranged Aryan papers for her and helped her find an apartment. Zdzisław also helped Roman's sister, Lili Rosenblum, flee the ghetto. In July 1943, the teenager David Plonski escaped from the [Warsaw] ghetto through the sewage system. He tried to contact the Polish underground to arrange for the escape of the handful of fighters who had remained alive in the destroyed ghetto. The Szymczak brothers came to his aid and provided him with food and arms. They also helped him return to the ghetto through a manhole and then, for three nights, waited for him and his group of comrades to leave the ghetto. They kept in contact with the fighters after finding hiding places for all. In 1944, following the end of the Warsaw Uprising, Zdzisław helped Roman to relocate his family.

Zdzisław Szymczak provided more details of his exploits in his own recollection of these events, including the assistance he received from Rev. Paweł Iliński of Zalesie Górne near Warsaw. (Richard C. Lukas, ed., *Out of the Inferno: Poles Remember the Holocaust* [Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989], pp.166–68.)

The aid that I organized for the Jews had a three-fold character, first of all moving Jews to safe places. Often through my mediation, people found shelter with partisan units [who operated in the Kielce woods]. The point of contact for moving Jews was my own residence at 15 Granica [Graniczna] Street in Warsaw. During the occupation, nearly 100 people passed through my apartment. To avoid provocation of the Germans, those Jews who came to my home first called upon people whom I knew and in whom I had confidence. That same day or the following day, the Jews were moved to other apartments in City Center, Powiśle, or Wola. These apartments were specially prepared with secret tile stoves on rollers, in the event of a German search. The Jews were also moved often to the apartment of my in-laws at 43 Królewicz Jakub Street, where in a one-family dwelling two secret places to hide Jews—one in the cellar and one in the loft—had been built.

...

Second, I helped to provide food to Jews who lived in the ghetto, even during the Ghetto Uprising. After the end of the Ghetto Uprising, I received from Mieczysław Kadzielski (the name he used during the occupation) information about the location of a camouflaged bunker in the ghetto. I decided to help this group out of the ghetto. To gain entry to the ghetto, I hired myself out for several days with a group of transport workers who worked for the Germans. This groups' [sic] task was to carry away industrial machinery from the ghetto. I assumed the risk, convinced that there was no other possibility to save the people in the bunker. During the time of my work in the ghetto, I detached myself from the other workers, with the agreement of the supervisor, and went to the address of the bunker. All I got there was information that Kadzielski had

moved to another bunker and would indicate later where he was. After several weeks, a fifteen-year-old Jewish boy, Little Jurek [Jerzy Płoński], a member of Kadzielski's group, came to my apartment. He had gotten out of the rubble of the ghetto through the sewers and he brought news of Kadzielski's location. Together with my friends, we decided to help Kadzielski and the people who were with him get out through the sewers. At a designated manhole exactly at midnight we would take them out. We leased an apartment near the entrance to the sewer, where we would immediately be able to get to the survivors. We anticipated using armed guards. The escape was successful. Kadzielski stayed first in the apartment on Królewicz Jakub Street and found himself later in Zalesie Górne near Warsaw, where he was hidden by Father [Paweł] Iliński, a member of the Home Army, in the home of the Matysiak family.

In my third way of aiding Jews, it often happened that I traveled by train to escort Jews to Warsaw. On one of these trips I went to Częstochowa to escort the twelve-year-old niece of Mrs. Kadzielski. After several days, we moved her to the house in Zalesie Górne. The girl calls herself Ola Harland now and lives in Paris.

During the entire occupation, although I was registered as living at 15 Granica Street, I tried to be there very rarely because I was being pursued by the Gestapo. The Gestapo possessed documents concerning my prewar Communist activities at the Warsaw Polytechnic. I succeeded in avoiding arrest three times. Since I myself was being pursued by the Nazis, it seemed reasonable for me to help the persecuted Jews.

Artur Ney, born in 1930, resided with his parents in the Warsaw ghetto. He ventured out frequently, staying in the home of a Polish woman, to buy goods which he would then smuggle into the ghetto. When the revolt broke out on April 19, 1943, he happened to be on the Aryan side. He moved to Runów near Grójec, where he worked for a Polish farmer. The villagers knew he was Jewish but he felt safe among them. He decided to return to Warsaw in December 1943, when the Germans conducted a round-up in the village seizing Poles for labour in Germany. Artur Ney relates the story of his stay in Warsaw in an account published in Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, at pp.331–32.

I went to the emergency welfare department. In the ghetto I had purchased an "Aryan" birth certificate from a boy who was a convert who was later deported from the ghetto. They checked the document in the social welfare office and discovered that it belonged to a convert. So I was sent to an institute which was run by Rev. Jan Kapusta as a convert. He was there as a civilian, hiding from the Germans. His real name was Jan Marzerski. He was a good person. Rev. Stefanowski also knew about me, and he was good to me too. The children who resided there knew nothing about me. While there I completed my sixth grade of public school. There were about 100 people there in total. The institute was located at 59 Sienna Street. I stayed there until the Uprising [in August 1944].

During the Uprising I joined the Home Army. They knew I was Jewish. The whole time I was in the first frontline in horrible conditions. I went there of my own free will, because they did not want to let me out of the institute. ... On October 7 we all left Warsaw as the last patrols. We were taken to Pruszków. I ran away from the transport and made it to Łowicz. ... I stayed there until the Soviet Army arrived.

Many priests in Warsaw assisted Jews during the German occupation. The following members of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, also called the Pallottine Fathers, were among those benefactors: Rev. Franciszek Pauliński, the rector of the residence on Miodowa Street; Rev. Wiktor Bartkowiak, the chaplain of the transit camp on Skaryszewska Street; Rev. Jan Stefanowski extended his care to both Polish and Jewish children; Rev. Jan Młyńczak was active in the Polus shelter for the homeless in the suburb of Praga.⁴¹

Accounts gathered at Yad Vashem, which recognized Sister Klara Jaroszyńska as a Righteous Gentile, attest to the following assistance by the Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross in Laski near Warsaw. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, pp.304–305.)

In August 1942, during the liquidation of the Radom ghetto in the Kielce district, Jakub Lautenberg, his wife, Karola, and their eight-year-old daughter, Anita, fled to Warsaw. With the help of an acquaintance, Anita was taken in by Józef Jaroszyński [Józef Jaroszyński], a teacher, and his wife, Helena, a former senior lecturer at the technical college. When Anita's parents subsequently turned up ... The Jaroszyńskis agreed to shelter Karola in their apartment and found a hiding place for Jakub in a rented cellar in the Bielany suburb of Warsaw. ... In due course, Anita was sent to a home for

⁴¹ Zygmunt Zieliński, ed., *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, 1982), p.664.

the blind run by the [Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross, misidentified in this account as the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth] in Laski Warszawskie, where the Jaroszynskis' daughter, Klara, worked as a nun. Klara introduced Anita as a relative of hers whose father worked as a pilot for the Polish Army-in-Exile. Before leaving for the convent, Maria Furmanik, a close friend of the Jaroszynskis who lived with them, drilled Anita in the Christian prayers. Later, Maria visited Anita in the convent and took her out for walks in the local parks. The Jaroszynskis, meanwhile, continued to supply Anita with clothes, textbooks, and stationery, without expecting anything in return. [This so-called ruse was not really necessary because, as we know from other accounts, a number of Jews were sheltered at Laski.—Ed.]

In 1941, the archbishop of Wilno, Rev. Romuald Jalbrzykowski, issued an appeal urging monasteries and convents to hide escapes from the ghettos. One of the many religious orders who responded to his plea were the Dominican Sisters, a contemplative order. During the round-ups of Jews in July 1941, about seventeen members of the Hashomer Hatzair, Abba Kovner and Arie Wilner (who had arrived from Warsaw) among them, took shelter in their convent located in Kolonia Wileńska, just outside the city of Wilno. Contact with the mother superior of the convent, Anna Borkowska, was made by Jadwiga Dudziec and Irena Adamowicz, members of the Polish scouting organization, who had ties to the Hashomer Hatzair and had already hidden other Jews in various convents and monasteries and had obtained documents for them. Dressed as nuns, the young Jews worked side by side with the nuns cultivating the fields near the convent. After nearly six months, they decided to return to the Wilno ghetto where they formed the nucleus of the armed underground. The Germans arrested Anna Borkowska in September 1943, closed the convent, and dispersed the nuns. Yad Vashem awarded Anna Borkowska (Sister Bertranda) and seven other Dominican Sisters—Maria Ostreyko (Sister Jordana), Maria Janina Roszak (Sister Cecylia), Maria Neugebauer (Sister Imelda), Stanisława Bednarska (Sister Stefania), Irena Adamek (Sister Małgorzata), Julia Michrowska (Sister Bernadeta) and Helena Frąckiewicz (Sister Diana)—for their part in the rescue mission. The story was first told by Philip Friedman in his book *Their Brothers' Keepers*, at pages 16–17. The account is based on the testimony of the ghetto fighter and poet Abraham Suckewer (Sutzkever), one of those rescued by the nuns.

The small nunnery was located not far from the Vilna Colony [Kolonia Wileńska] railroad station. During the German occupation there were only seven sisters in this Benedictine [actually, Dominican] convent, all from Cracow [Kraków]. The Mother Superior, a graduate of Cracow University, was a comparatively young woman of thirty-five at the time when the Jews were driven from their homes. Although the convent was too far removed from the ghetto for her to hear the cries of a tortured people, the Mother Superior seemed always to be gazing in that direction, as though she were waiting for a summons. She found it hard to keep her mind on the work which had previously claimed all her time and love, the ministering to the poor and the miserable.

One day she decided that the time had come to act. She summoned the other nuns and, after prayer, they discussed the subject of the ghetto. Not long afterward, as a result of this conversation, a few of the sisters appeared before the gate of the ghetto. The guards did not suspect the nuns of any conspiratorial designs. Eventually contact was established between the convent and the Vilna [Wilno] ghetto, and an underground railroad was formed. The seven nuns became experts in getting Jews out of the ghetto and hiding them at the convent and in other places. At one period it seemed as if the small nunnery were bulging with nuns, some with features unmistakably masculine.

Among those hidden in the convent were several Jewish writers and leaders of the ghetto Underground: Abraham Sutzkever, Abba Kovner, Edek Boraks, and Arie Wilner. Some stayed a long time, others returned to the ghetto to fight and die. When, in the winter of 1941, the Jewish Fighters' Organization [ŻOB] was formed, the Mother Superior became an indispensable ally. The Fighters needed arms, and the Mother Superior undertook to supply them. Assisted by the other nuns, she roamed the countryside in search of knives, daggers, bayonets, pistols, guns, grenades. The hands accustomed to the touch of rosary beads became expert with explosives. The first four grenades received gratefully by the Fighters were the gift of the Mother Superior, who instructed Abba Kovner in their proper use, as they were of a special brand unfamiliar to him. She later supplied other weapons. Although she worked selflessly, tirelessly, she felt not enough was being done. "I wish to come to the ghetto," she said to Abba Kovner, "to fight by your side, to die, if necessary. Your fight is a holy one. You are a noble people. Despite the fact that you are a Marxist [Kovner was a member of the Hashomer Hatzair, a leftist Zionist faction with pro-Communist leanings] and have no religion, you are closer to God than I."

Her ardent wish to enter the ghetto to fight and, in the end, to die the martyred death of the Jews was not realized. She was too valuable an ally, and was prevailed upon to remain on the Aryan side. In addition to supplying arms, she also acted as a liaison between the Jewish Fighters' Organization inside the ghetto and the Polish Underground ...

Mordecai Paldiel, an historian at the Yad Vashem Institute, records the rescue activities in *The Path of the Righteous*, at pages 216–17, and in his *Saving The Jews: Amazing Stories of Men and Women Who Defied the “Final Solution”* (Rockville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2000), at pages 208–10.

The story unfolds in Kolonia Wilenska [Wileńska], near Vilnius (or Vilna [Wilno], its former name under Polish rule, presently the capital of Lithuania), where Sister Anna Borkowska served as Mother Superior in a small group of Dominican nuns. Shocked by the horrible massacres of thousands of Jews [and Poles] in the Ponar [Ponary] forest, not far from her convent, in the summer months of 1941, she invited a group of 17 members of an illegal Jewish [Zionist] pioneering group to hide in the convent for brief spells of time. Soon thereafter, the convent of nine nuns was bustling with activity, for the youthful Jewish men and women were plotting, behind the secure walls of the Dominican convent, an eventual uprising in the Vilna Ghetto [which did not, however, take place].

“They called me Ima [mother],” Anna Borkowska fondly remembered. “I felt as if I were indeed their mother. I was pleased with the arrival of each new member, and was sorry that I could not shelter more of them.” Recalling those who passed through the convent walls, Anna mentioned Arie Wilner: “I gave him the name ‘Jurek’”—the code-name under which he was to be known for his exploits in Warsaw, where he eventually perished during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of April 1943. ... “In spirit ‘Jurek’ was the closest to me.” Then, there was Abba Kovner, the moving spirit of the Vilna underground—“my right hand.”

Kovner presided over the conclaves in the convent where plans were hatched for an uprising in the Vilna Ghetto. Until these plans could mature, Kovner and his 16 colleagues worked side by side with the convent nuns in the fields. There was also Tauba ... Margalit ... Mrs. K. ... Michas ...

To conceal the group’s activities ... all protégés were given nun habits and thus they cultivated the nearby fields. In this departure from monastic rules, it is reported that Mother Anna had the support of her superior in the Vilna archdiocese.

...

In the convent cells, Kovner issued his famous clarion call of rebellion, the first of its kind in Nazi-occupied Europe, which opened with the ringing words: “Let us not be led like sheep to the slaughter!” This manifesto, secretly printed in the convent and distributed inside the ghetto on January 1, 1942, served as inspiration to many ghetto and partisan fighters.

When the time came for Abba Kovner and his comrades to return to the ghetto (they told her, “If we are to die, let us die the death of free people, with arms in our hands”), Anna Borkowska rushed to join them. “I want to go with you to the ghetto,” she pleaded with Abba; “to fight and fall with you.” ... Kovner told her she could be of greater help by smuggling in weapons. The noted Yiddish poet Abraham Sutzkever relates: “the first four grenades ... were the gift of the Mother Superior, who instructed Abba Kovner in their proper use ... She later supplied other weapons.” [According to the Path of the Righteous: Concealing the weapons inside her habit, she brought them to the ghetto gates and stealthily transferred them to Kovner’s waiting and trembling hands. “I have come to join you,” she repeated on this occasion, “for God is with you.” With great difficulty, Kovner succeeded in dissuading her from that course. She returned to her convent and continued to aid those inside the ghetto from the outside.]

As suspicions mounted, the Germans eventually had Anna Borkowska arrested in September 1943, the convent closed, and the Sisters dispersed. One nun was dispatched to a labor camp. ...

During the [1984] ceremony in her honor ... [Kovner] turned to the audience gathered in her honor, and said: “In the days when the angels hid their faces from us, this woman was to us Anna of the Angels—not the angels that we invent for ourselves, but angels which help us build our lives for an eternity.” He had dedicated a poem to her, which begins with the words: “My Little Sister! Nine Sisters look at you with anxiety, as one looks at the sands in the desert.” A year later, Abba Kovner planted a tree in her honor at Yad Vashem.

In her account, Israeli historian Dina Porat mentions a chaplain who assisted the Dominican Sisters in Kolonia Wileńska. (Dina Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow: The Life and Times of Abba Kovner* [Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010], pp.46–50, 62.)

... the mother superior and her nine nuns warmly accepted Kovner, Arie Wilner (who had arrived from Warsaw), and others. In all, between fifteen and twenty individuals hid in wooden structures on the convent grounds. ... On occasion the nuns managed to find hiding places on neighboring farms and estates and took in other Jews, so that sometimes their number reached thirty. The convent grounds were surrounded by a high wall with but one iron gate, which was opened from the inside when the bell was rung. ... a priest named Zawecki [Zawadzki?], who vows enabled him to come and go at will, aided the mother superior in running the convent and served as father confessor to the nuns.

In October, at the height of one of the Aktionen, Kovner's mother and brother Michael fled to this convent as well, taking with them Sala (Shulamit), Genia and Neuta's 4-year-old daughter; Genia and Neuta remained in the city and came for visits. In a short summary of her memoirs, the mother superior recounted how she herself brought the child to the convent on a sled and how, after long weeks in a melina, they could not convince her that she was finally allowed to speak. ... Rosa, Kovner's mother, and the mother superior spent long hours in deep conversation, especially discussing the question of a merciful God who permitted such events to take place. ... Kovner walked around dressed in a monk's habit or in an apron and kerchief, because his obviously Semitic features endangered them all. ... Those in hiding did their best to repay their hostesses by working in the convent fields and kitchen, taking care of the cows and pigs, and drawing water from the well. They ate little, sharing the nuns' simple meals, which consisted mainly of potatoes and milk ...

The nuns were young women in their 30s; the mother superior was a few years older. They were all educated, and some of them held academic degrees. None of them, including the priest, tried to convert those in hiding. Quite the opposite, Kovner taught the nuns Hebrew, and they regarded him as a man of letters. The mother superior conversed with him and the other Jews at length in an attempt to understand what a kibbutz and Eretz Israel were. ... In addition to taking care of Jews in hiding, the nuns [the Jewish charges?] exploited the mother superior's connections to obtain documents and money for them and to secure information and hiding places for their relatives in the city.

The handful of Jews stayed in the convent for nearly six months ... their presence increasingly endangered the nuns. Rumors swirled that the convent would be closed because the Germans had instituted an anti-Catholic campaign, especially against the Polish clergy and its influence, and because the nuns were known to hide Jews and to coordinate their actions with the various underground organizations. ...

Kovner left the convent primarily because of the decision to organize a resistance movement in the ghettos. In December [1941] Kovner and Wilner told the mother superior that they had decided to return, Kovner to the Vilna [Wilno] ghetto and Wilner to the Warsaw ghetto ... In retrospect Kovner viewed the convent as the place where the idea for the ghetto uprising matured. Initially, the mother superior refused to permit them to leave, promising to hide them and all their friends either in the convent itself or in the neighborhood and to save them all. ...

Zawecki, the priest who frequently, visited the convent, told Kovner that masses of Jews were being taken out of the ghetto to be killed. In simple language and sure of his facts, he described how they went and he made Kovner realize it was a matter of mass murder.

The following account is based on testimonies gathered at Yad Vashem. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.108.)

In 1941, during the German occupation, Anna Borkowska (Sister Bertranda), mother superior of a Dominican convent in Kolonia Wilenska, about 15 kilometers from Vilna [Wilno], together with six other nuns helped save a group of Hashomer Hatzair members looking for a hiding place in the area. Through the mediation of Jadwiga Dudziec, a representative of the Polish scouts, Borkowska offered them temporary shelter in the convent. Among the 15 Jews taken into the convent by the nuns were many who later became members of the underground in the Bialystok [Białystok], Warsaw, and Vilna ghettos, such as Arie Wilner, Abba Kovner, Israel Nagel, Chuma Godot, Haika Grosman, and Edek Boraks. Borkowska (who was affectionately known as "Mother") did all she could to ensure the safety of the Jews in her care. In the winter of 1942, a group of young activists left the convent and returned to the ghetto in order to organize an underground Resistance cell. During their stay, the young activists had turned the place into a hive of activity for the Jewish underground with the knowledge and agreement of Borkowska and six other nuns. Abba Kovner was subsequently to relate that the first manifesto calling for a ghetto revolt was drawn up in the convent. After leaving the convent, the members of the underground maintained close ties with Borkowska, their "mother," who visited them in the ghetto, helped them obtain weapons, and brought them their first handgrenades. After rumors reached the ears of the Gestapo, that Jews were hiding in the convent, Borkowska was interrogated and the convent was shut down. The ties between the surviving members of the underground and Borkowska continued after the war, until her death.

(See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.355.)

The following accounts focus on Anna Borkowska. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, pp.xliii–xliv, 377.)

[1] Anna Borkowska was the mother superior of a Dominican convent in Kolonia Wilenska [Wileńska], in [near] Vilna, during the war. Emissaries of the Catholic Scouts in Warsaw, who before the war had contacts with some members of the

Hashomer Zionist youth movement, asked Sister Bertranda to take a group of Vilna [Wilno] Jews into her convent. Among those who found shelter for some time in the convent were Aba Kovner, Abraham Sutzkover, Rozka Korczak, Arie Wilner, and others. In her memoirs, Borkowska wrote: The German terror enveloped the entire country. They made a ghetto. 'We have to save people', Dudziec told me, 'I'll bring you several guards, you have good conditions for hiding people.' They came...helped us work in the garden and on the farm, several girls came too-the walls of our small house expanded, we felt safe inside it. They were quiet and sad, and after an Aktion (maskowa) began in the ghetto, more people came, a four-year-old with a grandmother. Some had lost their dearest ones, and they were even more closed and silent. Only their eyes showed the pain." In fact, inside the convent, discussions were held and ideas put forth about opposition and the need to organize for this purpose. The Jewish group in the convent called the mother superior "mother," Ima in Hebrew. Many years later, Aba Kovner published a brief article entitled "Ima," in which he wrote about the day he left the convent. When they took leave of the mother superior and the nuns who had given them shelter, Borkowska said she would like to be with them in the ghetto. Kovner answered impatiently, isn't it enough that we have to go to the ghetto and to what awaits us there, does she too have to pay with her life? Borkowska replied that she believed that in those times, God himself is in the ghetto too. If she wants to help, Kovner told her, perhaps she could help by obtaining weapons, because that is what they need. Sutkover wrote after the war, and Kovner also wrote in his article, that it was through Borkowska that the first hand grenades came to the ghetto. In the 1980s, Kovner and his friends in Israel learned that Anna Borkowska was living in Warsaw and was no longer the mother superior of a convent. They found her, a small woman, old and lonely, living in a small, unfurnished room, a large cross hanging on one wall. When an Israeli visited her on behalf of the survivors and asked if she needed anything, she replied that she would like to see one of the Jews she had hidden in the convent, and needed nothing else. Aba Kovner traveled to Warsaw and, in the presence of many people, bestowed on her the award of the Righteous Among the Nations.

[2] When Germany occupied Poland in 1939, Josef and Faiga Riter fled to Vilna [Wilno]. In 1941, when Vilna too was occupied by the Germans, Josef found shelter in a Dominican convent in the city. The Mother Superior of the convent, wishing to help Josef's wife, Faiga, too, urged her acquaintance Anna Koscialkowska [Koścalkowska] to hide Faiga on her estate in the village of Kolonia Wilenska [Wileńska], near Vilna. Koscialkowska, a patriotic Pole who was known for her humanitarian views, sheltered Faiga in her home without expecting anything in return. Koscialkowska's children, Maria and Witold, were let into the secret and together with their mother looked after Faiga and protected her ... In due course, Koscialkowska provided Faiga with Aryan papers, which enabled her to leave the house and meet her husband at the convent. One day the Germans decided to close the convent and ordered all its inhabitants out. Josef made his way to the Koscialkowskis, who, at great personal risk, took him in too, employing him as a night watchman. When the Germans began recruiting youngsters for work in Germany and submitted them to a medical examination, Koscialkowska and her children, fearing for Josef's safety, again came to the rescue by arranging for the Ritters to work in the local peat mine, which released them from the obligation to work in Germany. The Ritters were liberated in July 1944. After the war, they immigrated to Israel ...

The Benedictine Sisters offered assistance in various convents throughout Poland. They sheltered a Jew in their convent in Tyniec, in the outskirts of Kraków. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.218.)

At the outbreak of the war, Franciszka Goldberger was on a training farm in Lwow [Lwów], which had been annexed to the Soviet Union. In 1941, after the Germans occupied the city, Goldberger was interned in the local ghetto and toward the end of the year transferred to the Janowska camp. In 1943, Golberger fled from the camp and reached her native town, Cracow, where her parents used to live. When she discovered that her entire family had perished, she made her way to the home of Bronislaw [Bronisław] and Maria Florek, family friends. The Floreks gave her a warm welcome and offered her food, but were unable to hide her in their apartment. Nevertheless, Maria Florek accompanied Goldberger to acquaintances of hers who lived in the nearby village of Wrasowice, where, despite the danger, she rented a room for her. The Floreks visited Goldberger each month, paid her rent, and saw to all her needs. Goldberger stayed in her hiding place until the area was liberated. After the war, she immigrated to Israel. Franciszka was not the only member of the Goldberger family whom the Floreks helped. Even before her arrival, the Floreks looked after Wincenty Goldberger, Franciszka's uncle, after he escaped from the local ghetto. They hid him in their home throughout the winter of 1942 and later [after obtaining false papers for him through a priest⁴²] arranged for him to stay with the Benedictine nuns in

⁴² "Maria Florek," The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, Internet: <http://www.jfr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sup_maria_florek>.

Tyniec, near Cracow. The Floreks also helped other relatives of Goldberger, including Frania and Dolek Nichtberger who, after the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto, hid in the town of Mielec, where the Floreks sent them food and money until the liberation.

Zenobia Krzyżanowska recalled the help she and her family received in the Benedictine Sisters' convent in the village of Staniątki outside Cracow. (Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, p.284.)

I was born in Kraków [in 1939] to a Jewish working-class family. ... I am the youngest of eight siblings. During the period of occupation, Father worked as a carpenter in the Benedictine Cloister in Staniątki near Kraków. Mother was a seamstress, and in return for it, the cloister rented us an apartment and extended protection to our entire family.

One of my brothers, Józef Adamowski, was shot to death in 1943 (both my father and my remaining brothers belonged to the Home Army). ... My parents and my sisters survived the war. We lived in the building of the cloister until the end of the war.

After the war, my father built a house in this community, and I live here to this day.

The Felician Sisters (Franciscan Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice) who had been expelled from their home in Cracow were taken in by the Benedictine Sisters in Staniątki and ran a boarding school there. Six out of the eighteen girls they accepted were Jewish. There were only three Felician sisters: Mother Superior Filipa Świech, Sister Klementyna, and Sister Marcelina. An account of their rescue efforts is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.445.

Tadeusz Latawiec and his wife, Jozefa [Józefa], lived in a residential building in Cracow that belonged to the Eckers. In 1940, the Eckers—husband, wife, and five-year-old daughter, Janina—were expelled from Cracow to the ghetto in Wieliczka, where they remained until the ghetto was liquidated in August 1942. During the evacuation Aktion, Tadeusz Latawiec entered the ghetto and, risking his life, removed little Janina (with her parents' full consent) and brought her to his apartment. From then on, Latawiec, a postal clerk, and his wife, Jozefa, protected the Jewish girl, cared for her lovingly and devotedly as they would their own daughter, and met all her needs out of humanitarian principles and for no material reward. Mr. Ecker perished; his wife was sent to the concentration camp in Plaszow [Płaszów]. Latawiec made contact with her and occasionally brought greetings from her daughter until she was transferred to a different camp, never to return. In the spring of 1943, when the Latawiecs' neighbors identified Janina as the Eckers' daughter her protectors moved her to an orphanage at a convent in Staniatki (near Cracow), for which they made [modest] monthly payment punctiliously [for the child's upkeep]. After the liberation, the Latawiecs took Janina into their home and cared for her until 1949, when Jewish institutions arranged her resettlement in Israel.

Janina (Nina) Ecker's own testimony is found in Ewa Kurek's monograph, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, at pages 179–85. There she clarifies that both her parents survived the war and the circumstances in which she found herself in the care of the Felician Sisters.

My adoptive mother, a practicing Catholic, frequently went to church and prayed. According to her, St. Anthony inspired her one day to place me in a convent. She went to the Social Welfare Department and said that she had a niece from the Poznan [Poznań] area who she wanted to place in a boarding school. They gave her the name of the Felician Sisters in Staniarki [Staniątki] and obtained a birth certificate for me, and we left for Staniatki. This was the beginning of 1944. My adoptive mother had had me baptized with water earlier. I was accepted as a Polish girl in the convent until the end of the war.

The nuns did not know, therefore, that I was Jewish. My appearance was good, my Polish likewise. I behave properly and was a practicing Catholic.

When I was ready to take my first Communion, though, I was afraid that I would commit some sacrilege. In truth, though my adoptive mother had me baptized, it was not a real baptism. One day I approached the mother superior and asked to have a talk with her. I told her that I was a [sic] Jewish and begged her to have me baptized before I took Holy Communion. She fixed her eyes on me and said:

"Daughter of the Chosen Race, good child, let's try to figure this out." The next day the mother superior made a trip to my adoptive mother and asked her by what right had she placed a Jewish child in the convent without telling her. She said she already had several Jewish children and needed more Polish children to hide the presence of the others. Meanwhile, each new child she was getting was Jewish! (There were not many children in the school, about eighteen. Taking that into

consideration, six Jewish girls was a lot.) My adoptive mother swore that I was not a Jew, but rather her niece. The sister replied that that was nonsense, for I had admitted it myself. When she next saw me, my adoptive mother said: "Nina, what have you done!"

So I became baptized. In the meantime I befriended the other Jewish girls there, and thanks to me all six became baptized. Of course, everything happened in secret, though with much ceremony. ...

We then went to church and, hiding there, started to tell each other about ourselves. There were three of us [Jewish girls]. As for the rest of the Jewish girls, everyone knew that they were Jewish because of the way they looked. We tried to protect them somehow because they were constantly being bothered. The other girls bullied and frightened them, saying that if they misbehaved they would be denounced. Of course, no one betrayed them ...

When I organized this baptism, we were all very happy because we felt that if something happened we would go straight to heaven.

I was treated very well in the convent. ...

It was good in the convent. The nuns protected us. They tried to dress the girls who had an "inappropriate look" in such a way as to cover up their "Jewishness." The nuns were very orderly and tried very hard. Particularly, the mother superior, Sister Filipa Swiech [Świech]. ...

There were different stages in the convent. Toward the end of the war we suffered from hunger, for there were no food supplies and nothing to eat—but love and warmth were not lacking. Sister Marcelina was an exceptional person in this regard. For me she was not only a mother, but a friend. She worried over us and cherished us. And then there were the [Latawieces], of course. Every Sunday they came to me with a toy, a blouse, sugar or something else. Through all the years of the war I did not lack love and warmth. I was fortunate.

Michael Kutz recalled the help he received from the Benedictine Sisters in Nieśwież, a town in the voivodship of Nowogródek. (Debbie Parkes, "Life must go on—it's for the living says man who survived Holocaust." *The Gazette*, Montreal, September 25, 1988.)

Kutz was a young Jew of 10 in June 1941 when the German army invaded his town of Neswizh [Nieśwież] near the Polish-Soviet border. ...

Then came Oct. 29. The German commandant ordered all Jews to assemble at the town square. ...

... Jews were then marched to different areas around the city where, the night before, Jews had been forced to dig pits that would be used as mass graves....

There, the prisoners were made to undress, to jump into the pits one-by-one, and to lie down. ... The Germans threw grenades into the pits and shot at the people in them with machine-guns. Then more people were put through the same treatment.

"Many people were buried in these graves alive, wounded and unable to escape," Kutz says. "I happened to be one of the lucky ones."

Kutz wasn't seriously wounded, although he figures he must have been hit over the head with a rifle butt. He regained consciousness at the onset of dusk. ...

As small as he was, he pushed a few bodies on top of each other, stood on them and looked out. Seeing no one, he climbed out of the grave and ran some two kilometres to a convent. ...

At the convent, he rang the hand bell outside the building's gates. The mother superior [Idelfonsa Jaroń] answered.

"She immediately took off her robe and threw it over me because I was naked," Kutz says. Inside the convent, he was washed and dressed in the oversized clothes of the janitor.

But he couldn't stay. The religious told him that would be too dangerous. If he were caught, he would be killed. So, Kutz says, the nuns packed him a bag of food and directed him to a neighboring village. ...

There, Kutz went to the home of a gentile farmer, a friend of his father, who kept him through the winter. ...

The farmer, however, collaborated with the underground resistance movement. In the spring of 1942, he made contact with Jews in that movement who took Kutz to live in the forest.

Michael Kutz expands on his story in Alvin Abram, *The Light After the Dark* (Scarborough, Ontario: Abbeyfield Publishers, 1997), at pages 57–60.

As he ran, he looked for shelter ... In the distance, he made out the outline of a large building and recognized it as a convent. Michael ran towards it, remembering that the women in black clothes were the ones who took care of the poor and sick people on the streets of Nieswiez. Desperate for the warmth of a room, he pushed himself to the front gate, hoping they would help him escape from the Germans.

... When the door opened, with his last ounce of strength, Michael lunged inside and around the person blocking the door.

He turned to face a woman dressed in black. She appeared ageless, small, slightly bent in posture from the years of homage and she looked fragile. Surprise swept across her face, seeing a naked boy appear out of the night. She removed her cape and covered Michael with it. With quiet dignity, her voice soft and filled with kindness, she asked, "Who are you, my child? Where did you come from?"

Michael could not speak.

"Why are you here?"

Michael cried.

"I am the Mother Superior of this convent. How can I help you?"

With his tears flooding down his cheeks, Michael explained what had happened in Nieswiez and begged the Mother Superior for her help. Listening intently, she nodded her head a few times as Michael related what his tired and confused mind could remember. She led him into the inner recesses of the convent, along darkened, cold and forbidding corridors into the kitchen. In a locker by the door, she found clothes belonging to the janitor and gave them to Michael. Though much too big, he put them on, and cleaned himself by the sink, while the Mother Superior prepared hot food and administered to his cuts and bruises and doctored his head wound. After he had eaten, she sat across from him.

"You cannot stay."

"Why?"

"It is not safe for you here nor is it safe for those who cannot leave."

"Hide me. I will not be in anyone's way."

"It is not that. The risk is too great. If they find you, we will all suffer. Our lives are in danger if you stay."

"I have nowhere to go."

"I can direct you to those who may help you. I can do no more."

The fear of returning to the darkness overwhelmed him, but he was given no choice. The Mother Superior prepared a bag of food, and gave him directions to a neighbouring village. Quickly the Mother Superior ushered him out the convent gate, wishing him God's protection and locked the door after him. ...

... When he had almost reached his destination, Michael remembered the gentile farmer who showed his kindness when the family was in need of food. Aware he was near his farm, he decided to change directions, and seek out his help.

Upon reaching the farmer's home, Michael knocked on the door. When the surprised farmer saw Michael, he swept him into his arms crying with joy, that he had survived the massacre and was safe. He was ushered into the house ... Michael related his story, and when he was finished the farmer recounted to Michael what he knew.

"The Germans ordered several local farmers to the two sites days ago, he among them and had them dig the pits," he said. "They would return each day, and make the hole bigger until finally ordered to stop and leave the site. Before they left, Ukrainian and Lithuanian soldiers arrived in trucks filled with gypsies and cripples and killed them all. Their bodies were thrown into the pit as one would dispose of a worthless carcass. The farmers were unprepared for what they saw and some screamed hysterically. Others went into shock, their minds unable to accept the barbarism of what they had witnessed. One went mad. The Ukrainian and Lithuanian soldiers had blood on their uniforms, and appeared indifferent to their act. It was a horrible sight that will haunt him for the rest of his life."...

The farmer offered to hide Michael in the stable until Spring. Since it was obvious he was not part of the family, it was imperative he not be discovered or all were doomed. Michael stayed hidden from October 1941 until April 1942, coming outside only at night when no one was around.

The Benedictine convent in Wilno, adjacent to St. Catherine's Church, opened its doors to many Jews, with the blessing of Archbishop Romuald Jałbrzykowski. The superior of the convent, Sister Maria Mikulska, and the sisters are remembered for their courage and devotion to their charges. Tragedy struck in March 1942 when virtually all of the convents and monasteries in Wilno were shut down by the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators, and hundreds of members of Polish clergy were arrested and imprisoned in camps. The Benedictine convent now housed archives which the Germans had looted in the city and surrounding areas. Under Rev. Juozas Stakauskas (of mixed Lithuanian and Polish ancestry), the director of the archives, the convent once again became a mainstay for Jews from the ghetto. Upon their release, several nuns including Sister Maria Mikulska made their way back to the convent and continued to care for the Jewish labourers, who made hiding places for themselves in the convent. Some 11 or 12 Jews were saved, among them the families of Dr. Alexander Libo, Dr. Fejgenberg, and the Baks. Sister Maria Mikulska was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. The following account is from Gilbert, *The Righteous*, at pages 79–81.

Samuel Bak was only eight years old when the German army entered Vilna [Wilno]. A child prodigy, he had the first exhibition of his drawings a year later, inside the ghetto. After his father was sent to a labor camp, he and his mother were taken in by Sister Maria [Mikulska], the Mother Superior of the Benedictine convent just outside the ghetto. 'In time we became very good friends, Sister Maria and I,' he later wrote. 'I always waited impatiently for her daily visit. She supplied me with paper, coloured pencils, and old and worn children's books, gave me lessons from the Old and New Testament, and taught me the essential Christian prayer. After several days Mother's sister, Aunt Yetta, joined us; later her husband, Uncle Yasha, and Father, after they managed to escape the camp in which they had been long interned, were granted the same asylum.'

Only the Mother Superior and one other nun knew that there were men hiding in the convent. Eventually, as so often, the threat of discovery or denunciation loomed, and a new hiding place had to be found. [This occurred during the massive raids on Catholic convents and monasteries carried out by the Germans and Lithuanian police in March 1942, when scores of Polish priests and nuns were rounded up and interned.—Ed.] This was a former convent in which the Germans had housed the looted archives of a dozen museums and institutions in Vilna and the surrounding towns: 'Trucks loaded with confiscated riches arrived daily to be unloaded in the ancient building's courtyard,' Samuel Bak recalled. 'There the nuns, dressed now in civilian poverty, met a number of Jews who were sent every day from the ghetto to carry and pile the thousands of volumes, documents, and rare books that filled its rooms and corridors. One small group of them created a hiding place for the days that they foresaw would follow the final liquidation of the ghetto. The evening Mother and I arrived was a few months after the liquidation. Three families were now living buried under the books.'

Sister Maria and Father Stakauskas, a Catholic priest and former professor of history who was employed to supervise and sort the looted material, provided the hidden Jews with food and other necessities. 'Had the authorities discovered their selfless acts, they would have been tortured and executed,' Bak wrote. 'Their courage and devotion went beyond anything I have ever encountered. It was Maria who convinced the group in hiding to take in a woman and a child. She exclaimed to them our state of total despair. Sending us back would have meant our death. The nine people had a hard choice to make, and they vacillated, as clearly we would take up a part of their space as well as some of the very limited portions of available food. Moreover, a few of them were afraid our presence could increase their chance of being detected. But Maria made it clear how much she cared about us. The group could not afford to alienate her. All this came to our knowledge only later, but it provides one more link in our chain of miracles.'

Sister Maria visited every night. 'She would knock lightly on a wooden beam, three knocks that were the sign for us to dismantle the bundles of books inserted into our tunnel. She always came with some food, some necessary medications, and, most important, with good news that the German armies were losing on all fronts and that the days of our ordeal were numbered. Her optimism and her courage nourished the energies that were vital for our survival.'

Father Stakauskas visited once or twice a week. 'In his old black leather case that was stuffed with papers, he brought some hidden carrots, a few dried fruits, or a piece of cheese. But his main contribution to the boosting of our morale was his summary of the BBC news. A village friend allowed him to listen to a clandestine radio in the basement of his barn. ...

See also Samuel Bak, *Painted in Words: A Memoir* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; Boston: Pucker Art Publications, 2001), pp.335–46, 353–60, and Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*, pp.241–44. The following account is from Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 516.

In 1942, Dr. Jozas [Juozas] Stakauskas and Vladas Zemaitis [Žemaitis] were employed sorting books, including some in Hebrew that had been brought to the Vilna [Wilno] archive. A group of 12 Jewish workers was brought from the Vilna ghetto to help sort the books in the archive and their employers treated them with kindness and respect. The Germans eventually expanded the archive, adding a building to it that had once been a monastery. Stakauskas and Zemaitis exploited the abundance of space in the building to create a hiding place for their Jewish employees, whom they had decided to save. They prepared a well-concealed room on one of the building's floors and in September 1943 hid the 12 Jews who worked in the archive along with a four-year-old girl smuggled out of the ghetto. Maria Mikulska, a nun, was included in the secret and, disguised as an archive employee, she took responsibility for the fugitives' care. Because Germans and Lithuanians also worked in the building, there was constant danger that the hiding place would be discovered, but this did not prevent Mikulska from continuing to care for the Jews hiding there, ignoring the very real danger to her life. Mikulska was motivated by the firm belief that she was doing the right thing and all the 13 Jews she cared for were liberated in July 1944. After the war Mikulska moved to Warsaw and most of the survivors eventually immigrated to Israel.

Spontaneous assistance for Jews was frequent in Wilno. Beginning in 1941, Sister Helena Zienowicz, from the Congregation of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with the help of her sister Janina (not a nun), cared for three Jewish children: Wilinke Fink (born 1938), Renana Gabaj (5 years old) and her 10-month-old brother Benjamin. The Zienowicz sisters were assisted by other nuns from that congregation and by several priests: Rev. Władysław Kisiel, who provided material and moral assistance; Rev. Romuald Świrkowski, the chaplain of the Sisters of the Visitation, who provided a false baptismal certificate (he was eventually executed by the Germans for aiding Jews); and Rev. Jagodziński and Rev. Lewosz (Antoni Lewosz?) of St. Teresa's Church (adjacent to the gate known as Ostra Brama), who taught catechism to the two older children and thereby assisted them to pass as Catholics. The Zienowicz sisters also helped other Jews. Their story is recorded at length in Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, at pages 307–322. See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.396–97. Helena Zienowicz and Jan and Zofia Kukolewski were awarded by Yad Vashem. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, pp.939–40.)

Following Helena Zienowicz's graduation from the Nazareth Nun's [Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazarethi] high school in Vilna [Wilno], she chose to live in the closed convent of the Wizek [wizytki—Sisters of the Visitation] order and work as a teacher in Rabka (near Cracow). She left the convent when her mother became ill and returned to Vilna. In September 1941, Helena came upon three Jewish children: five-year-old Renana Gabaj, ten-month-old Benjamin Gabaj, and four-year-old Wilinke Fink (later Jozef Zienowicz), who had problems with his eyesight. Abel Gabaj, a doctor from Butrimoniai [Butrymańce] in Lithuania, was the father of Renana and Benjamin. Jakub Fink, Wilinke's father, was a friend of Dr. Gabaj's. One day in September 1941, Dr. Gabaj learned from a friend who worked as a policeman that a pogrom against the Jews of Butrimoniai was about to be carried out, and so the doctor decided to leave for Vilna. On the way out, the entire group of two adults and three children stopped for a rest in Angleniki, at Jan and Zofia Kukolewski's house. There they learned that the ghetto was closed, which ruled out the possibility of hiding in Vilna. The Kukolewskis agreed to let the adults stay with them and the children found shelter a few days later with Helena Zienowicz. Initially, they were only supposed to stay with her for a few days. But because no other solution could be found the children stayed under Helena's care until the war ended, and Wilinke, stayed under her care even after the war. The older children did not speak Polish; they only spoke Yiddish and Lithuanian, thus complicating the situation further. Hiding three young children was not an easy task under the difficult conditions of the war. Helena lived in a small apartment without hot water or a toilet. She constantly had to obtain food and fuel for heat, not to mention the constant threat of discovery. Moreover, the children were often sick and they missed their parents. Helena represented the fugitives as her brother's children, obtained Aryan papers from them, and taught them to speak and sing in Polish. She took care of their every need and brought them up as if they were her own children. Renana and Benjamin's father, Abel Gabaj, survived the war and emigrated with his children to Israel.

Another nun in Wilno, Sister Aleksandra Drzewiecka, took in two Jewish children. She and the Burlingis couple, who helped rescue the Gitelman family, were awarded by Yad Vashem. (Mordecai Paldiel, *Sheltering the Jews: Stories of Holocaust Rescuers* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], pp.117–18.)

Lea Gittelman gave birth to a girl in the Vilnius [Wilno] ghetto, and aptly named the child Getele ("of the ghetto"). In November, Lea's husband was transferred to a labor camp outside the ghetto, together with his wife and little girl. This momentarily saved them. In the course of his work, David met Viktoria Burlingis [Wiktoria was a Polish woman, her husband Pawel was Lithuanian]. After surviving another killing raid in the labor camp, David contacted Burlingis, who agreed to take the child with her. Lea stayed with the child for a few days, until she became sufficiently accustomed to Burlingis. One day, while visitors were in the house, Getele, at the other end of the house, suddenly began to sing a song in Yiddish ... "Viktoria and her husband came immediately to me; I started to weep, but they reassured me that no one had heard a word. Since the child spoke [only] Yiddish, however, they said they could no longer keep her. The next day, they told me they had found another hiding place for her." It turned out to be a Polish nun by the name of Aleksandra Drzewiecka [Drzewiecka].

In 1944, when Vilnius was still contested between the Germans and the Russians, with shells exploding everywhere, Lea and David managed to flee from the labor camp and reach Sister Drzewiecka's home to find Getele safe and sound. ... In the postwar years, Lea lost track of the Burlingis family. But she maintained contact with Sister Drzewiecka for many years, and the Gittelmans supported the kindhearted nun (who also sheltered another Jewish child) with packages, medicine, and money.

(See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part

Shulamit Bastacky was born in Wilno shortly after the Germans entered the city in mid-1941. She does not have any personal recollection of her rescuer, a Catholic nun, into whose care she had been entrusted by her parents. Shulamit was hidden in a cellar for almost three years. Her courageous rescuer is not identified by name. Shulamit's parents also survived the war and reclaimed their daughter, who had been placed in an orphanage. (Anita Brostoff and Sheila Chamowitz, eds., *Flares of Memory: Stories of Childhood during the Holocaust* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], pp.121–22.)

On Yom Hashoah each year I kindle the memorial candles. I kindle them in memory not only of my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who did not survive the Holocaust. I kindle them also for a Roman Catholic nun, a righteous gentile who risked her life to save mine.

These memorials stir in me the image of a little girl who huddled by herself for more than three long years in a small, dim cellar. While my family and the nun are blessedly recalled now at middle age, they do not lead to any real recollection of the quiet, frightened, curly-headed little girl. She is the figure that won't come to mind, won't allow herself to be a part of me now. She crouches forever in the recesses of a deeper cellar, the cellar of my mind.

I was born in August 1941, in Vilna [Wilno] ..., four weeks after the Germans entered the city. Our deadly game of hide and seek began that year and lasted until 1945. My mother and father who also survived the war, have had to tell me the story of my survival. They did so in the barest of terms, for any detailed narrative was too painful for them. We rarely mention the past at home, even now in America in 1996.

I don't remember the nun, either. I know that she came as often as she could and brought me enough food to survive until she came the next time. I must have been overjoyed each time she appeared to interrupt the dark flow of hours. Now, I do not see her face; I cannot hear her voice; nor do I feel the touch of her hands. But somehow, even without memory, I know that she gave me more than food—she shared herself through a kind word, a show of affection.

I emerged from the cellar malnourished and sick when the Russian Army liberated Vilna [in July 1944]. The nun had placed me on the bank of a river, where I was found by a Lithuanian man who then placed me in a Catholic orphanage where I was given a Lithuanian name. My family found me in the orphanage by recognizing a birthmark on my body. After our reunion, we traveled by train to central Poland where I went to a rehabilitation center sponsored by the Joint Distribution Organization, a facility for Jewish children. There I was physically and emotionally rehabilitated. They gave me quartzlight treatments for sun deprivation and more importantly, a safe place where I could be a normal child.

I often wonder why I don't remember. The answer I give myself is that my memory is blocked as a result of being deprived of family, of nurturing, and of the most basic human needs.

The feelings of a lost early childhood will remain with me the rest of my life. But my feelings of respect and gratitude for that nameless nun will remain with me, too.

Yisrael Gutman and Shmuel Krakowski, *Unequal Victims: Poles and Jews During World War II* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1986),⁴³ at pages 236–37, record the assistance provided by the Jesuit priest, Fr. Adam

⁴³ Unfortunately, this widely cited study is terribly flawed and one-sided, especially those chapters authored by Shmuel Krakowski. Although there are relatively few documented examples of improper behaviour on the part of the Polish Catholic clergy, the authors state: "As the recorded evidence shows, the attitudes of the priests towards the Jewish fugitives varied; and their influence upon the local population reflected the lack of unanimity." The authors then set out in their survey three examples of unfavourable conduct and four positive ones. See Yisrael Gutman and Shmuel Krakowski, *Unequal Victims: Poles and Jews During World War II* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1986), pp.244–25. There is no mention, for example, of the extensive assistance provided by nuns, yet this book is treated by many Western historians as the leading text on the issue of wartime Polish-Jewish relations. Shmuel Krakowski also refers to a "report originating with the Polish Catholic Church," covering the period from June 1 to July 15, 1941, which was transmitted to the Polish government in London by the Delegate's Office (*Delegatura*), as exhibiting "anti-Semitic sentiments in their most extreme form." The report is cited seemingly to corroborate the existence of widespread hostility toward Jews on the part of the Catholic Church. *Ibid.*, 52–53. Relying on Krakowski, that same document has been referred to recently by Israeli historian Saul Friedländer in his *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), pp.184–85. Friedländer stresses that it is "a report originating with the Polish church itself" and makes much of "its quasiofficial nature." While conceding that it did not represent the general attitude of Polish Catholics toward Jews, he argues it indicated "some measure of concurrence" among the underground leadership with regard to the so-called Jewish question, which was supposedly characterized by "extreme anti-Jewish hatred," as manifested in this report. British historian Richard J. Evans goes even further in his *The Third Reich at War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), p.64, where he states: "As a semi-official report of the Polish Church to the exiled government declared in the summer of 1941, the Germans 'have shown the liberation of Polish society from the Jewish plague is possible'." He then concludes that the Polish Catholic Church not

Sztark, and nuns in the town of Słonim, in northeastern Poland. Fr. Sztark was the administrator of the parish in nearby Żyrowice and the chaplain of Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Słonim. He raised money for the Jews, took food to the ghetto, issued false baptismal certificates, and urged his parishioners to extend help. He brought abandoned Jewish children to the presbytery and then transferred them to the convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who worked closely with him, and to the gardener Józef Mikuczyn, who hid a Jewish boy brought to him. These activities eventually cost Fr. Sztark, Bogumiła Noiszewska (Sister Maria Ewa), a medical doctor, and Kazimiera Wołowska (Sister Maria Marta), the mother superior of the convent—their lives. They were executed on December 19, 1942, on Pietralewice Hill outside Słonim. All three of them were recognized posthumously by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentiles.

Rafał Charlap recalls: A priest named Stark [actually, Adam Sztark], still a young man of about thirty, was doing his utmost to provide the Jews with free forged “Aryan” documents. He called upon his parishioners to extend help to the Jews, and persuaded the Poles he trusted to shelter Jewish fugitives. One of the Jews he saved was a young boy, Jureczek [now Jerry David Glickson, whom he had first hidden in the convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary], for whom Stark found a hiding place with a gardener, Josef [Józef] Mikuczyn. The orphaned boy survived the war there, and was later picked up by his uncle. In the summer of 1941, the Germans exacted from the Jews of Słonim [Słonim] ghetto a “contribution” of gold. As the deadline approached, the Jews were still 1/2 kilogram short of the quota which the Germans demanded. In order to enable the Jews to fill the quota, Father Stark organized the collection of golden crosses from his parishioners. When the Germans learned of Stark’s activities, they arrested and shot him together with the Słonim Jews, in their mass execution in Petrolowicze [Petrołowicze or Pietralewice].

In the same town of Słonim, the Jews received much help from Dr. Noiszewska [actually, Bogumiła Noiszewska—Sister Maria Ewa of Providence from the above-mentioned order, who is incorrectly described as a “former nun”], the director of the municipal hospital. She sheltered the small son of her Jewish colleague, Dr. Kagan. The Germans were notified and shot her together with the child.

The following account of the last days of Fr. Sztark’s like was authored by the Jesuit priest Vincent A. Lapomarda (*Inside the Vatican*, May 2000, pp.52–53). (According to another version, Fr. Sztark was arrested along with the two Sisters and murdered the following day, December 19, 1942.)

It was in the final phase of their “final solution” that the Gestapo broke into the convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on December 19, 1942. The convent was in the [prewar Polish] provincial area of Nowogrodek [Nowogródek], in Słonim [Słonim]. The religious community was under Mother Superior Kazimiera Wołowska [Wołowska] (1879–1942) whose religious name was Sister Maria Marta. She was assisted by Bogumiła [Bogumiła] Noiszewska (1885–1942) who was known in religious life as Sister Maria Ewa. Both had been hiding and caring for orphaned Jewish children, whom Father Sztark had been rescuing and bringing to them. The children had been hidden in the attic of the convent of the nuns.

only did not take a clear stance against the Germans’ murderous policies towards Polish Jews, “if anything, the opposite was the case.” The document in question is reproduced in its entirety in Krzysztof Jasiewicz, *Pierwsi po diable: Elity sowieckie w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1941 (Białostoczczyzna, Nowogródczczyzna, Polesie, Wileńszczyzna)* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN and Rytm, 2001), pp.1195–1203. The report does not set out the name of its author (a reading of the text indicates it was written by one person); the author may not even have been a member of the clergy; and, on its face, the report does not purport to be an official document of the Church in Poland or to express the views of its leadership. It is difficult to understand how leading Holocaust historians could manage to overlook these obvious characteristics and attribute it to the Church as a whole. The report was analyzed incisively by Polish historian Tomasz Szarota, who points out these obvious facts and provides some valuable context and perspective. Szarota surmises that the author may not have been a member of the clergy at all, but notes that he did have access to some members of the Episcopate. The author’s personal views gravitate toward the extreme elements within the Church such as Rev. Stanisław Trzeciak. When he wrote the report, the Holocaust was not yet underway and therefore the author clearly did not have in mind the physical annihilation of the Jews. In any event, the mainstream factions of the Polish underground did not share the author’s extremist views. The author’s call for the mass emigration of Polish Jews was something that was in fact being championed at that time by Zionist circles and their supporters in the West, who called for the creation of a national Jewish state in Palestine populated by two million Jews from Poland. See Tomasz Szarota, “Sprawozdanie kościelne z Polski za czerwiec i połowę lipca 1941go roku: Próba analizy dokumentu,” in Julian Warzecha, ed., *Słowo pojednania: Księga pamiątkowa z okazji siedemdziesiątych urodzin Księdza Michała Czajkowskiego* (Warsaw: Biblioteka “Więzi,” 2004), pp.669–82; the article also appeared in Tomasz Szarota, *Karuzela na Placu Krasińskich: Studia i szkice z lat wojny i okupacji* (Warsaw: Rytm, and Fundacja “Historia i Kultura,” 2007), pp.198–216.

Though the sisters lived in fear of a Nazi search, they were completely surprised when armed men broke into their convent. A thorough search soon located the Jewish children in the attic. Since hiding Jews was a crime punishable by death, the Gestapo tortured the sisters to extract any information they could use to continue their campaign against the Jews. When the sisters refused to betray any of those helping them in their clandestine activities, the Nazis, that very day, took both sisters out to a nearby execution site, a place called Gorki Pantalowickie [Góra Pietrówicka]. There they forced the nuns into a pit and shot them.

Within ten days of the execution of Blessed Maria Marta and Blessed Maria Ewa, the Gestapo caught up with Father Sztark. The priest's life had been in danger for years. First during the hostile occupation by the Soviets and then by the Nazis. He never hesitated to serve as a shepherd for the defenseless, first as the pastor for parishioners in Zyrowice [Żyrowice], then for Jewish children who had managed to survive the round up and slaughter of their parents. The priest repeatedly risked his life by collecting the children and concealing them in his rectory until he was able to secretly take them to the relative safety of the Immaculate Conception Convent. He fully knew that keeping these Jewish children out of the hands of the Nazis would cost him his life if he should be discovered. It is clear that he began this work and continued to carry it out in respect to the Gospel command to "love your neighbor."

Just as the Gestapo came in suddenly on the sisters in the convent on December 19th, so on December 27th their command car appeared without warning in front of the priest's house in Zyrowice. The startled priest was immediately ordered to leave without taking anything with him. He asked if he could take bread in order to say Mass. The Gestapo agent leading the Jesuit away sardonically said: "Where you are going, there's plenty of bread!" This merciless tone of the SS man told Father Sztark that his end was near. He submitted, simply saying: "It is my martyrdom."

Father Sztark still had one more night to live, however. It was not until the following day that he was packed into a truck filled with others who had defied the laws of the Nazi occupation. They were taken to the same place, Gorki Pantalowickie, where the two Sisters of the Immaculate Conception had been killed just a few days previously, the same site which the Nazis used for their executions of the Jews in that area. When they arrived there, Father Sztark, like his fellow victims, was ordered to undress himself. He was prepared to meet his Maker, but he wanted to do so in the black robe of the Jesuit Order of which he was such a faithful member. So he told his executioners he would not undress, saying he wanted to die in his robe. For some reason his killers granted him his last wish.

The Nazis forced him along with all their victims into a pit, and began riddling them with bullets. The priest, though mortally wounded, was not immediately killed. In one last great display of will and in excruciating pain he managed to stand and gasp out these final, glorious words: "All for Christ the King! Long Live Poland!"

The rescue efforts of Rev. Franciszek Smorczewski of Stolin in Polesie (Polesia), who has been recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile, are described in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, at pages 728–29.

On Rosh Hashanah 5703 (September 11, 1942), during the Aktion in the Stolin ghetto in the Polesie district, the Germans left a number of Jews and their families behind to run the local hospital. The Jews—Dr. Hersh Rotter (later Henry Reed), his wife, Ewa, and their three-year-old son, Aleksander, Dr. Marian Poznanski and his wife, Gina, Dr. Ernberg, a veterinarian, and his wife, Erna, and two Jewish nurses—were housed in the service quarters inside the hospital precinct. Since it was clear that sooner or later they would share the fate of the Jews in the ghetto, they began to plan their escape. Dr. Rotter turned to his friend Franciszek Smorczewski, the local priest, who encouraged him to escape, supplied his wife with a Christian birth certificate, and began enlisting the aid of local Poles to help the Jews in the hospital escape. The escape was planned for November 26, 1942. On the morning of that fateful day, a Polish girl warned the group that an SS detachment had arrived in Stolin. Toward evening, the Rotters escaped from the hospital to the home of a local Polish doctor, where Maria Kijowska, the wife of Wladyslaw [Władysław] Kijowski, the forester, was waiting for them in a horse-drawn wagon. Kijowska took them to her home in the forest, where they hid for a few days until her husband accompanied them to Stiepan and Agap Mozol, where the Jewish refugees stayed until February 1943, at which time they joined the partisans. The other Jews who were left in the hospital were smuggled out in a similar fashion and found their way to partisan units in the forest.

A small circumcised boy with a broken leg, who was brought by his mother to St. Lazarus Hospital in Kraków for medical care, had to be relocated to a convent outside the city after a German inspection at the hospital threatened his life. (Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, pp.16–17.)

There are known cases of hospital personnel hiding Jewish women. On occasion, even a Jewish male desperate for shelter

was accommodated in a hospital bed, although the presence of a circumcised patient imperiled the whole staff. During the Nazi reign of terror in Cracow, a Jewish mother brought her small boy to St. Lazarus Hospital. The boy had a broken leg. Both mother and child had "Aryan" documents, but Dr. Lachowicz, the chief physician, and the admitting nurse both took note of the fact that the prospective patient was circumcised. His presence at the hospital would be deemed by the Germans as a crime punishable by death. However, the doctor and nurse admitted the boy but sent the mother away. The boy's leg was treated, and his belly bandaged as a precaution against Gestapo visits. During one such raid, Dr. Lachowicz refused to remove his young patient's bandages, pleading with the Gestapo that the boy was a Christian, assuring the Germans that on their next visit he would show them proof. Two weeks later the Gestapo returned, but the boy was no longer on the premises. The staff had removed him to a convent in the neighborhood of Miecho [Miechów]. The Germans, who did not neglect making periodic searches among the nuns also, found the boy and threatened to execute him. The nuns insisted the boy was a Christian. They presented an official statement, signed by Dr. Lachowicz, explaining that a bad fall had so injured the boy's foreskin and his leg that an operation was later performed to save his life.

Assistance came from nuns near a work camp for Jews in Bielany, a suburb of Warsaw, as related by George Topas in *The Iron Furnace: A Holocaust Survivor's Story* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990), at pages 85–86.

Once, assigned to a work detail in the surrounding wooded area, I helped load liquid containers aboard trucks. During the lunch break, I wandered within sight of a Catholic cloister, which was apparently still allowed to function. Two nuns were outside the building, washing kitchenware. When they saw me, one of them motioned for me to come closer; the other disappeared hastily behind the door and in a moment emerged with a pot of soup.

"Please sit down and eat."

I took the pot from her hand and ate the best meal I had had in many months. I heard one say, "Lord, they starve you." I thanked them for their kindness and quickly retreated to my work.

Clem Loew recalled the assistance he received from clergy when staying in a convent in Olsztyn, a small town near Częstochowa, in *The Hidden Children: The Secret Survivors of the Holocaust*, Jane Marks, ed., (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1993), at pages 142–43.

"The next day my mother went to a bishop and told him we were Jews. She promised to donate a lot of money to the Catholic church if he would take care of me. The bishop agreed, and he arranged for me to stay in a convent in a town called Olsztyn, outside of Warsaw. ...

"When we arrived at the convent, a nun named Sister Leonia showed us around the clean three-story building with its large and friendly looking dormitory for the children. ... That was where I ended up staying for the next three years. Emotionally I was numb. They treated me well, but I was just going through the motions of doing what I was supposed to do. I learned all the prayers very quickly, but I was aware of being different. ...

"I had several close calls. One time I was outside playing in the sandbox when a nun rushed over to me, grabbed me, and dragged me inside. She slid me under a bed, whispering, 'The Gestapo are coming to search for Jews.' I lay there terrified until the coast was clear. Another time the Gestapo did find me. The officers were actually dragging me away! One was yanking me out the door when a retired bishop living in the convent hobbled down the wide steps and yelled, 'If you take him, then you have to take me too.' He put his life on the line for me! The Nazis could easily have taken both of us, but for whatever reason they left me alone."

(The retired "bishop" residing at the convent in Olsztyn was probably a monsignor or some other prelate rather than a bishop. The donation provided by Clem Loew's mother was in all likelihood simply to cover the expenses of housing and feeding the child, a not unheard of request of those who were able to afford it, given the impoverished circumstances in which church institutions found themselves.)

Assistance from priests in Częstochowa, in southwestern Poland, who were encouraged to extend help to Jews by Bishop Teodor Kubina, is documented in a number of sources. Bishop Kubina instructed his priests to issue false baptismal certificates to Jews and to find them hiding places. On his instructions, Rev. Wojciech Mondry, the pastor of St. James parish and local dean, transported Jewish children to shelters in Kraków. (Aleksandra Klich, "Teodor Kubina: Czerwony biskup od Żydów," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 1, 2008; information from Rev. Jan Związek, retired diocesan archivist.) The following accounts are found in Wacław Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of*

Charity: Christian and Jewish Response to the Holocaust, Part One (Washington: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), pp.143–45, Entries 124, 129 and 131 (see also Jan Pietrzykowski, “Księża diecezji częstochowskiej w walce z okupantem,” *Wrocławski Tygodnik Katolików*, May 10, 1970):

June [16], 1943. Early in the morning German Schutzpolizei (security police), under the command of a Gestapo officer, Wilhelm Laubner, surrounded the rectory of St. Barbara's parish. Its leader, accompanied by two gunmen and a Jew who was previously caught with an identification card forged in that parish, entered the building and, with a burst of bullets, killed Rev. Teodor Popczyk, 33, who was pointed out by the Jewish informer as the person guilty of providing him with false papers.

[August] 1943. Bolesław Grzeleński, an organist at the parish of St. Zygmunt [Sigismund], was engaged in the preparation of false identification papers for the Jews. It involved searching for an appropriate name of a deceased parishioner, marking the entry in the parochial books to prevent more than one ID for the same name and distributing the papers among the Jewish refugees. The organist was promptly arrested after several such documents were discovered in the ghetto. He was tortured to disclose the names of his beneficiaries.

1944. Since the formation of the ghetto on April 19, 1941, the rector of the cathedral parish, Rev. Bolesław Wróblewski, took care of more than 60 Jewish children by placing them in various Catholic institutions. Finally, sometime in 1944, the Germans became suspicious of his activities and of his entire household. After the intensive search disclosed no children present at the rectory, the 74-year-old priest was pistol-whipped and his sister, Miss Wróblewska, was struck by the Gestapo officer Hintze with a rifle butt on the head and died a few days later. Their maid who had a broken arm was pushed into a cellar and the bed-ridden aunt of the priest, Mrs. Wielowieyska, was severely beaten.

Confirmation of the assistance provided by Rev. Tadeusz Wiśniewski of St. Sigismund [Zygmunt] parish is found in the accounts of the Albertine Sisters (*infra*). The Jewish charges at the Albertine Sisters' shelter at 14 Wesola Street in Częstochowa received baptismal certificates from that parish. The parish of St. Joseph also furnished false identity documents to Jews. (Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, p.106.) Other religious orders with homes in Częstochowa also carried assistance to Jews.

The Pauline Fathers from the Jasna Góra monastery, which housed the revered icon of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, smuggled food to Jews confined in the ghetto, despite the constant surveillance of the German invaders, and assisted the Jews in other ways. (Zygmunt Zieliński, ed., *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945* [Warszawa: Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, 1982], p.687. (See also the account based on Hania Ajzner's memoir *Hania's War*, *supra*.)

The following account is based on the testimony of Artur Dreifinger, originally from Lwów, who moved to Warsaw with his mother during the occupation and he went by the name of Tadeusz (Tadzik) Stenawka. He was separated from his mother during the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944. Young Tadzik was taken in and assisted by many Poles, who were afraid of keeping him for long because of his Jewish appearance. He was eventually taken to Częstochowa where he was cared for by Rev. Antoni Marchewka, and later placed in an orphanage in Kraków. After the war he was reunited with his mother and moved to Argentina. (Ireneusz Skubiś, “Wiem, że to Bóg mnie uratowała,” and “I Know That It Was God Who Saved Me,” *Niedziela*, no. 46, November 12, 2006.)

When I was seven the Warsaw Uprising broke out. After its fall and the bombardment of Warsaw my mother and I found shelter in a basement for twenty days. Suddenly, the Germans appeared and made us all leave our shelter. Children under 10 were to stand facing the street and those over 10 were to face the walls of the buildings. So were their fathers. After a second all those men and boys were shot.

I was only with my mother and I was separated from her. On that day I was left alone in the world. From the place of the shooting some people took me to the Red Cross, which was just two hundred meters away. There somebody put me in a car and took to Włochy near Warsaw. I was alone there. I did not know where to go and did not have anything to eat. It was dark. I was sitting in the street and crying. One person passed by, and another one, asking why I was crying. I did not know what to answer. I said I did not have mother, I lost her, and I was by myself and had nowhere to go. Some people took me to their house. I had a chubby face and it was providential because people often were afraid of taking emaciated kids thinking they were ill. I was perhaps one day in that house and the next day I was taken to another. They simply said, “Tadzik, you must go.” I asked why, not understanding anything.

"You know why," they said. They were afraid of speaking straight, "Because you are Jewish." And then I went from home to home. I heard various things, "If you do not leave they will kill me, my wife, children and you. You must go. And do not tell anyone that you were here. Have some underwear, food and go." And that was every day. One day someone took me to Pruszków. I felt very well there, they treated me as their son. From there I was taken to Częstochowa.

When I arrived there some people waited for me: some 30-year-old man, a woman and a girl who could be of my age. The woman who had brought me there gave me to that man and left without saying anything. And we went home. There I met a boy who was my age. The next day a priest came and it turned out that it was Fr. Antoni Marchewka. He asked, "Are you Tadzik?"

During the occupation my mother decided that I would be called Tadeusz Stenawka. The priest took me to a small room. There were a bed, a toilet, a ladder and a table in the room. The priest told me not to go out and approached the balcony. So I stayed all day inside the room and waited for him. The priest left in the morning and came back in the evening. One day he took me to the church. From that day I went to the church with him every day. Some day he gave me a white robe, a surplice, which was needed to bring the incense. ...

The day came when the priest said, "Tadzik, we must go." I still remember that morning. It was dark, raining and no people in the street. We went to Kraków. The priest took me to a large house, where there were little ladders and numerous children, at the age of 4 to 15. I was given some food, but older kids came and took the food from me. I was scared ... In the gate the priest told me to pray to Lord God every day. I know that it was God that saved me. The priest took my hand and kissed it. He was weeping. He left me with those children and went away. I did not see him afterwards.

Assistance was provided to Sonia Games (then Zofia Róża Sieradzka) of Praszka near Wieluń by Rev. Krzemiński, who knew her family from her hometown. Rev. Krzemiński had been relocated to the Częstochowa suburb of Grosz, where he lived under Gestapo surveillance when Sonia Games left the Częstochowa ghetto to seek his help to get Aryan documents. (Sonia Games, *Escape from Darkness: The True Story of a Young Woman's Extraordinary Survival During World War II* [New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1991], pp.102–104, 120–21.)

The housekeeper opened the door ...

I told her ... that I was looking for a priest from Praszka. She immediately ushered me in and asked my name. I told her and her hand flew to her mouth "Zofia Sieradzki!" she exclaimed in alarm and hurried off to get the priest. He came in looking very grim.

"My God, child, you could not have come here at a worse time! We are under surveillance at this very moment. We are being watched by the Gestapo!"

My heart sank. The priest introduced himself as Father Krzeminski and anxiously asked about my parents and what had happened. ...

There was a furtive knock on the door and the housekeeper answered it, then came running back to us.

"They are coming," she stuttered frantically. "Gestapo!"

They both grabbed me by my arms and opened a floor trap door leading into the basement. The housekeeper and I descended down the ladder into the musty interior. ...

The housekeeper pulled me toward an empty barrel and made me crawl in. It smelled of pickles. Then she poured cucumbers over me until my head was covered and loosely placed a round wooden top cover over it. We could already hear the pounding at the door upstairs. Then the housekeeper ran up the ladder and I vaguely heard the trap door being shut. ...

From above came the sound of boots stamping and loud voices. I heard the trap door being lifted and someone coming down the ladder. I held my very breath. Footsteps again very near to me, noises of movement, banging ... Then I heard the trap door again. Were they leaving? Again stomping upstairs reverberated dimly in my ears. Voices I could not make out and after a considerable while silence again.

They came and left! I felt a powerful surge of relief and waited. The cucumbers were lifted from my head and the housekeeper whispered loudly "It's alright Zosia" I wiggled out of the barrel and wearily followed her upstairs again. Father Krzeminski was sitting at a wooden table by a kerosene lamp.

"This was close ..." he said, "very close. You see we were tipped off that they were coming. We knew it." Now he needed to decide what to do with me and immediately told me that I could not stay the night, it was too dangerous. They could always come back.

... I was to stay with Aunt Hela for two weeks and then I was to return to Father Krzeminski's.

He had no way of providing me with the proper papers but would make out a false christening and birth certificate which would be better than having nothing at all. But I must not come back sooner because Father Krzeminski was having

problems with the Gestapo. They had nothing on him but suspicions thus far but if they found me here it would be the end for all of us. The housekeeper gave me a piece of bread but I could not even stay long enough to eat it. I had to leave immediately regardless of the curfew. The country road should be empty and I should sleep in the fields. ...

Today he is not nearly as nervous, and true to his word, he has a typed out certificate of Birth and Christening waiting for me. It is made out on yellowing, aged paper to give it a genuine appearance. He has made me three years older than I really am. People would be less suspicious if I am a little older, especially if I need to find work. ... Fortunately I am developed enough to appear older.

... I am given a small prayer book and Father Krzeminski instructs me to learn everything in it by heart. It is well worn but has a lovely mother of pearl binding. He also gives me a silver crucifix on a chain.

I explain that I have attended catechism classes as a child, but he actually knows this part of my history. Father Krzeminski seems to know my family well. I am extremely touched by this and ask him if he would wish to christen me. But even there he surprises me. He remembers my mother's wishes. It is to be done when I am sixteen, and he will give it due respect. I am under stress now, and this is a very serious decision to make. ...

"If you are ever caught," he tells me, "the Gestapo will trace these papers to me, you know. You will not be able to withhold the information from them ... They have a way ... They torture people. They will get it out of you. If ever this happens and you should suffer guilt,—do not on account of me. I have done for others what I am doing for you. Those are the chances I have to take. Zosia, I want to give you absolution now in advance and my full forgiveness. Save yourself from torture with my blessing. Nobody can withstand it anyway ..."

In her wanderings in the vicinity of her native village of Bolesławiec near Wieluń in the summer of 1942, Mala Brandsdorfer (then Goldrat) encountered many friendly Polish villagers who were prepared to help her. Their help was short term because of their fear of the severe punishment meted out by the Germans, and not because of malice. On occasion, the villagers would turn to their parish priest for guidance. (Mala Brandsdorfer, as told to Louis Brandsdorfer, *The Bleeding Sky: My Mothers's Recollections of the Shoah*, Internet: <http://www.brandsdorfer.com/podcast/>; also <http://www.theverylongview.com/WATH/mothers/skyintro.htm>.)

I remember growing up in Bolesławiec [Bolesławiec] very happy. The town had about 500 families, with about 2500 people. Jews made up about a quarter of the population. ... We lived and traded together in peace. There were some Poles in our town who were openly anti-Semitic, but very few. ...

One of the farmers who dealt with my uncle was a Christian named Pannek. He was a very nice man, and he liked my sister because of how honest she was. ... After the war started he said to her that if she or her family ever had to hide from the Germans they should come to him, and he'd hide them at his farm.

Pannek's farm was about one kilometer from our town. My daughter and I went there to hide. Pannek let us in and made a place for us in the attic of the stall. ... Living with him were his wife and his wife's sister. He also had two children, a son 14 or 15 years old, and a daughter about 20. They were both living at home.

The next day a woman came to Pannek's and told us that the Germans had surrounded the town. They were ordering all the Jews to assemble in the market square. She had met my sister Eudel in a field outside of town. She told my sister to run and hide, but my sister said her parents were home all alone and that she must go back to them. And so my sister returned to the town.

The following day Pannek's sister-in-law went into the town to find out what had happened. She returned and told me that all the Jews were being held in the church, and the Germans were ordering all those Jews still in hiding to come out. My parents and one sister were with the other Jews, but one of my sisters was still hiding in the attic of my neighbor's house. It was my sister Fay. She was sick, and my father took her over to the neighbors. He didn't want her taken by the Germans while she was ill. There were rumors that the Germans were killing the sick right away.

The neighbor who was hiding my sister was very scared and wanted her to either go to the church with the other Jews or go into hiding with me. The next day I paid Pannek's sister-in-law 50 marks to smuggle my sister out of the town and bring her to me.

Pannek's sister-in-law dressed Fay up as a field hand going to work in the fields outside of town. Fay was very sick when she brought her. She was running a fever. When she saw me she started crying and banging her head against the wall. She kept saying that we should go with our parents. That we would not survive anyway. The Germans had put up notices that they would shoot any Jews they found, and they would also shoot any Poles that helped a Jew hide. But I said, "No, we would not walk voluntarily into their hands," and I dragged her up to the attic.

For the next few days the Germans kept the Jews in the church. A few of the Jews who were still in hiding were caught, some had given themselves up. Then all the Jews were taken to Wielun [Wieluń]. I had a terrible feeling that the three of us were the only Jews left in the entire district. ...

Fay's illness was getting worse. Late at night I took her into town to see the doctor. ... He was a very fine man. ... He gave her some medicine that made her better. He refused to take any money from us saying we would need it more than he would.

As we were leaving, Dr. Taren said, "Go hide in small villages. There you will find less anti-Semitism than in the cities." We thanked him and left. ...

Pannek was too scared to hide us near the house during the day. Since a lot of people came to his house he was afraid we would be seen. During the day, when it wasn't raining, he told us to hide in the nearby fields. ...

Once when we were hiding in the field we heard someone coming. We crawled into a stack of wheat. I looked out and saw 2 women walking towards us. It was Mrs. Jakobovich and her daughter, Estarka. Estarka was about 20 years old. They were neighbors of ours before the war. ... Estarka got out [of the ghetto] and got to village a few kilometers from our home. ... There she was able to hide out with a Christian family until the end of the war. ...

One day Pannek said that we would have to leave. He was too afraid to hide us any longer. ... Pannek's wife was truly a wonderful human being. She pleaded with her husband to let us stay. ... But still he said no. So after two weeks of hiding at Pannek's we were sent away.

We went to a village near Wojcin [Wójcin]. Wojcin was the town my mother was born in. We went to a family that had done business with my father. In the house lived an old woman with her daughter and son-in-law. The old woman had gone to school with my mother. She asked us why we didn't bring our mother with us. She would have helped her hide too.

We stayed there a short while hiding in their attic. One day two Germans came into their yard. Both the old woman's daughter and I saw them come in. We got very frightened. I was sure that someone had told on us until I saw they had bicycles and one was broken. They stopped to fix it and then went on their way.

We had such a bad fright that a few days later Fay noticed a patch of hair on my head had turned white. The young woman was pregnant then. She had been married for five years and this was going to be her first child. A few days after we had seen the Germans come into the yard she lost the child. It may have been because of the fright she had. The next day the husband came up to the attic and told us we would have to leave. He was very sorry about it, but they felt that they couldn't keep us anymore.

From there we went to another village called Drzdkowitz [Dzietrzkowice], to a Christian farmer named Urbonek [Urbanek?]. My husband knew him from doing business with him and felt he was a good man. My husband wrote that if I had to hide I should go to this man's house, tell him who I was, and he would surely let me hide there.

When I got there I found out that Urbonek was a leader in the village, appointed by the Germans. We came to his house at night. He let us in, gave us some food, and took us up to the attic.

Urbonek was in his middle 20s. He had a wife and some young children. His wife was very scared to have us in the house. We would sometimes hear them arguing about us being there. Since he was working for the Germans some of them would come to the house. Also they had a lot of enemies in the village because of the work they were doing. His wife was afraid of us being found there. It would have cost them their lives if we were.

Once I heard him say to his wife that if he was destined to die, he would, whether he was hiding Jews or not. But his wife prevailed and we were sent away. ...

Urbonek sent us to his brother in another village, but they were also afraid. As soon as we came to their door Urbonek's sister-in-law started yelling that the village was surrounded, and that the Germans were looking for us. None of this was true, but the woman was hysterical. We could not stay there. They sent us somewhere else.

For a time we were just sent from village to village. A Christian once said to me, "Why do you risk our lives? No Jews will survive anyway."

In one place we came to, as soon as we walked in, the man there said that he was sure we were spotted and made us leave right away. Another place we came to late at night. We were allowed to stay the night but no more. In the morning we had to leave. After a while there was no place for us to go, so we decided we had to go to the Jewish ghetto in Czeszochowa [Częstochowa].

We went to another village, named Toplin. It was the village in which Alter was born. Toplin was 28 kilometers from Boleslawiec. There we went to a Christian named Antos Krzyzos [Antoś Krzyżoś]. He was the same man who took the money to my cousin in Wielun when I tried to rescue my husband.

As soon as we came to his house we told him we only wanted to stay for a short while. We told him of our wanting to get into the ghetto. Antos' family tried talking him out of letting us stay. They were afraid. But he said he would help us and took us up to the attic.

We couldn't just walk into the ghetto. If we were caught outside we would be shot. We had to be smuggled into it. I had a cousin in the ghetto named Rachel Liss. Rachel ran away from Wielun when her husband was taken away to labor camp. I knew that she had ended up in the Czestochowa ghetto. Antos helped me get a letter to her. We were taking a chance writing a letter to someone in the ghetto. If the letter had been read by the Germans we would have been caught, but Antos agreed to take the chance.

In the letter I asked her to find out how we could get into the ghetto. This was in September 1942. It was on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, that we sent the letter. We spent the holiday up in the Krzyzos' attic. Two weeks later a letter came back from my cousin.

My cousin told us to go to the Ponow [Panów(?), i.e., the Lords'] woods. The Ponow woods were near Wielun. There we would find a man whose name I can't remember now. She said that this man could smuggle us into the ghetto.

The next day we said good-bye to Antos Krzyzos and headed for the Ponow woods. We walked all day until we got to the woods. I remember it was a beautiful day. A number of Poles spotted us for Jews as we traveled there. Some were kind to us; some were not; but none of them turned us in. One told us that just the day before we came there the Germans had finished a large "operation". For 2 weeks they searched the woods for Jews. Over 30 were caught hiding there. The Germans took them all to Wielun where they were all executed.

We came to the man my cousin told us see. He said that he could not get us into the ghetto anymore. Once he used to lead animals into the ghetto to be slaughtered for food. Then he was able to smuggle someone in by dressing them up as a helper. But the Germans stopped letting meat into the ghetto since they started taking Jews out of there. ...

In the morning we were able to see a village in the distance. We went there, and we looked for a house that was run down. We knew that the people living in poor houses were not Germans or collaborating with them.

We came into a house. We told the people the truth about who we were and what had happened to us. They said not to fear. They would talk to the village priest, and he would know what to do. The priest was a very fine man. He advised that we go to the city of Klobuck [Kłobuck] which was not far from there. There were still some Jews in Klobuck. One of them was the dentist. We were to go to the dentist, and he'd be able to help us get into a Jewish work camp nearby.

During the round-up of Jews in a village near Olkusz, an old woman became frightened by the sudden appearance of an unknown Jewish girl at her door and alerted a nearby German soldier nearby who shot the child on the spot. Her confession was recorded in Chava Kwinta, *I'm Still Living* (Toronto: Simon & Pierre Publishing Company, 1974), at pages 159–60.

Not far from the little town of Olkush [Olkusz] the Germans rounded up all the Jews to have them sent away. One mother, desperately wanting to save her child, told her to run away, to go as far as she could and then ask some Polish family to take her in as their daughter. She was a clever little girl of eight, and she managed to steal away. She was wearing a nice summer dress. In a village she knocked on one of the doors. An old woman appeared. "Grandma," the child appealed to her, "will you take me for your daughter?" The old woman did not think; automatically she called a Nazi soldier. ... she said to him, "Here's a Jewish girl." The German shot the child on the spot. The old woman did not expect that, she thought he would simply take the child away; and she could find no peace. She went to her priest for confession.

"You did a very bad thing," he told her. "You should have given the child the refuge she was looking for, or at least you should have let her go to look for it elsewhere. You did a very wicked thing. Jesus will not forgive you and I cannot take your guilt on my conscience." The old woman went home and, after a short time, she died.

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should have let her go to look for it elsewhere. You did a very wicked thing. Jesus will not forgive you and I cannot take your guilt on my conscience.” The old woman went home and, after a short time, she died.

Throughout occupied Poland, Poles were encouraged to purchase or, less often, simply take Jewish property after the Germans had deported the Jews from the town. A Jewish woman passing as a Pole recalled how Rev. Stanisław Marchewka, the pastor of the former Cistercian monastery church in Jędrzejów near Kielce, implored the faithful in his sermons not to acquire property confiscated from the Jews: “People, do not go there. Don’t buy any of those things. Don’t take anything, because it is stained with blood.” (Memoir of Sabina Rachel Kałowska, *Uciekać, aby żyć* [Lublin: Norbertinum, 2000], pp.93–94.)

A Polish family sheltered Goldie Szachter, a Jewish girl, on their farm near Świętomarz near Bodzentyn. They confided in the village priest, Rev. Eugeniusz Skrzypczyk, who assisted in the pretence that the child was a member of the family—their niece—and a Catholic. The Jewish girl would later write, “I nevertheless recognized the beauty of the spirituality of the church services as well as its sanctifying influence on the Polish peasant household in general.” (Goldie Szachter Kalib, with Sylvan Kalib and Ken Wachsberger, *The Last Selection: A Child’s Journey Through the Holocaust* [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991], pp.161, 163–64.)

Irene Bau (née Landesdorfer), born in Kraków in 1929, and her mother Regina were able to pass as Christians, after her mother received a false identity document in the name of Zofia Głowacz from a priest in Koszyce, a village north of Bochnia. Later, when living in the village of Wiśniowa near Strzyżów, suspecting that she was Jewish, the local police seized Irene’s identity card. Irene went to confession in and confided in a priest that she was a Jew in hiding. The priest went to the police station and told the police chief, “Give the girl back her papers. I knew her parents. The girl is not Jewish.” The police chief complied. With her papers back, she was able to find a job in a store and continued working there until the area was liberated by the Soviet army. (Bill Tammeus and Jacques Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland during the Holocaust* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2009), pp.25–31.)

A young Jewish girl travelling on a train to Kraków survived a German inspection after being protected by Rev. Alfons Walkiewicz, a priest who was unknown to her. He then placed her with a Polish family in Kocmyrów where she survived the war. Her brother Aleksander Allerhand relates this story in Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, at pages 76–77, 81.

Meanwhile, there was no news about my other sister. We thought she had perished. But after some time Mr and Mrs Kwiatek let me know in the camp that she had come back, and that she was at Kocmyrów, near Kraków. What had happened? Those people she used to stay with—a Polish woman and a Ukrainian—after a year, more or less, told her, ‘You may go to Kraków.’

She was going by train. In the compartment with her, there was a priest wearing a cassock, whom she knew from Monasterzyska [where she had been sheltered] and who escorted her to Kraków. She had no papers, and all of a sudden the Germans were there to check documents.

‘Documents, papers,’ they demanded.

The priest said, ‘This is my sister.’ And they left.

My sister had already told the priest that her daddy was a Polish officer in captivity, and Mummy was at Auschwitz for selling pork fat. She said she was now going to Kraków where she did not know anyone, as she came from Bydgoszcz. And the priest took her to his friends from Bydgoszcz (Bydgoszcz had been incorporated into the Third Reich as soon as the war had started), who were moving to a small town—Kocmyrów.

The priest’s name was Alfons Walkiewicz.

The priest’s friends had a buffet in Kocmyrów. They were Genowefa Kunegunda and Roman Kłosowski. They immediately treated my sister as if she were one of the family. She even began to go to school. She shared a bed with the family servant, Czesia. At one point Czesia started doubting my sister’s history, as some of the facts did not fit. Anyway, they deduced that they were both Jewish, but they did not give it away to one another. They were both ready to deny it, because you couldn’t be sure who was a spy and who wasn’t. They did not tell each other the truth until after the war. Nowadays, Czesia, then some twenty years old, lives in Jerusalem. She comes from Sanok. ...

My sister stayed in touch with Father Walkiewicz till he died, which was in the 1980s.

Rev. Aleksander Osiecki was instrumental in rescuing the Haber family from Brzeźnica, a village near Dębica, where he was the pastor. He was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, p.567.)

In 1940, Oscar and Frieda Haber were sent to a forced-labor camp in Pustkow [Pustków], near Brzeznica [Brzeźnica], the village where they were born in Debica [Dębica] county, Rzeszow [Rzeszów] district. Oscar, a dentist, had treated many of the people in his village and he and Father Aleksander Osiecki, the local priest and one of his patients, had become fast friends. To help them, Osiecki issued Haber and his wife Christian birth and marriage certificates, which they used to obtain Aryan papers. In August 1942, when the Germans were about to liquidate the camp, the Habers decided to flee. The priest directed them to the home of relatives of his who lived in the nearby village of Jurkow [Jurków], and they remained there, working on the farm, until May 1943. Following information provided by informers, the Gestapo raided the village, but the Habers spotted them in time and managed to escape to the forest. At this point, Haber and his wife realized that they could no longer hide out in the village and in their distress returned to Franciszek Musial [Musiał], a Polish laborer who had worked alongside them on the farm and with whom they had become friendly. Musial empathized with the Jewish fugitives' suffering and took the Habers to the home of Jan and Anna Stalmach, his sister and brother-in-law, who lived with their son, Adam, in Tworkowa, a remote village in Brzesko county, in the Cracow district. Motivated by pure altruism, the Stelmach family received the Habers warmly and hid them in their home for a year and a half, providing them with all their needs until their liberation, without asking for or receiving anything in return.

Rev. Jan Patrzyk, the pastor of Medenice near Drohobycz, rescued the daughter of a Jewish doctor and acquaintance by taking her to his native village where she survived the war. He was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, p.590.)

Dr. Meir Eisenberg, a Jewish doctor, and Jan Patrzyk, a priest, had become friends before the war when they both served in Medenice, near Drohobycz, in Eastern Galicia. During the occupation, Patrzyk was transferred to the village of Lipinki in Gorlice country, Cracow district, and Eisenberg was deported with his family to the Drohobycz ghetto. In 1942, after losing his wife in an Aktion, Eisenberg decided to try to save at least his 15-year-old daughter, Judit. He turned to his friend Father Patrzyk and smuggled the girl into his home. Patrzyk took the Jewish girl under his wing and obtained Aryan papers for her [from Rev. Franciszek Zmarzły of Raclawice, in the name of Anna Maziarz]. She became a part of his family, and his sister, Barbara Patrzyk, cared for her as if she were her own sister. After the war, when Patrzyk discovered that his friend Meir Eisenberg, the girl's father, had perished, Judit remained under his care and continued her studies in the local high school. Only after a year, when an aunt of the girl's was found, was she handed over to her, all without asking for or receiving anything in return. Judit eventually immigrated to Israel ...

Rev. Antoni Osikowicz (sometimes given as Osikiewicz), the pastor of Drohobycz, in southeastern Poland, exhorted his parishioners to help Jews, provided Jews with false documents, and intervened on their behalf with the German authorities. Rev. Osikowicz was eventually deported to Majdanek for his rescue activities and perished there on December 29, 1943. He was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, p.568.)

On August 2, 1942, on the eve of the Aktion in the city of Boryslaw [Boryslaw], in Eastern Galicia, Berta Brawer gave birth to her son, Dani, and decided to do everything in her power to save his life. She heard that a Catholic priest, Father Osikiewicz [Osikowicz], was hiding Jewish children, and Brawer appealed to him for help. After he explained that he had no place for infants, the priest suggested that she look for a Christian woman willing to hide the baby and take care of him. He also promised to provide the baby with a Christian birth certificate. In her distress, Brawer appealed to Stanisława [Stanisława] Fedorcio, with whom she had become acquainted before the war when she had done housework for Brawer's neighbors. At first, Fedorcio hesitated, fearing for her life, but after the priest found out that she had been approached he invited Fedorcio to be the baby's godmother at his baptism ceremony. After the ceremony, he convinced her that as the baby's Catholic godmother she was required to safeguard the baby's life, otherwise God would not forgive her. Convinced, Fedorcio took the baby home and for three years raised him as her own, taking care of all his needs. Brawer survived and after the war Fedorcio returned the baby to her safe and sound.

At least two other survivors, Blima Hamerman and Anna Wilf, state that Rev. Osikowicz helped many Jews by providing them with Christian documents.⁴⁴

According to Jewish testimonies, assistance from priests and nuns in Drohobycz was extensive. (Andrzej Chciuk, ed., *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945* [Clayton, Victoria: Wilke and Company, 1969], p.48.)

In a letter from a Drohobyczian Mrs. Lola Getlinger received from Brazil in 1959 ... she refers to cases where the Polish Roman Catholic and also the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic clergy issued literally hundreds of false birth certificates to Jewish people, so as to enable them to be regarded as Aryans. Among others, Mrs. Getlinger's whole family was issued with such papers.

Extremely helpful in this task were Fathers Dr. Kazimierz Kotula and Banaszak [actually Rev. Stanisław Banaś, who provided false baptismal certificates and shelter to Jews]. The monasteries of the Capuchin and Bazylian [Basilian] Brothers gave refuge to a large number of Jewish children.

Some of the assistance provided by Polish Jesuits to Jews as well as others has been chronicled in Vincent A. Lapomarda, *The Jesuits and the Third Reich* (Lewiston/Queenston and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), at pages 124–25, 129–31.

Father [Tomasz] Rostworowski entered the Jesuit Order at the age of nineteen and was ordained a priest on 23 June 1935. Engaged in the fight for Warsaw under the title of Ojciec Tomasz (Father Tomasz), he served as chaplain in the main command. With the setback of the revolt, he was originally believed to have perished until he was found very heroically helping the wounded in the underground. Tragically, his sorrow at the failure of the uprising was compounded by helplessly witnessing the slaughter by the Nazis of the wounded prisoners shortly after he had distributed Holy Communion to them. At the same time, his heroic activities included that of providing secret shelter for Jews hunted by the Gestapo.

As for Father [Józef] Warszawski, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1924 and was ordained a priest on 18 June 1933. He was known as Ojciec Paweł (Father Paul) in the underground which he joined in October of 1941 where he served under the command of Colonel Radosław (Jan Mazurkiewicz) in a unit that had at least fifty Jews engaged in the uprising. Despite the Gestapo's constant surveillance of the two Jesuit houses in Warsaw, Father Warszawski was able to warn some Jews about the Nazis and to help those rescued from the Warsaw Ghetto find lodging and even escape death. ... After the capitulation of Warsaw, he escaped for a short time from the Gestapo with a number of others in the Polish underground. When he was caught, he was imprisoned first in the Gestapo Center (Aleje Szucha) in Warsaw and, then, taken to various places until he ended up in Germany where he was freed as a prisoner of war during the liberation, on 29 April 1945, of Stalag XB at Sandbötsel by the Canadians. ...

Father [Jerzy] Mirewicz was ordained a priest on 24 June 1938 and was caught up in the turmoil of events that overwhelmed Poland during the war. The Nazis had imprisoned Jews in the temporary camp on Lipowa Street in Lublin shortly after the invasion of Poland before Majdanek, the major concentration camp in the Lublin area, was built. It was in these circumstances that Father Mirewicz was instrumental in rescuing seventeen Jews in 1940.

The Jews had served in the Polish Army and were separated as captives from other Polish soldiers with the defeat of Poland. Since they were expected to be transported to the death camp [actually a gravel pit at the time, which was later transformed into a hard labour camp for Poles and then a death camp for Jews—Ed.] at Treblinka, northeast of Warsaw, Father Mirewicz risked his life in rescuing them. This involved hiding the Jews and obtaining fabricated documents for them as well as transportation. Through various means, the Jesuit was instrumental in having the seventeen Jews transported to the relative safety of the Russian front [actually Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland—Ed.].

Moreover, in 1942 Father Mirewicz had occasion to escort a Jewish fugitive by train from Biłgoraj in the Lublin area to Milanówek in the Warsaw area where the fugitive could join the members of his family who were being hidden by a Christian family. Even though the Jesuit had permission to travel, officials were constantly checking the papers of passengers. When the train reached Dęblin, within the district of Warsaw, a policeman came into the car and demanded to know if Mirewicz's companion was a Jew. Fortunately for the priest and the fugitive, the whole compartment came to their rescue by insisting that Mirewicz was escorting a "lunatic" to a hospital asylum.

During the war, Father Mirewicz had cooperated with the Council for Aid to the Jews in Poland. Known as "ŻEGOTA," its code name, it had originated among Catholics ... Despite these dangers, never did Mirewicz find any Christians who

⁴⁴ Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, p.227.

refused to cooperate with him in helping the Jews.

Father Mirewicz referred to the obstacles that were encountered in trying to rescue the Jews. At times not only did their appearance and their speech betray them, but there were cases of Jews who had lost their nerve in those trying circumstances and even revealed to the Nazis the identity of those Poles who had given them shelter. The Jesuit found that, in the case of rescuing those seventeen Jews from Lipowa Street, the Jews whom he had helped did not wish to risk their own lives even though they were happy to be liberated. In 1944, when at least three of them returned to Lublin with the liberation forces of the Russians, Mirewicz was disappointed to learn that two of those whom he had rescued wanted nothing to do with him lest they be exiled to Siberia by the Lublin Government on the suspicion of having collaborated with a sympathizer of the exiled Polish Government.

There are many accounts of priests providing guidance and encouragement to the faithful who assisted Jews. The reason that Polish rescuers turned to priests is not because they thought that helping a Jew was wrong—indeed according to their religion it was a sin to harm one's neighbour, including a Jew, but rather for assurance that they should persevere despite their fear and the grave danger that they were exposing their own families to.

In his memoirs *A Warsaw Diary*, *supra*, at pages 87–88, Michael Zylberberg describes how his Polish benefactors in the Czerniaków district of Warsaw (St. Anthony's Parish), turned to their parish priest for guidance.

Our poor family were keen to have us without rent at a time when people were taking enormous sums to hide Jews. They had no previous knowledge of us but felt they had a sacred duty to shelter anyone in need. Of course, our existence had to be a closely-guarded secret. ... Both the grandmother and her daughter prayed frequently that God would help them and us. When we were worried that something might happen, they always assured us that they would stand by us and protect us. Their compassion was outstanding.

Easter was getting closer and a new problem arose for us. Mrs. Klima said she had to go to confession and that she had to tell the whole truth. That included telling about us. She was afraid that the priest might not approve and regard this procedure as dangerous; she was at a loss what to do, and asked me for advice. I begged her to let us know what day she was going to confession, so that we could stay out of the house all day. Thus she would not need to mention us and would have a clear conscience. We kept out of the house that day, as promised, but Mrs. Klima confessed everything to the priest! Happily for us and for her, however, the priest assured her that she was performing a noble service on helping those in danger. She returned home overjoyed.

Esther Kimchi, a native of the town of Złoczew near Wieluń, was a little girl when the war broke out. The family moved to Warsaw. One day they escaped from the ghetto where they had been forced to move into. Her parents turned to Polish acquaintances who agreed to take the child in. She survived the war protected by this pious Polish Catholic family, encouraged in their resolve by their parish priest. After the war young Esther was reunited with some uncles who had also survived. Her parents perished. (Esther Kimchi, "Due to the Merits of the Righteous of the World," in *Sefer Złoczew* [Tel Aviv: Committee of Former Residents of Złoczew, 1971], pp.272–75.)

My parents also faced this decision and decided to use their connections. I was left outside the ghetto in a safe hidden place. To tell the truth, a hiding place was also found for my mother, but she preferred to stay in the ghetto in order to save me, for she feared that if she was discovered she might reveal my hideaway. Thus, she sacrificed herself for me.

My parents left and I remained with Polish acquaintances from before the war. They consented to keep and protect me in their house in order to avoid being captured by the German killers ...

At first, I was not completely isolated from my family since my father took risky chances to see me. He would dress up as a sanitation worker and reach my hiding place or he would smuggle something to the "Aryan side" and use the opportunity to visit me. These activities were very dangerous. Once, I even heard his injured call when he encountered German guards that fired at him while crossing the ghetto passage.

Towards the end of 1941, the visits stopped and I stopped seeing him. Slowly, I began to realize what was happening there in the ghetto and what was happening to my protective family. I saw on the horizon the flames that were rising from the burning ghetto. This was a picture that I will never forget.

A new chapter began in my life. I erased my youth, so to speak, from my memory and all it stood for. I became an inseparable part of the adopted family, although I had certain reservations in my heart. I understood that I am not like everybody in the family for I had something to hide.

My adopted parents had families and when somebody asked the husband who I was, he pointed to his wife and said she belonged to them and vice-versa. My stay in the flat was also irregular since I had a hiding place in a box of straw near the fireplace. I did not attend school but received lessons from the oldest daughter of the family who had just turned 18. All the children in the family were warned to keep my presence a secret and to reveal nothing about me to friends or relatives.

My luck was that the children were older and could be trusted. But I was still a small girl and had to be drilled about the fact that I was no longer Jewish and not to say something that might reveal my identity or lead to insinuations ...

In order to provide me with an absolute hidden identity, the family decided to convert me to Christianity. Thus, when the family went to mass on Sunday I was part of the family and prayed with them. In retrospect, it appears that my conversion to Christianity was of great importance and would play an important role later on in my life. The days of the terrible rule seemed to prolong themselves. The Germans were victorious on the battlefields and seemed invincible, and there was not even a spark of hope for change. This situation depressed everybody, especially my savior family for they were in constant mortal danger. The lack of change and the constant fear of hiding a Jewish child in their home began to wear thin in the house. The husband especially began to show signs of despair, but the wife, who was a devout Catholic, went to consult the priest about the situation. He gave her spiritual strength to hold fast in her belief of saving a soul. From then on, not only was I protected by the lady of the house but also by the Catholic Church. Needless to say, the husband and wife squabbles on the subject ended with the husband's submission to the wife's decision to continue to hide the girl. ...

The family treated me very well. They liked me and spoiled me by providing me with everything that I needed in spite of the hardships due to the war situation and the shortages. They sometimes even treated me better than their own children so that I did not feel underprivileged. Following the Polish uprising in Warsaw, the city lacked food and to a certain extent water, but I hardly felt it as I was provided by the savior family with the necessary needs.

Since I did not attend school for fear of being exposed, the daughters of the family taught me how to read and write. They also escorted me to church and instructed me how to pray. Sometimes I joined the church choir. I was always escorted by one of the girls when I visited the priest at the church and he always stressed the importance of religion and adherence to it. As for myself, I was still rather young to understand the importance of religion. The home atmosphere however was one of warmth and reception. I received and gave gifts, participated in family celebrations, and felt as though I belonged to the family.

Meanwhile, the war was nearing its end. The pressure on the Germans grew by the day and they prepared for the final battle in the city. They ordered the entire civilian population to abandon the city. There were no cars, so we started to walk in the direction of Lodz [Łódź]. We walked for about two weeks until we reached some abandoned camp that became our temporary abode.

Halina Neuberg (now Zylberman), a native of Kraków, moved to Warsaw with her parents during the occupation where they passed as Christians under an assumed identity. At one point she confided in an unknown priest at the Church of the Holy Saviour (Zbawiciela) where she and her mother would meet her father, who lived on his own for safety's sake. (Halina Zylberman, *Swimming Under Water* [Caulfield South, Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2001], pp.38–39.)

One afternoon after meeting my father in the church, I had an overwhelming urge to talk to the priest. I entered the Confessional Box and in a few short sentences I told the priest how I felt. It all came tumbling out, that I was Jewish, that I felt inferior to the whole human race, that I couldn't bear it any longer. I had a naïve trust in priests because they were often Polish patriots. That didn't necessarily mean that they were sympathetic to Jews, but this time, I was in safe hands.

He listened to me patiently and seemed moved by my confession. He said: "I sympathise with you my child. You must never consider yourself an inferior being. You are not. It's just the times and this dreadful war that are responsible for the injustices and cruelties that are inflicted on people. Please believe that this will pass eventually, and you must have the patience and stamina to survive it. Our God is everywhere. He watches over his children and helps them. It doesn't matter what their skin colour is, or their religion. As long as you are a good human being then he will be with you, my child."

His words were so important to me that I remember them, word for word, to this day. They lifted my fear and depression and as I left the church, I became aware of the sunshine and the first signs of autumn approaching.

During the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Halina and her mother were captured by the Germans and given jobs as cooks at a German army base. Eventually, with the help of a priest, they were released from their service in the German army. They survived in a Red Cross camp in Pionki until the withdrawal of the Germans. (Ibid., pp.88–120.)

A priest at the Church of the Holy Saviour (Zbawiciela) in Warsaw counselled a Polish woman to continue to shelter a Jewish family after she had broken down in fear of announced German reprisals. (Stefan Chaskielewicz, *Ukrywałem się w Warszawie: Styczeń 1943–styczeń 1945* [Kraków: Znak, 1988], p.34.) That same Jewish beneficiary (at pages 170–71) noted the various reactions of the Poles to the plight of the Jews and the beneficial role of religion:

Many Poles helped Jews in a variety of ways, sheltering them or supporting them financially, risking a great deal in doing so and exposing themselves to various dangers. The majority of Poles undoubtedly felt great sympathy for the Jews and categorically condemned the humiliation of their Jewish fellow-citizens. But there were others who emphasized with pride that they were not Jews and that German treatment of the Jews was a matter of indifference to them. Some felt deep compassion for the Jews, but were subconsciously glad of the benefits their destruction brought. There were also Poles—but surely few in number—who actively collaborated with the Germans and it is difficult now to ascertain whether they did this out of conviction, because of direct material benefits, or whether they were forced to do so by German blackmail.

Can the Polish population of Warsaw therefore be categorically described as anti-semitic or philosemitic? Can the population as a whole be characterized through the actions of individuals? No, the people behaved in the same way as anyone would probably have behaved in similar circumstances, including the Jewish population. There were good people, there were evil people, there were indifferent people. Just as there always are all over the world.

I must make one observation here. In hiding, I realized how deeply humanitarian the role of religion was, how much the teachings of the Catholic Church influenced the development of what was most beautiful and noble among believers. Just as in critical moments the majority of people turn to God for help—even if their faith is not particularly strong—so the very thought of God dictates to them the need to help their neighbour who is in danger.

(This excerpt was translated in Władysław T. Bartoszewski, “Four Jewish Memoirs from Occupied Poland,” *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, volume 5 (1990), p.391.)

Blanca Rosenberg, who passed as a Christian in Warsaw, resided in the vicinity of St. Alexander’s Church in Three Crosses Square (Plac Trzech Krzyży). Her curiosity about the true attitude of priests toward Jews led her to conduct the following experiment: “I wondered what Jews could expect in the privacy of the confessional, and one Sunday at mass, I decided to find out. As seemingly good Catholics, we went regularly, and at the end of mass that morning I impulsively entered the confessional. ‘Father I’m breaking the law. I’m hiding a Jew.’ It was as close as I dared get to the truth. The voice that answered was young. ‘It is no sin, my child. In the sight of God it is a good deed.’” (Blanca Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last: Survival under False Identity, 1941–45* [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993], p.133.)

Janet Singer, a young Jewish girl from Nowy Targ who was just four when the war broke out, was assisted by a number of Poles in and around Kraków, including members of the clergy. Her father acquired from a priest a birth certificate of a deceased Polish girl which enabled his daughter to assume the identity of Krystyna Antoszkiewicz. Afterwards, the young Jewish girl, found roaming the streets of Kraków, was taken in by Alicja Gołąb, a member of the Polish underground. She was sent to a farm owned by the Catholic Church and administered by Jan Gołąb, Alicja’s brother-in-law. The latter’s brother, Rev. Julian Gołąb, the pastor of St. Nicholas’ Parish in the Wesola district of Kraków, hid a Jewish engineer in his rectory for the duration of the war. The man survived and, after the war, converted to Catholicism. Alicja’s husband, Ludwik, a judge, collaborated with his brother, the priest, in saving two hundred Jews by providing them with baptismal certificates. Janet Singer Applefield’s recollections, “Lost Childhood,” were published in John J. Michalczyk, ed., *Resisters, Rescuers, and Refugees: Historical and Ethical Issues* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1997), at pages 204–205.

While still in the ghetto, my father knew my stay with the Polish woman had to be temporary, and he had to figure out what to do with me. He was able to buy [likely through a voluntary offering to the church] the birth certificate of a deceased Polish girl from a Catholic priest, and I became that girl. I had a new identity, a new name: Krystyna Antoszkiewicz. He also contacted our cousin, a young woman, who also had falsified Polish papers with the name Halina Walkowska [Walkowska]. She agreed to take me, and we went to live in Myslenice [Myślenice], a town close to Kraków.

One day she told me she was going to meet her Polish boyfriend in a Krakow cafe. She instructed me to wait for her in the church across the street. Though I waited for hours, she did not return. When I walked out to the street, I saw that the

street was cordoned off. The Gestapo had arrested everyone in the cafe. It was May 21, 1943. There I was, seven years old, walking the streets and crying, completely bewildered and terrified, not knowing what to do. I was alone in the world. (I have learned that this cafe was a famous meeting place for the Polish resistance movement, and that my cousin and his friend belonged to the Armia [Armia] Krajowa. ...)

An older woman came to me and asked what was the matter. She looked around, making sure no one was looking, placed me under her large cape, and quickly whisked me into the building housing the cafe. She was the caretaker of the building and took me upstairs to a woman named Alicja Golob [Gołob]. Alicja asked me, "Who are you, where do you come from?" I repeated a well-rehearsed phrase [likely with a non-Varsovian accent]: "I come from Warsaw, my parents were killed in a bombing raid, my father was an officer in the Polish army." That night Alicja's son, Stashek [Staszek] took me to the farm, a four-kilometre walk. It was too dangerous to remain in that apartment, for the Gestapo always returned to the scene.

Alicja's mother was an active member of the Polish resistance. She housed ammunition and shortwave radios and maintained an in-house hospital for wounded men and women of the resistance. ... She was eventually arrested as a political prisoner. Because of the torture she endured, she died only a few days after her release from prison.

The farm was owned by the Catholic Church and administered by Jan Golob, Alicja's brother-in-law. Another brother, Julius Golob [actually Julian Gołob, the pastor of St. Nicholas' Parish in the Wesola district of Kraków], a priest, hid a Jewish engineer in his rectory for the duration of the war. The man survived and, after the war, converted to Catholicism. Alicja's husband, Ludvig [Ludwik], was a judge. He and Julius saved two hundred Jews by giving them baptismal papers (I saw the records on a recent visit to Poland). They treated me like one of the family and asked me no more questions, since it was safer not to know my true identity. I could not go to school because people might get suspicious and ask too many questions. How could my presence be explained? I did not have my identification papers. ...

I remained with the Polish family until the end of the war, when my cousin's father came to take me. I was sad to leave, and the family wanted to keep me but felt that ethically and morally it was the wrong thing to do.

In addition to the aforementioned engineer (and architect), Alfred Überall from Lwów, who had marked Semitic features and had to be disguised as a priest, Rev. Julian Gołob also sheltered in his rectory the surgeon, Dr. Józef B., later a professor of the Medical Academy in Kraków. Both of these charges survived the war and converted to Catholicism. Rev. Gołob also provided baptismal certificates to a number of Jews. (See Jan Żaryn, "The Catholic Church Hierarchy vis-à-vis Polish-Jewish Relations Between 1945 and 1947," in Kamiński and Żaryn, *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom*, p.86; Jan Żaryn, "Schronienie na plebanii," *Rzeczpospolita*, January 19, 2008.)

Many priests in the vicinity of Dąbrowa Tarnowska near Tarnów rendered assistance to Jews. (Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, pp.344–45.)

A great deal was done for the Jews by the priests of various parishes, who in addition to finding shelters issued the necessary Aryan documents. ... Rev. Franciszek Okoński, (a chaplain of the Home Army whose nom de guerre was "Nawa"), the pastor of Lusowice, assisted both Poles and Jews. He sheltered, among others, a Jewish lawyer from Kraków. Word of this reached Tomasz Madura, a confidant of the Germans who was later executed by the underground. The German police raid on the rectory did not incriminate anyone as the Jew who was hiding there jumped out the window and simply walked away while the 'Blue' police stood around. ... The enraged Germans found two servants and, without verifying their identities, shot them. The two priests who were arrested at the time were released after a few days because nothing could be proved against them.

The pastor of the parish in Bolesław, Rev. Wojciech Dybiec ... saved the lives of two Jewish brothers from Bolesław—Dolek and Roman Kegel. He issued birth certificates in the names they had chosen—the surname assumed by the former was Bernat, and the latter Ciepiela. A third brother, Moniek, moved to Dubno where he was sheltered by a Polish school teacher. All three of them survived the war. ... Dolek Bernat, who lives in Brooklyn, in the United States, wrote in a letter dated December 19, 1965: "... one evening my brother and I made our way to the rectory and asked to speak to Rev. Dybiec. He invited us in asking what we wanted. We requested that he issue us Aryan documents ... His reply was, 'How can I issue such documents, but on the other hand how can I not?' He looked through the register of births and asked us to choose names that more or less corresponded to our ages ... After providing us with the necessary documents he asked that we not disclose where we got them from should the Germans capture us and ascertain that the documents were not ours ... We thanked the priest with tears in our eyes and left. ... And indeed the documents did assist us, and to this day we bear the surnames given to us by Rev. Dybiec."

Miriam Winter recalls how, as a young girl, she passed as a Catholic in the village of Wola Rzędzińska near Tarnów with the help of nuns, Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived, and the local pastor, Rev. Jan Węgrzyn, who allowed her to take Communion without being baptized in order to maintain the ruse that she was a Catholic child. (Miriam Winter, *Trains: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood during and after World War II* [Jackson, Michigan: Kelton Press, 1997], pp.54–66.)

Although the priest promised to baptize me and I underwent the required preparation, my first communion didn't happen because the priest had religious scruples.

In November of 1941 Maryla [Dudek later Maria Oracz, Miriam's Polish benefactor—Ed.] brought me to stay with Masłowa in Wola Rzedzinska [Rzędzińska]. Masłowa, a widow, lived with her three children in a house in the middle of the village. ...

I went to the school run by the Catholic nuns. They were called Siostry Służebniczeki [służebniczki] "Sisters of Service." ... One of them, Klara, had shining dark eyes and was often kind to me. ... Sister Klara had given me this book.

"This is a catechism; study it every day," she said. ...

The Christian children from the village didn't have to hide. Despite the war they still lived with their families. I wanted to become Christian and also feel safe. I didn't want to be Jewish anymore. I memorized the prayers from the catechism. ...

In the classroom I was praised for my quick memory. Sister Klara, the nun who was good to me, sometimes talked with me after class. ...

"The priest will baptize you soon. Then you'll go to the first communion with the rest of the children." ...

Two weeks before the scheduled first communion, the priest sent for me. I went to the church. ...

"Praised be Jesus Christ," I said, curtsying in front of the priest when I entered the sacristy. He extended his hand for me to kiss. ...

"I will not baptize you," he began looking at the ring on his finger, and I froze in place. "You may ask for it later, after the war..." His words caught me unaware. He talked in a solemn voice, clearly articulating his words, but I couldn't understand them. I waited a long time.

"But prosze Ksiedza [proszę Księdza] ..." I tried politely to argue, but he raised his hand and I stopped. His voice was cold. I looked at him with panic, but his eyes were still on the ring as he explained his plan.

"After the war, any priest will do it for you," he said slowly, as if he feared that I didn't understand. "I will not baptize you now when you may think that I am forcing my religion on you. ... You have to wait for your baptism and for your first communion until after the war."

I sat motionless while he explained:

"You must pretend that you are making the confession."

My heart sank when I realized what he was saying. "I will be sitting in the confessional, so it should be easy for you. But you must be very careful."

His large gray eyes were now looking straight into mine. ...

"On Sunday you will not take the communion, but you must pretend that you are doing it. You must be careful and do exactly as I say."

His words bit deep into my memory: "All you need to do is to imitate the motions of other children. You shall come to me for the confession, and I shall pretend to give you absolution. Then I shall pass you over at the communion. The sexton is prepared and will go along. ...

Saturday came, and I went to church to fake my confession. ...

On Sunday I went to the church early. ... I did everything exactly the way the priest told me to do ...

I saw the priest coming. The sexton followed him with a small round silver tray. I opened my mouth and relaxed my tongue. ... No one noticed that the priest had omitted one child. I pretended to swallow, bowed my head, walked back with my palms joined together, fingers unified in a praying gesture. ...

In a borrowed white dress I went with Maryla to Tarnow. ...

The photographer put a white silk lily into my hand and carefully arranged a picture of Saint Anthony [actually, it was a picture of Jesus—Ed.] on a small brown table. ...

The camera clicked; he removed the picture and the silk lily. ... Maryla paid, and we went back to Wola Rzedzinska.

The priest's refusal had serious consequences. It put me and those around me in danger. I had to pretend to be a Christian girl. Now it was harder for me to pretend. I was bound to make mistakes.

In Kolbuszowa near Rzeszów, the local pastor, Rev. Antoni Dunajewski, also responded to a call for help by

Naftali Saleschutz. (Norman Salsitz, as told to Richard Skolnik, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland: Remembering Kolbuszowa* [Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992], pp.292–94; also Norman Salsitz and Amalie Petranker Salsitz, *Against All Odds: A Tale of Two Survivors* [New York: Holocaust Library, 1990], pp.249–52.)

I now remembered Kotulova [Kotulowa], the Polish widow whom I had visited just before I left Kolbuszowa to be with my family in Rzeszow [Rzeszów], and with whom I had left some belongings and merchandise. Her house was right behind the fence that surrounded the ghetto I resolved to see her at once. After nightfall I left the camp without telling anyone, not even my brother. I climbed the fence and knocked on Kotulova's door.

"Pani [Mrs.] Kotulova, I have to run away. I need forged papers, and I may need a place to hide."

"I will help you," she said.

"Where can I get papers?"

"I'll have to talk to the priest."

"Do I know him?"

"You should; Monsignor Dunajecki has been our parish priest for nearly twenty years."

"Yes, I know of the Monsignor."

"He has all the birth records of the parish, and he may be able to give you the birth record of someone who died during the war."

"I had a friend in grade school, about my age, who was killed at the front in 1939. His name is Tadeusz Jadach. Maybe I could use his birth certificate."

"I'll see what I can do. Come back tomorrow night."

... When I returned the next evening, Kotulova handed me something more precious than gold: the birth certificate of Tadeusz Jadach, a Roman Catholic Pole. With that paper I might survive the war. I put my arms around the ample frame of my saving angel, and hugged her until she protested she couldn't breathe.

"I will be indebted to you as long as I live," I told her.

"You would have done the same for me."

"Just one more thing, my brother Leibush; I need a certificate for him. Could you possibly get one for him, too?"

"I'll talk to the Monsignor."

The next day I had a birth certificate for Leibush: a Ludwig [Ludwik] Kunefal [born in 1904, a Capuchin who died in 1936]. As she handed it over, she mentioned that the Monsignor wanted to meet Leibush and me. A few days later we went to her house to meet the Monsignor. When we saw him, neither of us knew what to do or say; we had never in our lives spoken to a priest, and we were overwhelmed by the man's appearance. He was tall and majestic-looking, with an inscrutable face. We stood there embarrassed, but he quickly realized our discomfort and extended his hand to us in greeting.

"I am Proboszcz [pastor] Dunajecki," he said in a warm, disarming voice. "I am pleased to meet both of you."

We shook his hand, after which our hostess invited us to share some food she had prepared for us. Soon we were immersed in lively conversation.

"I would like to suggest something," Father Dunajecki said after we had been chatting a while. "You, Tadeusz, you speak Polish like a Pole. But Leibush's Polish is a dead giveaway. I would suggest that Leibush not use the certificate that I have made available to him. You don't have to decide now, but think about it."

We told him we would reconsider. As it turned out, we realized that the Monsignor was correct; we never used that certificate.

With Leibush in the other room talking to Kotulova, the Monsignor and I began to talk. The priest grew pensive.

"You know, Tadeusz" he said, "I have been a priest here in Kolbuszowa for nearly twenty years, and I have never gotten to know a single Jew."⁴⁵ I have never had any dealings with any Jewish organizations, and I have never had the slightest idea what was going on in the Jewish community. I have never even met your rabbi. Now, in view of what's happened to the Jews here, I deeply regret not having made the effort to know your people better. What's most upsetting to me is the thought that I could have saved scores of Jewish children by placing them among my parishioners; it would have been an easy thing to do. But no one said anything to me, and I myself have been remiss for neglecting what was going on under my very nose. I can't tell you how sorry I am."

I could tell he was really sincere. I didn't know how to respond. He was blaming himself, but who really was to blame? As we were about to leave, he shook our hands and wished us luck. Then he made the sign of the cross over us and bade us

⁴⁵ Earlier in *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland*, at p.244, Salsitz stated that his father, a merchant in Kolbuszowa, supplied Catholic churches in the area with candles and other items used in various church ceremonies.

goodbye.

Rev. Dominik Litwiński, the pastor of Ostrowy Tuszowskie near Kolbuszowa, provided false documents to a Jew, thus enabling him to pass as a Pole. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, p.394.)

In the summer of 1941, after the Germans occupied the town of Lwow [Lwów], Samuel Blasenstein left Lwow and returned to Tuchow [Tuchów], his hometown, in the Cracow district, where he discovered, to his dismay, that all the Jews had been deported. Not knowing what to do, Blasenstein turned to Genowefa Koziol [Koziol], a former school friend of his, who, with the help of the local priest [Rev. Dominik Litwiński from Tuchów⁴⁶], provided him with a birth certificate in the name of a Catholic who had passed away. Equipped with this certificate, Blasenstein moved to the village of Dobieslawice [Dobiesławice], in the Kielce district, where no one knew him. After renting a room from a Polish family, Blasenstein found work as a secretary in the village council. Blasenstein stayed in the village until January 1945, when the area was liberated.

In 1940, Rev. Eugeniusz Okoń of Radomyśl nad Sanem, near Stalowa Wola, started up a local committee to assist Jews consisting of nine members of the community, three of them priests: himself, the local pastor Rev. Canon Feliks Chudy, and Rev. Janusz Geneja. Rev. Okoń came to the assistance of a number of Jews deported from nearby villages. In particular, he cared for the elderly Dr. Reich from Rozwadów and his 75-year-old sister, who eventually committed suicide in despair. Rev. Okoń also provided false baptismal certificates and identities to the family of American author Jerzy Kosiński, consisting of Jerzy (then a young boy), his father Moişe (Mieczysław) Lewinkopf, his mother, and an adopted brother. He brought the Lewinkopf family, now the Kosińskis, from Sandomierz to the village of Dąbrowa Rzeczycka, where they survived the war posing as Catholics, despite the fact that the villagers were aware that they were Jews. Local villagers assisted other Jews as well. The parish priest, Rev. Tadeusz Sebastyański, in the nearby village of Wola Rzeczycka, was aware of this ruse and assisted the Lewinkopf family in maintaining it. Even though he had never converted, Jerzy was allowed to make his communion and served as an altar boy. Rev. Okoń continued to visit the Lewinkopfs until he too had to hide from the Gestapo. He urged his parishioners not to turn Jews in, as decreed by the Germans under penalty of death. Jerzy Kosiński passed off his scurrilous novel *The Painted Bird* as autobiographical for many years, until it was exposed as a hoax.⁴⁷

Karolina Jus (née Frist) and her Gentile husband Andrzej Jus described the assistance they received from Eugeniusz Baziak, auxiliary bishop of Lwów, and various priests in southeastern Poland, in their published memoirs, *Our Journey in the Valley of Tears* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). (Tonia Desiato, "Faith and love guided couple through 'valley of tears'," *The Catholic Register*, Toronto, November 9, 1991.)

In June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union and soon after Lwów was also occupied by the Nazis. The young couple had planned to marry but the occupation made their marriage a dangerous one. ...

"My husband is a hero, he saved me," she said. "People don't understand that Poles were risking their lives; he was not obliged to marry me, nor help me.

"If a Pole was found giving a glass of water to a Jew his penalty was death and that would also be Andrzej's penalty for loving me." ...

It was in their deep despair that they turned to the Catholic Church for help.

Mrs. Jus and her family were very faithful to their religion and she never considered converting to Catholicism. She knew, however, that by following the Jewish religion she placed not only herself but her future husband and his family in danger.

The distraught young woman thought and prayed all night before making a decision ...

⁴⁶ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.266.

⁴⁷ See James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton/Penguin, 1996), pp.27–28, 30, 34–35; Joanna Siedlecka, *Czarny ptasior* (Gdańsk: Marabut; Warsaw: CIS, 1994), pp.43–49; Tadeusz Rek, *Ksiądz Eugeniusz Okoń 1881–1949* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1962), pp.182–83; Stanisław Myszka, *Radomyśl nad Sanem: Dzieje miasta i parafii* (Stalowa Wola: Muzeum Regionalne, 2003), pp.184–88.

The bishop of Lwów [Eugeniusz Baziak] began preparations not only for Mrs. Jus's baptism and marriage but also to conceal her Jewish identity. Changing her past was the only way to save her from death ...

It was no easy task and Mr. Jus risked his life in making all the necessary arrangements and countless trips to give his future wife a new birth certificate and a recorded baptism.

He did this with the help of Father Alojzy Palus. During the day, the young priest studied the archdiocesan records looking for the proper spot to place Mrs. Jus's birth and baptismal dates.

Painstakingly, the two men entered the new dates and names using thinned ink, to make the writing seem worn.

Her place and date of birth and the names of her parents were changed. Her date of baptism and her godparents were created and the couple's marriage date was entered as December 1938 before the outbreak of the war. ...

Mrs. Jus's family did not accept the offer of the local Catholic church and bishop to hide in a nearby convent. The offer was made with no strings attached, the Church was not looking for conversions, said Mr. Jus, just to give them refuge.

But her father [who was murdered by the Gestapo, along with Mrs. Jus's mother and only sister, on April 22, 1942] believed that the danger was overdramatized ...

The memoirs of Andrzej and Karolina Jus, which are dedicated to the memory of the "many ... Poles, among them many Catholic priests and nuns, who, risking their own lives, enabled Karolina, and others like her, to survive the times of contempt," detail the couple's many encounters with the Catholic clergy during the German occupation. (Ibid., pp.74, 78, 79, 80, 84, 90, 93, 106, 108, 131–32, 169.)

When Andrzej returned to Karolina ... he met [Sister] Filomena at Karolina's place ... She was dressed already in her traditional nun's habit with the medieval 'corner hat' of the Sisters of Charity. She brought food for Karolina and her family. Her convent was not far from Karolina's apartment. She intended from now on to pay frequent visits to Karolina, and had asked other nuns to be of assistance to them. Her organizing was already evident as nuns from the convent of Holy Sacrament had brought fruit and vegetables from their garden to Zosia [Karolina's sister]. They, at once, took a great liking to her and promised to bring fresh fruit and vegetables every day. Before Andrzej's second visit on this day, Filomena had a chat with all the members of Karolina's family, and she fully understood their sufferings. She came to comfort them and diminish their isolation. ...

... In his most hopeful dreams, he could not imagine how open-minded, understanding, and helpful the bishop [Eugeniusz Baziak] was. ...

The bishop discussed with his secretary the choice of the priest who would be the best person to baptize Karolina, marry the couple, and, after the wedding, have them under his constant vigilance to advise them what to do in the case of imminent danger. After a while, they agreed on one of the priests from the Bernardine Monastery. His name was Father Aloisius (Alojzy), and the secretary promised to arrange an appointment with him for the couple next day at 10.00 a.m. in the office of the Bernardine Monastery in Lwów.

The bishop added: 'Father Alojzy will take care of all the documents that will be needed. He is a very courageous and shrewd person. In the fight against Evil we have to use sophisticated methods and act quickly to save decent people. He knows how to fight and what methods are appropriate. He is under my jurisdiction, and I will personally watch over your situation and always be of assistance.' ...

There was still the matter of protection for Karolina's family. ... The bishop [Eugeniusz Baziak] thought for a while, and said: 'Tell them that my advice is to hide all three of them: the father in one of our monasteries, the mother and Karolina's sister in a convent with nuns. The sooner, the better. Any day something might happen to them. ... They will be protected by all the means available to the church. Of course, our means are not unlimited, and our greatest concern is that we cannot help all people who need protection. Our help is unfortunately a drop in the big ocean of human needs. This help must be kept in the strictest secrecy. One false step and everybody might be lost.'

He paused and then continued: 'Do not forget to tell Karolina's parents that we do not expect them to convert. Nor will we exercise any pressure in this direction. Although the mission of the church is to expand the Catholic faith, above all our mission is to help, in Jesus's name, any needy human being. As I just told you, our greatest concern is that we can do it only for a limited number of people who, in this country, are in grave danger.'

At the end of the conversation, the bishop added: 'We consider the Nazis' anti-Semitism as racism and crime. The German nation was educated to feel superior to all the nations in the world. In general, any anti-Semitism, not only theirs, is considered by us to be against the teaching of Jesus.' His voice was very sad now: 'Unfortunately, some of our priests before the war preached in a way that was not always consistent with the conception of love for all human beings, whatever their nationality and religion might be, not in a way that Jesus taught us.' ...

Then, [Father Alojzy] explained to them that the certificates of baptism and marriage had to be written on old forms, that of baptism on a form used in or around the time of Karolina's birth, the certificate of marriage on a form used before

the Second World War. In the Lwów monastery [of the Bernardines], they had neither form. He knew that they still had the marriage forms in the village parish about 20 kilometres from Lwów. Andrzej would have to go there with a message from Father Alojzy, and bring the forms to him.

It was much more complicated to get the form for baptism. Each baptism was entered in the parochial books of baptism. In addition, at the end of the calendar year, the parson sent a register of all baptisms in his parish to the archdiocese, where each baptism was entered in the archdiocesan books. Both the parochial and the archdiocesan offices were, at the same time, offices of the civil state, providing data on the population to state registers. Therefore, even with the access to the archdiocesan books, it was dangerous to enter Karolina's name into them because it could be easily discovered that her baptism had not been registered in the parochial books. To avoid this danger, it was necessary to find a church in which the parochial books of the period close to her birth had been destroyed, burnt during the First World War, between the two wars, or at the beginning of the Second World War. ...

After telling the bishop how grateful Karolina's family was for his generous offer, Ludwik [Andrzej's father] asked for a short delay before giving a definite answer. After a lapse of two weeks, he went to the diocese with a negative answer, carrying the message of immense gratitude of Karolina's family and trying to explain the attitude of Juliusz [Karolina's father]. The bishop was sad, but not surprised: 'Unfortunately it is not the first time that we have seen such an attitude. We will pray for them with the hope that they will accept our offer and that when this happens it will not be too late. Sometimes just one hour, one minute, means life or death. As long as there exists such a possibility, our doors stay open for them.' ...

The parson [of a small village close to Glinna Nawaria, about 20 kilometres from Lwów] welcomed him [Andrzej] warmly when he mentioned that he had been sent by Father Alojzy. The parson was in his seventies but still in good shape and agile. He handed Andrzej baptism and marriage forms printed before the outbreak of war in 1939. He did not ask any questions, but, as he passed to Andrzej a bunch of forms, mentioned: 'Father Alojzy might need more. God bless you, young man. Take care when travelling.' ...

Juliusz and his family had the same problems [with food and heating materials]. Great help was given to them by [Sister] Filomena. She became their frequent guest, always bringing vegetables and fruit from the convent garden. Some other nuns, from the nearby Convent of Sisters of the Holy Sacrament, were also bringing food from their garden. Andrzej never learned who had told them about Juliusz's family, whether it was Filomena or Father Alojzy. ...

... They discussed with him [Juliusz] many times the proposal of Bishop Baziak. Ludwik went again to see Juliusz and told him that the proposal was still valid. But Juliusz did not revise his former decision ...

They [Andrzej and Karolina] went to see Father Alojzy before their departure. He was in a very depressed state, having been seriously affected by stories of Nazi atrocities. They discussed with him many problems, and they saw how open-minded this priest was. They discussed with him the problem of informers, those who betrayed because of their profound anti-Semitism. Father Alojzy blamed the situation not only on the Germans. 'We have to admit,' he said, 'that we have bred our own kind of anti-Semitism in Poland a long time before the war. It was advocated by our own pre-war government—taught by some teachers in the schools and universities, by some physicians in the hospitals, by some lawyers in the courts, by some industrialists in factories, merchants in shops, and, we have to confess, by some of our priests in offering public or private advice, even in the church. This was not what Jesus taught us to do. We need a better society after the war. We have to recognize what mistakes we made and never repeat them again. Our true Polish patriotism has nothing in common with hatred of other nations. Our Catholic religion has nothing to do with the hatred of other religions. The free will given by God means a good will, full of love for other human beings, whatever their religion, whatever their race, colour of skin or social class. Our God does not want false patriots whose principal program is to hate people of other religions or other nations. For the actions of some informers, we have to take partial responsibility. It is our sin that we have not fought hard enough against the hatred in human hearts.' He appeared to them to be inspired by God. He blessed them and promised to be in contact: 'Do not forget to notify me if you feel in danger. Remember that I am praying for you and I will act for you in any capacity that could be helpful.' ...

... Andrzej went to see Father Alojzy in the monastery. The terrible story of Karolina's family was an awful shock for him. He could not conceal his tears. He knelt and prayed for a long while. Then he told Andrzej about the terrible events that were taking place in the ghetto of Lwów. ...

Andrzej then went to the convent of Filomena. She was terribly moved by the story of the tragedy in Orelec.

On the way home from a village parish located about 150 kilometres distant from Lwów, Andrzej witnessed on the train in which he was travelling a betrayal of a Jewish man by a young woman. (Ibid., pp.95–96.)

After a short time the train stopped in a small railway station. The [German] policeman kicked the already unconscious old man out of the train and shot him.

There was silence, full of fear and terror, in the train. Even the informer did not say a word. After a while, when the train

began to move, a peasant in the corridor between Andrzej and the informer asked: 'Why did you do this? How could you be so cruel?' 'Shut up,' she shrieked. 'I will ask the policeman to check you. Perhaps you are also a disguised Jew.' The peasant did not say a word and moved towards the end of the corridor. The train was moving slowly, leaving on the platform the body of the massacred man.

The informer returned to her compartment. Opposite her sat a young priest. After a while, he said: 'God will never forgive you. You, and not the policeman, you yourself killed this innocent, poor man. Even when, after confession, some priests might absolve you and forgive on this earth, I can assure you that God has condemned you already for ever. You will suffer for ever, because you are not a human being. You are an Evil. For Evil there is only one place—hell.'

The young woman started at once to cry. The priest returned to his breviary.

Lala Fishman (née Klara Weintraub) recalled the assistance that she and her Jewish friend Mila received from their Polish friends in Lwów when they decided that they would attempt to pass as Christians. They needed to become acquainted with Catholic prayers and rituals and secure birth certificates, which were furnished by an unidentified priest. (Lala Fishman and Steven Weingartner, *Lala's Story: A Memoir of the Holocaust* [Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997], pp.173–75.)

It was time to leave Lvov [Lwów]. ... Mila also felt as I did. When I broached the idea of leaving to her, she enthusiastically endorsed it. The success of the plan hinged on fulfilling two requirements obtaining "Aryan papers," counterfeit documents that identified us as Poles; and learning how to pass ourselves off as Polish Catholics. We straightaway embarked upon a crash course in Catholic prayer and ritual. Our instructors were sympathetic Gentiles, boys and girls around my age. Several of them had been friends of Fima [her brother]; now they were my friends too. Occasionally, they dropped by the apartment to drink tea and talk about the war and finally to help transform us into believable if not believing Catholics.

... Our friends taught us how to genuflect and make the sign of the cross with a convincing display of piety. They provided us with copies of the catechism, and we memorized all the material therein. They also gave us silver crucifixes to wear on chains around our necks, just like the ones every Gentile in Poland seemed to wear. I secretly resolved, however, that although I would attend mass and kneel and appear to pray like a Catholic, I would not take Holy Communion, I would go through all the motions of being a Catholic save this one; and when I prayed, I would make up my own prayer, silently asking God for his aid and protection. I meant no disrespect to the Catholic Church and Christians by these actions. Rather, I felt that it would be both sacrilegious [sic] and blasphemous for me to do otherwise. I believed that for a Jew to willingly accept what Catholics believed was literally the body and blood of Christ would be a sin, an insult both to my Jewish heritage and to the Christians who were doing so much—and placing themselves in such danger—on my behalf.

At any rate, Mila and I engaged in our Christian studies with the diligence of nuns preparing to take their vows, and I daresay that before long we could have gone into any church in Poland and played the role of devout Catholics without arousing any suspicions whatsoever among the genuine Christians. Sadly, the same could not be said for my mother and sister. Rysia was just nine years old, and therefore too young to learn Catholic rites and prayers, much less comprehend the urgent necessity for doing so. And my mother, devastated by grief, had undergone what amounted to a nervous breakdown and was incapable of the intense effort that even a false conversion to Catholicism demanded from her.

Nevertheless, we pressed forward with the scheme. Getting Aryan papers would have to be our next step. But how? This problem was solved when some of Fima's friends brought a Catholic boy named Staszek to the apartment for one of our evening get-togethers. Staszek had been told about our plans and wanted to help. He mentioned that he could get four blank birth certificates (metrycas [metryka]) from his parish priest. ...

Staszek got us the birth certificates. ... We filled out the certificates with false names but with our actual birthdays. I decided that my name would be Urszula Krzyzanowska [Krzyżanowska]. A very Christian name. My mother, Mila, and Rysia each took a different name. We did not want to appear in any way related—an important consideration if one of us was arrested. At the bottom of each document was a blank line where the parish priest was supposed to sign his name. I thought up a likely name for the priest and then, wielding my pen with a flourish, signed it on all the documents in bold, sweeping letters.

Rev. Kazimierz Romaszkan, a Pole of the Roman Catholic Armenian rite, and another unidentified priest from Lwów are mentioned as rescuers in testimonies found at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. (Eliyahu Yones, *Smoke in the Sand: The Jews of Lvov in the War Years 1939–1944* [Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2004], p.252.

[Rev.] Romashkian [Romaszkan] ... concealed the fifteen-year-old daughter of Bertha Kahana and treated her devotedly

as he did his niece, Krystyna, a fifteen-year-old in poor health. Additional Poles [among them Rev. Bronisław Jakubowski of Ryków near Złoczów⁴⁸] and Ukrainians came to Kahana's assistance; they include the Litwak and Brodziński families, who furnished her with "Aryan" papers.

An anonymous priest assisted Zyla Menkes-Post, who had fled from the Janowska camp with an infant in her arms. Poles helped her obtain "Aryan" papers with which she could escape from Lvov [Lwów].

Irena Wilder (later Krystyna Winecka or Christine Winecki), a young girl from Stanisławów (born in 1928), took refuge with her aunt in Lwów. Her aunt approached a Catholic priest, Rev. Józef Czapran, the vicar of St. Anthony's Parish, who provided the child with a false birth certificate. She was taught Catholic prayers by a nun to assist her in passing as a Pole. These lessons proved to be invaluable when Irena Wilder was later apprehended and interrogated in Warsaw. (Christine Winecki, *The Girl in the Check Coat: Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland and a New Life in Australia* [London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007], pp.61–62.)

When the train slowly arrived at the railway station in Lwow [Lwów] I was 130 kilometres from home ...

By midnight I found myself in the caring arms of Aunt Lucja [Lucja]. ... At the sight of me she started to cry, and before long I too burst into tears. I was not aware at the time that Jews were also being killed in Lwow. ...

The Jews of Lwow were prepared for the worst. They knew their days were numbered and that those who could still save themselves had no time to lose. The following day Aunt Lucja took me to St Anthony's Church in the suburb of Lyczakow [Łyczaków], where the local vicar, Father Czapran, issued me with a birth certificate from the parish registry of births, marriages and deaths for the year 1930. thus disappeared Irena Wilder, born in Stanislawow [Stanisławów], daughter of Oscar and Janina, of Jewish denomination, her place taken by Maria Wilska, female, aged 11, daughter of Katarzyna (father unknown), of Roman Catholic faith.

The same day Aunt Lucja placed me in the care of Uncle Ludwik and his wife Aunt Stefa who both lived in Grandmother Amalia's house in Mala [Mała] Street. Every morning now I would go to church, where the good Sister Benedykta taught me the words of the Catholic prayers. In the quiet, semi-dark atmosphere of the church permeated with the smell of incense, I felt safe there and I could cry uninterrupted.

Several days later, at the beginning of January 1942, I fled from Lwow together with Uncle Ludwik, Aunt Stefa and cousin Zbyszek, leaving Stanislawow even farther behind ...

Other Polish accounts confirm the cooperation of the priests of St. Anthony's Church in Lwów in rescuing Jewish children. (Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, p.140.)

The father of Tadeusz Jaworski (the going by the name of Vogel), who was the director of the electrical works in Lwów, obtained birth and baptismal certificates for the family in the name of Jaworski from a parish priest outside the city, without any compensation. These documents helped the Vogel family survive the war passing as Christian Poles. (Michał Maryniarczyk, "Ja cię przechowam! Konspekt scenariusza filmu dokumentalnego," *punkt.ca*, no. 5–6 (2006), pp.10–11.)

The Sacré-Coeur Sisters sheltered a number of Jews in their convent in Lwów. Among them were the two sisters and brother-in-law of Herman Flajszer (passing as Henryk Repa). (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, p.838.)

During the war, Janina Urbaniak-Nowicka lived in Warsaw. In February 1943, she married Henryk Repa. In May 1943, the Germans arrested Henryk in the street [after he was betrayed by a Jew he knew from Lwów who worked with the Gestapo in Warsaw] and brought him home. It was only then that Janina realized that her husband was Jewish and that his real name was actually Herman Flajszer. However, using her knowledge of German, and by paying a hefty ransom, she was able to convince the Gestapo agent to leave Henryk at home. The following day she brought her husband over to her family; however, she did not reveal Henryk's true origin. Then she rented an apartment in Radosc [Radość], near Warsaw, and told the owners of the building that her husband was suffering from tuberculosis and that the local climate was not good for him. She had to commute to her office in Warsaw. In September 1943, at her husband's request, she went to Lwow to fetch Henryk's mother, Salomea Flajszer-Jablonska [she passed as Maria Jabłońska], as well as Henryk's niece, Anna Fil-Wroblewska [she went as Wróblewska] (then aged four), whose parents had been murdered in the Lwow

⁴⁸ Account of Berta Kahane, Yad Vashem archives, no. 03/2541.

ghetto. All these fugitives were sheltered in Janina's Warsaw apartment. [At the beginning of 1944 Janina again went to Lwów to bring the remainder of Henryk's family to Warsaw, namely two sisters and a brother-in-law. However, they refused to leave their hiding place in the convent of the Sacré-Coeur Sisters.⁴⁹] In June 1944, she brought them over for "summer vacation" to Golkowo [Golków], near Piaseczna [Piaseczno]. There, her mother-in-law was represented as her mother while Anna was passed off as Janina's daughter. A few days prior to the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, Janina took Henryk to Warsaw, since in Radosc the Germans were recruiting men to dig trenches. During the uprising, their house was bombed and both of them found themselves in Pruszkow [Pruszków] camp. Henryk escaped from a transport to Germany and went to his mother in Golkowo; he then found Janina in Mogielnica. After the liberation of Mogielnica in January 1945, Henryk and Janina separated ...

Felicja Kohn, a native of Lwów, recalled the assistance provided to Jews, among them her own mother, by Sister Maria Homme of the Sacré-Coeur order in Lwów. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, p.262.)

My mathematics teacher, godmother and great friend of mine, a Sacré-Coeur nun, Maria Homme, meeting my mother wearing an arm band in the street, took her by the arm and walked by her side down the street—a very dangerous thing to do. A friend of mine had been staying with the same Sister Homme for some time.

Anita Lanner, another resident of Lwów, was six years old when the war broke out. Her parents were divorced. She survived with the help of a number of Poles, including a priest and nuns. (Pat Launer, "The Girl With the Pink Glasses: Survivor Anita Lanner Found Healing Through Hatha," *San Diego Jewish Journal*, August 2007.)

During the German Occupation, they were relocated to the Ghetto, along with tens of thousands of others. "I'd sneak in from where I was hiding to visit my father, who was in another area. I knew if they would catch me, it would be the end." When she was 8 years old, her father decided to move. He ended up in the Warsaw Ghetto and participated in the famous Uprising, where he lost his life.

Meanwhile, back in Lvov [Lwów], a friend of her father's, an unmarried Polish physician, smuggled Anita out of the Ghetto and took her in as his out-of-wedlock daughter.

"He was a very nice, good man. His mother took care of me. There were others hiding there, and one day, the Gestapo came and led us all out into the street, under guns. Suddenly, I heard this voice, I don't know where it came from, and it said, 'Run, now!' I hesitated, because I didn't know where to go. Then I felt a push on my shoulder and I ran. It was some kind of miracle. Maybe it was the survival voice. Maybe it was the 'pink glasses.' I always believed I would live.

"I didn't know where to run. So I went back to the apartment they took me from. The doctor's mother took me to my mother, who was hiding with a Polish woman. I was placed with another family. Every time they had visitors, they'd hide me in a little hope-chest, with holes to breathe.

"With them, I had to go to church. The priest baptized me and prepared me for my first communion. He took care of me; maybe he knew I was Jewish. He found a place for me in a Polish orphanage. ...

"I was at the orphanage for about a year. Then, in 1944, when the Russians started moving west, the Germans told the orphanage to repatriate. So we went to Krakow [Kraków], where we were dumped in a nun's cloister. The nuns didn't have enough money to support us, so they gave us up for adoption. A wealthy couple adopted me. They had a lot of land, stables and orchards. I loved the country life. Then the Germans and Russians came and took everything. So I was given back—this time to a communist/government orphanage.

Assistance of various kinds came from priests throughout Poland. The following testimonies are recorded in Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Żegota*, at pages 116, 120, 137, and 138.

Pesa Cimerman (Achtman): *Mrs. Cimerman's sister, who was hidden at the Kopers' [in the Warsaw suburb of Praga], had once been rescued by a priest, Oskar Wiśniewski, when she was discovered in a hiding place, dirty and ragged. It was obvious she was Jewish, but Wiśniewski was called upon to identify her. He insisted she was a parishioner and took her home until another place could be found.*

Zofia Berczyńska: *Ilonka Freedman, [then a five-year-old girl with very Semitic features who was entrusted to Wacław Berczyński by a Jewish co-worker at the German factory in Częstochowa in which they worked], soon became [a niece by the name of] Irena Gawrońska, after a local priest gave her an authentic birth certificate of a deceased child.*

⁴⁹ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.380.

Richard Kalinowicz, [a captain in the Polish army when the war began, Kalinowicz—of Jewish origin—became a Home Army unit commander in the Sambor region]: *He recalled that there was a prisoner in the Sambor jail who worked as a pośmięciuch, a cleaning man. He was a priest who had been arrested for helping Jews. On a whim, the Gestapo officer in charge did not have him shot but kept him there as a janitor. It seems he was amused by his praying, his “conversations with God” as he called them. This priest/janitor used to conceal food in his cleaning equipment and give it to the Jewish prisoners. ...*

Procuring documents was a steady part of the unit’s work. Birth certificates were obtained regularly from a Father [Antoni] Żołnierczyk in Sambor, though Kalinowicz did not hesitate to forge some himself. He still had the official rubber stamp from St. Elizabeth Parish in Lwów. ...

The Dipel family of Sambor ran one of the largest shelters [for Jews]. The mother and her brother, Father Stojakowski, were famous for their help. The three sons, Tadeusz, Julian and Juliusz, all belonged to Kalinowicz’s unit and to Żegota.

Stanisław Karliński (*nom de guerre* “Burza”), a Home Army unit commander in the Piotrków Trybunalski region, oversaw the preparation of hundreds of false identity documents by a special cell in his underground organization. Involved in this operation were trusted workers in the county office as well as Catholic parishes that issued false birth certificates which were required to obtain or produce *Kennkarte* (German identity documents). Some of those priests, identified fifty years later, were: Rev. Marian Skoczewski (“Ksawery”), Rev. Patora from Kamieńsk, Rev. Jan Golonka and Rev. Stanisław Musiał from Ręczno, Monsignor Secomski from Bąkowa Góra, Rev. E. Gązka from Lubień, priests from the parishes of Sulejów, Paradyż, Żarnów, Kazimierzów, Przedbórz, and Piotrków, and the Bernardine Fathers.⁵⁰

The risks involved in such exploits were substantial. Rev. Jan Widłak, the pastor of Miechów and a Home Army chaplain, worked closely with an underground cell of the Home Army that “legalized” documents for endangered persons. With his permission, Franciszek Grzebieluch, the church organist, issued hundreds of baptismal and birth certificates which were then used to obtain false German identity documents (*Kennkarte*), with the assistance of Marian Urbański, a county clerk, who fabricated the documents, and Bronisław Falencki, who distributed them. More than a dozen Jews were provided with such documents. One of them, Maria Bochner from Miechów, was arrested in Przemyśl on March 12, 1943, and interrogated about the source of her false documents. As a result, Falencki was promptly arrested and sent to Auschwitz. He was tortured cruelly (his genitals were crushed with pliers) in order to extract from him the names of his accomplices. Some of them were apprehended by the Germans and executed. The church organist went into hiding for the duration of the war. Rev. Jan Widłak also placed Jewish children in the county orphanage run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and in private homes of his parishioners. In 1942, he received a Jewish couple from Wieluń by the name of Walter, who had converted to Catholicism. Previously, the Walters had been sheltered by Rev. Szczepan Sobalkowski, vice-rector of the Higher Seminary in Kielce, who served as chaplain of the Kielce District of the National Armed Forces. Rev. Sobalkowski took the Walters under his roof even though he resided next door to the German gendarmerie. He continued to provide assistance to them (food and the like) when they moved to Miechów where they survived the war passing as Poles. Rev. Sobalkowski’s exploits came to light after he was arrested by the Communist security police in 1948. The Walters came forward in his defence during his show trial, and Rev. Sobalkowski drew a relatively lenient sentence of seven years. After his release from prison, he was appointed the auxiliary bishop of Kielce.⁵¹

Rev. Mieczysław Połoska, the pastor of Kielce-Białogonie, provided false baptismal and birth certificates to Jews and assisted them materially. After the war, the Communist authorities arrested Rev. Połoska, together with Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek and several other priests from Kielce, on trumped up politically motivated charges. A Jewish woman named Rachela Kłasztorna came forward in his defence during his show trial, testifying to the

⁵⁰ Statement of Stanisław Burza-Karliński dated February 9, 1993.

⁵¹ Marek J. Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust: Polish-Jewish Conflict in the Wake of World War II* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs; New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p.195; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., pp.858–59; Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, Entry 317; Daniel Wojciechowski, “Ksiądz biskup Szczepan Sobalkowski (1901–1958)—charyzmatyczny kaznodzieja i wychowawca młodzieży,” *Nasz Dziennik*, July 28–29, 2007; Daniel Wojciechowski, “Zasłużony w ratowaniu Żydów skazanych na zagładę: Ksiądz infułat Jan Widłak (1892–1974),” *Nasz Dziennik*, September 27–28, 2008.

assistance he provided to Jews and righteous character.⁵²

Despite his reputation of being an anti-Semite, Rev. Marian Pirożyński was active in rescuing Jews—a fact confirmed by Jewish witnesses who came forward in his defence at an anti-clerical show trial in the mid-1950s. While residing in Mościska from November 1942 to May 1943, Rev. Pirożyński assisted in the escape of Jews from the ghetto, among them Zofia Katz, the daughter of a dentist, to whom he provided false documents. The Redemptorist monastery in Mościska sheltered a number of Jews. Rev. Pirożyński cared for a 2-year-old girl who was thrown out of a tram by her mother in Warsaw and placed her with Leokadia and Maria Wochelski. He found safe houses for Jewish children in Skierniewice. Rev. Pirożyński fell under suspicion and had to change his place of residence and hide from the Germans several times.⁵³

Alicja Kleinberg, the wife of a dentist from Rabka, and her young daughters Ewa and Hanka (Anna), took refuge in the countryside near Biecz where they passed as Poles. In August 1942, a few days before the liquidation of the local ghetto, Mrs. Kleinberg turned to her friend Marian Sikorski, headmaster of the elementary school in the village of Szerzyny, who helped the Kleinbergs escape from the ghetto. After sheltering them for a few months and obtaining Aryan papers for them in the name of Janowski, the Kleinbergs moved to a house in a nearby village which Sikorski had rented for them. He continued to look after the Kleinbergs until their liberation in January 1945. Their cover depended on the support of various persons including a village priest. (Accounts of Ewa Janowska-Boisse, née Kleinberg and Anna Janowska-Ciońcka, née Kleinberg, “Father Never Returned from Exile,” in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, volume 2, pp.100–102.)

Not wanting to endanger the Sikorskis, Mother decided to move to the nearby village of Święcany. We moved in with a family of farmers named Szynal. Mama told the farmers that she was an officer's wife and that this was the reason why it was safer for her to live with the children in the countryside. We had instructions from Mama to bite our lips, because their natural fullness could give away our origins. Nonetheless, our black hair, which stayed curly despite constant brushing, still betrayed us. ...

The winters were cold and harsh back then. Toward the end of the war we didn't go out of the house, because we had no warm clothes or shoes. Luckily, there were various people who helped Mama in all this misery. In order to create the appearance that we did have a family, that we were not in hiding, Lola, who herself was hiding on Aryan papers, would come to visit us. Endangering her own life, she brought us money from Aunt Zosia, who by then was already in the Kraków ghetto. A priest from a nearby parish also visited us, bringing us food from time to time. I remember that his name was Józef Wilk. Maria Wnęk, a relative of Mr. Sikorski's, who was a teacher, would come through heavy snow to visit us. She walked on foot more than a dozen kilometres to instruct us in catechism and how to behave in church. ...

There were days when Mama would tell us to hide in the nearby woods, because she would get a tip that German gendarmes were coming into the village. At such times we were dying of fear, wondering whether we would still find Mama alive when we returned.

In this village, Mama met a man from Sieradz who had escaped from a train that was taking him to forced labor in Germany. His name was Władysław Nogala, an exceptionally good-hearted and noble man. He helped us, bringing us onions so that “the children wouldn't get scurvy.” He also gave us chickens and whatever else he could obtain. Władysław Nogala was respected in the village and was involved with the partisans who were active in our area.

One day the village administrator, knowing that Władysław was friendly with Mama, told him that “people are talking that Mrs. Janowska is a Jew, and I will have to report this to the police.” [Village administrators were required to report the presence of Jews under penalty of death.—Ed.] Władysław Nogala replied, “If you do, your head will lie in this dunghill.” After this encounter the administrator was silent.

A priest from Gorzkowice near Radomsko who was involved in the underground, probably Rev. Jan Łabęda, the local pastor, came to the assistance of two Jews, Vovtche Raichbard and Shmuel Friedman, and provided them

⁵² Daniel Wojciechowski, “Dwukrotny więzień Mokotowa: Ks. Mieczysław Połoska (1896–1981),” *Nasz Dziennik*, January 5–6, 2008.

⁵³ Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.1022; ŻR 1, 717; *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich 1918–1981* (Warsaw: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1983), vol. 6, pp.684–85; Ryszard Bender, “Piorzyński Marian,” in *Encyklopedia “Białych Plam”* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne), vol. 14 (2004), pp.150–53; Elżbieta Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), pp.78–79.

with false identity documents. The following testimony is from a Jewish survivor from Łask. (Z. Ben-Moshe, "Respect for Jew-Savers," in Z. Tzurnamal, ed., *Łask: Sefer zikaron (Łask: Izcór-Book)* [Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Łask in Israel, 1968], pp.124–26.)

We must remind [i.e., be mindful of] all those people, not Jews, who gave their hand to save many of our town when they escaped from the Nazi murderers. Also in Łask [Łask] there were good Christians who suffered seeing how the Jews of their town suffered. In the hard days of distress and banishment, they endangered themselves by hiding Jews and giving them from their bread. Gabrionchik and his wife from Łask; he gave documents and food [to] two escapers: Vovtche Raichbard and Shmuel Friedman. A Christian woman emerged as a saver-angel, when they had to pass the boundary of the German protectorate [i.e., into the Generalgouvernement]. Heinzl, Skibinski [Skibiński] 's son-in-law, guided the two to the Polish secret organization in order to receive German documents, and hid them in his home some days. He gave them the address of Zvi Michalovitz in Grushkovitza [Gorzkowice], and did so that they would be accepted by a priest, who was the chief of the secret organization in this place. This priest, whose name is unknown, accepted them with bright face, and immediately gave them the necessary documents. The young Christian, who knew they were Jews, hid them in her parents' house, telling them these two are Polish officers from Varsha [Warsaw], who escaped from the Gestapo.

The Polish policeman Krakowski, who saved Zvi Michalovitz from the death-waggon [sic], just in the last minute, and brought him to a refuge place. The family Banashchik, who hid him in the threshing-floor, and gave him all he needed for lessons he gave their children in the nights. ... The villagers who disperse pieces of bread and turnip on the ways, for the caravans of hungry people, who went under the watching of the S.S. The villagers who gave their shoes to [the] barefooted and weak. How can we forget the villagers who refused to give food [to] the watchers of the women-caravans who were transported from work-camp. Shraga Noiman tells about a Polish boy who worked as an electrician in Kolomna [?]. He offered to save the whole group of Jews that worked there, and to transfer them to a secure place near Varsha. This electrician and his fellows, who acted a period of time to save Jews, were caught at last by the Nazis.

We must remind a little of those sparks in order that our sons and daughters will know, that even in the darkness of extermination and killing, there were also cases of deeds of kindness. I cannot tell everything, only a little.

Zofia Reichman, who was born in Lwów in January 1941, describes how her mother was able to obtain, with the assistance of a priest from the parish of Our Lady of the Snows (Maryi Panny Śnieżnej) in Lwów, documents which assisted them to survive under false identities as Poles in the outlying village of Zima Woda. (Sophia Richman, *A Wolf in the Attic: The Legacy of a Hidden Child of the Holocaust* [New York, London and Oxford: The Haworth Press, 2002], pp.15–16. The document is reproduced in the book between pages 106 and 107.)

My mother had a number of close gentile friends, among them Stasia Drabicka. The two were linked by music. Stasia played the cello, and, before the war, they frequently enjoyed playing duets. Stasia was a Catholic, and she was related to a priest. As a member of the clergy, Stasia's uncle was in a position to provide papers that could help my mother with her escape plan. Asking gentiles for this kind of help was a very risky business. There were severe reprisals for those helping Jews. ...

The plan for going into hiding had to be carefully implemented. Stasia's uncle provided the birth, baptismal, and marriage certificates of a deceased Catholic parishioner, Maria Oleszkiewicz, born in 1908. My mother's 1903 date of birth was close enough. It was arranged that I would be baptized as Zofia Oleszkiewicz. We had our new identities. Now we had to find a place to live where no one knew us. ... The outskirts of Lwów seemed a good choice as a hiding place because it would allow us to remain relatively close to my father. There was always a distant hope that he might be freed or find a way out of Janowska [camp].

The Dominican monastery in Lwów manufactured documents for Jews on a large scale. (Zygmunt Mazur, "Dominikanie lwowscy w podwójnej niewoli," *Gazeta*, Toronto, no. 144, 1991.)

Priests from the monastery were moved by the tragedy of the Jews, especially Father Sylwester Paluch and Father Anzelm Jezierski. Not heeding the danger that faced them they provided material assistance to Jewish families. Father Sylwester, with the assistance of a painter by the name of Rzepecki, fabricated some 500 certificates of baptism and distributed them to Jews. The Gestapo became aware of these activities and it was only by sheer luck that the priests escaped repercussions. Many Jews survived on these certificates and some of them attained high positions in postwar Poland. None of them, however, remembered about the humble priest from Lwów. Father Sylwester died in Warsaw on November 3, 1983. None of those rescued through his assistance attended his funeral. He was buried in the order's graveplot in Powązki Cemetery

in Warsaw.

Rev. Edward Tabackowski, pastor of Tłumacz, provided many Jews with false documents, among others to Berta Opoczyńska and Mina Bikels Rotenstreich. He also sheltered a Jewish student in his rectory and provided and other forms of assistance to Jews such as smuggling food into the ghetto and encouraging his parishioners to shelter Jews. Rev. Tabackowski did not heed the warning of his imminent arrest by the Gestapo. He was taken to the jail in Stanisławów where was tortured before being put to death on October 20, 1942. (Shlomo Blond, et al., eds., *Memorial Book of Tłumacz: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Community* [Tel Aviv: Tłumacz Societies in Israel and the U.S.A., 1976], pp.cxxviii–cxxix.) According to Mina Bikels Rotenstreich,

A few Jews escaped when the Polish physician, Dr. Zeno Hoffman, hid them in the hospital where he was working.

In 1942 the Gestapo arrested Dr. Hoffman and the Canon [Edward] Tabackowski, who risked his life by issuing baptism certificates to Jews so that they could escape to the Aryan side. We were given eight such certificates by Tabackowski, even though we had nothing to give him in return. The Polish pharmacist Shankowski [Szankowski] also helped the Jews as much as he could. Much of the valuables which Jews placed in his keeping were returned to them, although this was dangerous to do.

Dr. Solomon Altman of Złoczów obtained false birth and baptismal certificates for himself and his wife from a local priest. (I.M. Lask, ed., *The City of Zloczow* [Tel Aviv: Zloczower Relief Verband of America, 1967], columns 113, 115–16.)

There were many priests who provided Jews they knew with original birth certificates in the names of persons long dead.

...

I also know of a man, Kruth, who found refuge in the house of Rev. Dzieduszycki and embraced the Catholic faith together with his whole family. [The priest in question appears to be Rev. Paweł Dzieduszycki, a Jesuit from Lwów.—Ed.]

Dr. Altman was one of at least forty-two Jews from Złoczów and Jelechowice rescued by a number of Polish families in the village of Jelechowice,⁵⁴ which belonged to parish of Złoczów. Fourteen of them, including Samuel Tennenbaum, his wife, and their two children, were sheltered in various places on the property of Helena Skrzyszewska, a member of the Polish underground. The house was also occupied by a Polish teacher, Maria Koreniuk, and a Ukrainian handyman, Hryc Tyz, who later converted to Latin-rite Roman Catholicism and became known as Grzegorz. At one point Hryc became alarmed at the fact that Skrzyszewska had taken in yet another Jewish family, and out of fear and stress, rather than malice, voiced his displeasure.⁵⁵ A priest counselled him to continue to support the Jewish charges. The priest's intervention resulted in a dramatic change in Hryc's attitude. (Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir* [New York: Shengold, 1986], pp.252–53.)

⁵⁴ See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: Poland, Part 1, pp.311, 422, and vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, p.833; Lask, *The City of Zloczow*, columns 142–43; Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir*, pp.228–78.

⁵⁵ As Jewish testimonies disclose, some Jews were also hostile to the idea of accepting other Jews into their hiding places, as this would increase the risk of discovery, and Polish rescuers took in Jews over the protest of their existing Jewish charges. See, for example, the testimony of Braha Bergman and David Efrati in Elżbieta Isakiewicz, *Harmonica: Jews Relate How Poles Saved Them from the Holocaust* (Warsaw: Polska Agencja Informacyjna, 2001), pp.174, 219; Interview with Sheila Peretz Etons, April 30, 1999, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), pp.26 ff. (English section); Issur Wondolowicz, "Between the German Hammer and the Polish Anvil," in Shmuel Kalisher, ed., *Sokoly: B'maavak l'haim* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Sokoly Emigrés in Israel, 1975), pp.208 ff., translated as *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>>; Samuel Gruber, as told to Gertrude Hirschler, *I Chose Life* (New York: Shengold, 1978), p.74; Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp.157–58; Nelli Rotbart, *A Long Journey: A Holocaust Memoir and After: Poland, Soviet Union, Canada* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2002), pp.56–57; Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971), p.128; Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p.218; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.712; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: Poland, Part 1, p.83; Marcus David Leuchter, "Reflections on the Holocaust," *The Sarmatian Review* (Houston, Texas), vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000); Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), p.80.

Over several days, my wife began to notice that food was disappearing at twice the anticipated rate. Hela [Helena Skrzyszewka] at first denied any knowledge of it, but finally confessed to us that she had taken in another Jewish family, four people, who were sheltered in our former hiding place, the cellar under the barn. Their name as Parille; they had lived in Jelechowice before the war, had escaped the Germans and had been living in a hole in the ground in a nearby forest. Winter had made it impossible for them to try to survive there so one night, Mr. Parille came to Hela for help and she took them in.

They had nothing, so from then on we shared whatever we had with them. We never saw them. ...

A huge row ensued over this. Hryc, in broad daylight, ran into the yard and started to yell at the top of his lungs, ... "She gathered a bunch of Jews and then disappeared for days at a time." I grabbed a rusty revolver, which Hela had hidden under the bed in our room, and ran after Hryc. I managed to get him back into the house, he calmed down quickly. Next day he went to confession. When he came back, he kissed my wife's hand and apologized for his behavior of the previous day. We were both happy and worried. Now the priest, too, knew about our presence. ... People often ask what was the main factor that motivated our hosts. I believe that it was their deep faith.

St. Lazarus church in Kraków gained a reputation for providing Jews with false identity documents. Rev. Brunon Boguszewski also sought out hiding places for endangered Jewish children. His rescue efforts brought him recognition by Yad Vashem. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, p.105.)

Bruno [Brunon] Boguszewski, a priest, used his official position as birth registrar at Swietego Lazarza [Świętego Łazarza] (Saint Lazarus) Church, Cracow, to save Jewish children by issuing them Aryan birth certificates. Boguszewski's reputation as a savior of Jewish children spread far and wide. One woman whose child was saved thanks to Boguszewski was Anna Carter who, after escaping from the Cracow ghetto, obtained a birth certificate for her daughter, Alina, aged eight. A little while later, Boguszewski also provided four-year-old Zygmunt, Alina's brother, with an Aryan birth certificate. He gave Carter another five birth certificates issued in the names of Catholic children for distribution to those in need. The priest found a hiding place for little Alina in the home of acquaintances in Chrzanow [Chrzanów], where she stayed until the area was liberated in January 1945. Her brother, Zygmunt, was not so lucky—he was shot dead by the Germans after they were alerted by an informer. After the war, Alina was reunited with her mother, who had survived Auschwitz. Mother and daughter emigrated to the United States, where they kept up contact with Boguszewski. Boguszewski knew full well the fate that awaited him if caught, since his predecessor, who had also supplied Jews with false certificates, had been imprisoned by the Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz. His actions were dictated by purely selfless, humanitarian and religious principles.

Documents obtained from Catholic Church sources were plentiful, with virtually every parish in Warsaw participating in this rescue activity, assisted by the Polish underground. Simha Rotem, a member of the Jewish Fighting Organization, describes how he obtained his false identity documents. ("Kazik" Simcha Rotem, *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994], pp.60–61.)

You couldn't be on the Aryan side without identity documents. ... the Polish underground had helped me get a Kennkarte (the identity card issued by the Germans in the Generalgouvernement which replaced the Polish identity documents). I was sent to the office of a church in one of the Warsaw suburbs. I went to the clerk and requested a birth certificate (which was required in order to receive the Kennkarte). They had coached me in what to say. This was a document whose real owner, someone my age, was no longer alive. The clerk looked at me sharply and spat out: "Funny world—one person dies and another walks around and impersonates him." I didn't say anything. He asked my address, the names of my parents, and the other details of questionnaires everywhere in the world. I answered briefly and finally got the birth certificate.

From there I went to the registration office where Poles worked with Germans and Poles, and submitted a proper request for a Kennkarte. My fingerprints were taken like any other Polish citizen's. At the end of this process I had a Kennkarte in the name of Antoni Julian Ksiezopolski [Książopolski]—a common name among the Polish aristocracy. At the same time I got a forged Kennkarte from the Polish Underground in another name. I kept the document with the name Ksiezopolski with me, while the other one was kept at "home" in case of trouble. They also gave me an Arbeitskarte (proof of employment). [The final sentence is found in the Polish translation of this book, but omitted in the English version.—Ed.⁵⁶]

⁵⁶ See Simcha Rotem "Kazik", *Wspomnienia bojowca ŻOB* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993), pp.73–75.

Vladka Meed, a member of the Jewish underground living in “Aryan” Warsaw, was able to obtain a German identity document with the help of a Polish friend and the complicity of a priest who facilitated the “cover-up.” (Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, p.213.)

I managed to obtain a genuine Kennkarte from the German Municipal Bureau in the name of Stanisława Wonchalska [Stanisława Wąchalska], our faithful Gentile co-worker. Anna had arranged with her priest not to report her daughter's death, and assured me that if I would be detained as a Jewess, she would intercede on my behalf. At the same time, she told me the names of grandmothers, aunts and cousins. I was now a full-fledged Aryan with two generations of Gentile forebears.

In this manner a number of Jews acquired the names and birth certificates of deceased Poles, with which they obtained authentic Polish identification cards. Such documents afforded substantial protection, but they were not wholly dependable, for the Germans, if suspicious, could check documents against municipal and church records.

Leonora Rozen and her mother Sarah Charlap Muller, who survived the war passing as Christians in Warsaw, obtained false identity documents issued by priests via their contacts in the Polish underground. (Leonora Rozen, “Survival in Warsaw,” *The Ser-Charlap Family Newsletter* volume 10, no. 1, March 1999.)

When the “cleansing” of the Ghetto began, Mother and I were living in Warsaw under the cover of false identities. We had “good” false papers which were certificates of birth and christening, delivered by priests who were close to the Polish Underground network. They were issued by obliging civil servants in some other city in Poland and certified that the holders had been living in that place for many years. They were not easy to get and one needed time to have them made and delivered by the network. The underground organization also provided a “Kennkarte”, a sort of identity card printed as a real document and bearing authentic German seals. I still have two of those cards, my Mum's and My Aunt Rita's. So with these false papers I was known as Barbara Policzkowska and my mother was Anna Domanska [Domańska], born [née] Stolarczyk.

After leaving the ghetto in Warsaw Stefanie S. and her mother Dunka passed as Christians in Warsaw with the help of false documents they had obtained from a priest. For a time they lived with a relative of her father's family who had converted to Catholicism and lived openly with her Polish husband. (Yehudi Lindeman, ed., *Shards of Memory: Narratives of Holocaust Survival* [Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2007], pp.138–39.)

Shortly before her father's death, when Stefanie turned four, plans were made to get her out of the ghetto. Her mother bleached her already dark blond hair. She was tutored in Catholic prayers, and instructed that outside the ghetto she could “never talk about what goes on in the house [or] say the names of anybody,” or reveal information that might betray her Jewish identity, such as her grandfather having a beard. ...

The two of them remained together at the home of Adela, a relative from Stefanie's father's family. Adela was a Jewish woman who converted and married a Polish scientist. They lived in Żoliborz [Żoliborz], a suburb of Warsaw. Adela took very good care of Stefanie's mother, Dunka, who was confined to bed with a bleeding ulcer. When Dunka recovered she got a job as an operating room nurse even though she did not have nurse's training.

Stefanie and her mother had false documents that a priest had procured for them. These were the actual birth certificates of deceased people who were born at about the same time as Stefanie and her mother. As a result, they could not go by the same name. She remembers that her mother claimed Stefanie was her illegitimate child, named Maria. When Adela's eighteen-year-old daughter, Krycia, was caught working for the underground, Stefanie and her mother fled from Adela's home because they feared the Gestapo would search the house. ...

Upon returning to Warsaw, Stefanie hid in a villa with her mother, only three houses from Adela's home. The gentile woman who owned the villa was hiding seventeen illegal Jews (Jews without Christian papers). ...

Two secret hiding places were constructed in the house in order to conceal the seventeen Jews in the event of a search. One was a hole behind a water closet in the basement, which extended into a tunnel that went several houses down. The other was in a small bedroom on the second floor. There was a cabinet built into the wall with shelves that could be removed. From there, people could crawl into the eaves of the house.

Individual rescuers often turned to priests directly to obtain documents, or used intermediaries:

[1] Severin Kohn (now Gabriel), who passed as a Christian in Warsaw, obtained a birth certificate from a priest of the Church of the Holy Cross in Łódź, declaring him to be Władysław Gawroński. (Severin Gabriel, *In the*

Ruins of Warsaw Streets [Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2005], p.100, and the illustration between pp.96–97.) [2] The father of John K., who was the owner of an estate in Lubieńka, obtained Aryan papers for the whole family from Monsignor Aleksander Cisło, dean and pastor of Stryj, a good friend of the family. The family consisted of parents, John K. and his wife, and John's sister and her son. (Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, p.312.)

Jewish testimonies in the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, at Yale University Library, attest to priests providing false documents to Jews in various localities: Magnuszew near Warka (Henryk P. [Prajs] Holocaust Testimony [HVT–3171]); Rozwadów near Stalowa Wola (Pearl B. Holocaust Testimony [HVT–2876]); Mińsk Mazowiecki (Irit R. Holocaust Testimony [HVT–1805]; Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, pp.193–94); Mroczkowice near Rawa Mazowiecka (Emilia S. Holocaust Testimony [HVT–1907]); Lwów (Rita L. Holocaust Testimony [HVT–2256]); Stryj (Sabina G. Holocaust Testimony [HVT–2181]).

Rev. Stefan Ścibiorek, the assistant pastor of Osieck, issued a false birth certificate to Henryk (Froim Fiszel) Prajs from Góra Kalwaria near Warsaw, who received assistance from many villagers, often complete stranger. (Testimony of Henryk Prajs, January 2005, Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>>.)

On 25th February 1941 they deported the Jews from Góra [Góra] Kalwaria to the ghetto in Warsaw. My sister was already there, she hadn't come back to Góra Kalwaria with the outbreak of the war. Mom didn't even think of escaping, and me neither, I wanted to go to the ghetto with my family. The neighbors would come over and say, 'Listen, run away, go, you don't look like a Jew, maybe you'll make it.' I heard there were Jews in Magnuszew [town 25 km from Góra Kalwaria]—there was this sort of grapevine during the occupation—and that there are no deportations there. And so I basically ran away in the evening, after a talk with Mom. I don't know what happened to my family. I lost contact with them on that day. They were gone without a trace. Only my brother came to me later on. Lots of people left the ghetto then, everyone tried not to surrender.

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

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

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

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

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

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

My longest single stay was in the village Podwierzbie near Żelechów [Żelechów, Podlęś community, Garwolin district] with a Mrs. [Katarzyna] Pokorska. She was an acquaintance or a cousin of Mrs. Wasilewska [Mr. Prajs' neighbor]. Many

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

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

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

The following are some examples from Warsaw. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, p.405, and Part 2, pp.722–23.)

[1] At first the relations during the occupation between Henrk [Henryk] Krueger, a resident of Warsaw, and his friends interned in the local ghetto were completely businesslike. But the humanitarian values imbued in Krueger soon induced him to help the needy and the persecuted, at great risk to his own life and without receiving any payment. He supplied food to his acquaintances in the ghetto, such as Halina Wald and the Frydman family, but in the summer of 1942 when the big Aktion began in Warsaw in which the ghetto's Jews were taken to Treblinka, he felt compelled to do more to save their lives. He managed to get into the ghetto, which was more closely guarded at the time, bringing Aryan papers in his pockets. He gave these to 20-year-old Mina Frydman and accompanied her to an apartment he had prepared to shelter her on the Aryan side of the city. While she was in hiding, Krueger continued to supply Mina with everything she needed, and when she was threatened by blackmailers he moved her to another apartment. [He secured new identity documents for her based on a certificate he obtained from Holy Cross church in Warsaw.⁵⁷] She remained there until the late summer of 1944 and after the Warsaw Uprising was taken, with her borrowed identity, to forced labor in Germany, where she was liberated by the Allied armies.

[2] Before the war, the Sliwczynskis [Śliwczyńskis], from the town of Mława [Mława] in the Warsaw district, lived on the same street as Ella Zlotnik [Złotnik] (later Perkiel), who was in the same class as one of the Sliwczynski girls. During the occupation, the two families moved to Warsaw, where the Zlotniks were interned in the ghetto. In 1943, when Ela [sic] and her father hid on the Aryan side of the city, the ties between the two families were renewed and Ella and the Sliwczynski's son, Jerzy, met frequently. In 1944, after the Gestapo arrested Ella's father, Ella had to change her identity and disappear. Jerzy helped her by arranging a temporary hiding place for her outside the city and obtained new Aryan papers for her. When Ella returned to Warsaw, she stayed with Sliwczynski until the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944. When the Germans arrested Jerzy, Ella stayed with his father, Tadeusz Sliwczynski, until after the war, when she emigrated to the United States. The Sliwczynskis helped other Jews from the town of Mława who hid on the Aryan side of Warsaw, including the Makowskis, the Kleniecs, Celina Czech, and Biezunska [Biezuńska]. Despite the danger, the Sliwczynskis considered it their human duty to help their Jewish friends and never expected anything in return. [They were able to obtain false Kennkarte for these Jews based on birth and baptismal certificates issued by Rev. Dudziński of St. Charles Borromeo parish in the Powązki district of Warsaw.⁵⁸]

Guta Tyrangiel (later Genevieve Tyrangiel-Benezra) was born on August 26, 1940, one day after the establishment of the ghetto in Mińsk Mazowiecki. When the Germans liquidated the ghetto in August 1942, Guta's parents managed to escape with Guta and her younger sister Esther. They hid in the surrounding villages and then moved to a labour camp named Kopernikus where the danger to their lives seemed less immediate. Their young daughters were hidden in the attic of a building because it was forbidden for children to live in the camp. Guta and her sister were smuggled out of the camp in a closed wicker basket in October 1942. A local Catholic priest named Hert (?), who worked with the Żegota organization, and a notary supplied them with false baptismal certificates and made arrangements for them to be cared for by different Polish families. Guta was entrusted to Józef and Bronisława Jaszczuk, a childless Polish couple who lived in Mińsk Mazowiecki. They presented her as

⁵⁷ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.273.

⁵⁸ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.558.

their niece, Genowefa Filipiak. Guta survived the war, but her parents and younger sister did not. (Guta Tyrangiel Benezra, *Mémoire bariolée; Poetic Paintings; Głosy przeszłości: Post-Shoah peintures, poèmes, récits* [Ottawa and New York: Legas, 1995]; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Internet: <http://www.ushmm.org/uia/cgi/uia_doc/query/18?uf=uia_EFzQiM>; Guta Tyrangiel Benezra, Internet: <<http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/responses/benezra/>>; Polish Righteous Among the Nations Jozef and Bronislawa Jaszczuk, Internet: <http://yad-vashem.org.il/righteous_new/events/righteous_jaszczuk.html>; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, p.308.) *In August 1942, after the liquidation of the Minsk [Mińsk] Mazowiecki ghetto in the Warsaw district and the transfer of most of its inmates to the Treblinka death camp, the Tyrangel couple arranged a hiding place for their two baby daughters while they themselves found shelter with a peasant family in a nearby village. The girls' hosts, fearing for their safety, enlisted the help of the parish priest to transfer Guta Tyrangel to the Jaszczuks, who lived in Minsk Mazowiecki. The other girl was sent to another family, where all traces of her were lost. The girls' parents perished, and only Guta survived, thanks to the devoted care of Jozef [Józef] and Bronislawa [Bronisława] Jaszczuk, who saw to all her needs. ... After the war, the Jaszczuks adopted little Guta, who later emigrated to Canada.*

The risks inherent in providing false documents are illustrated by the following account of Maria Rajbenbach, a Jewish woman who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto just before the outbreak of the uprising on April 19, 1943. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, p.233.)

How did we obtain our documents? A brother of the painter [Marian] Malicki was employed, together with his wife [Maria], at the Record Office of the Municipal Administration. Together with a parson [from the cathedral parish of St. John the Baptist] they had forged both the death and birth registers to secure Christian birth certificates of two deceased women. Thus several people had to collaborate to prepare such certificates. The Malickis had supplied numerous Jews with such certificates. Unfortunately, one of these Jews was identified by the Gestapo and in this way the names of the three people became known to them. The parson was shot dead, the Malickis were sent to Treblinka [actually it was Majdanek] concentration camp and Malicki had his arms and legs broken in an attempt to extort the names of other rescued Jews. But he would not give them away. Both perished in Treblinka camp. [Actually, Mrs. Malicka survived.]⁵⁹

A number of Jewish children were sheltered by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth, who had been displaced from Grabie near Toruń and relocated to Świder, now a part of Otwock, a town near Warsaw, where they ran a home for children known as the Educational Institute of St. Anthony (Zakład Wychowawczy św. Antoniego—"Promyk"). The children were given false identities and supporting birth and baptismal certificates were issued by Rev. Canon Ludwik Wolski, the pastor of St. Vincent de Paul parish in Otwock. Three and of the nuns—Sister Gertruda (Stanisława) Marciniak, the Mother Superior, Sister Ludwika Małkiewicz, and Sister Krystyna Bykowska—as well as Rev. Ludwik Wolski were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. Among their charges were: Dan Landsberg (Daniel Lancberg), passing as Wojciech Płochowski; Maria (Marysia) Osowiecka, passing as Halina Brzoza; Ruth (Rutka) Noy, passing as Teresa Wysocka; Alfred Karol (Leopold Blitzylberg); and Jurek Adin. Their stories are set out below.

The family of Max Noy survived the war with the assistance of a number of Poles, among them a priest and the Sisters of St. Elizabeth in Otwock who sheltered their daughter Ruth. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, pp.485–86.)

Raizel Noy of Otwock, near Warsaw, gave birth to her daughter Ruth in September 1939, after the German occupation began. In August 1942, during the large-scale deportation of Jews from Warsaw, the Noy family managed to escape from the ghetto with their young daughter. Maks Noy, Raizel's husband, worked in a labor camp run by a German contracting company in the nearby town of Karczew; Raizel and her daughter wandered in the vicinity with no hope of finding shelter. Because she looked Jewish, Raizel experienced constant tension and fear of the lurking dangers that she and her daughter faced. Aware that the likelihood of her survival was dwindling, Raizel decided to spare no effort to at least to save Ruth. At his workplace, Noy made contact with Ludwika Małkiewicz [Małkiewicz], a Catholic nun who taught at the Otwock

⁵⁹ Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, p.235 (annotation); Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.544 (annotation).

convent orphanage, and asked her to rescue his daughter. Malkiewicz consulted with Krystyna Bykowska, the mother superior [this is inaccurate: the mother superior was Sister Gertruda Marciniak], and the two agreed to admit the girl. In coordination with Malkiewicz and Bykowska, Ruth was left in the convent corridor one night and when she began to cry—alone and in the dark—the nuns came out and brought her inside. Little Ruth was placed with the Polish children and the nuns cared for her devotedly. Sisters Malkiewicz and Bykowska performed this act of rescue as a human duty flowing from their deep religious faith and sought no recompense for it even though it endangered their lives. Maks Noy eventually escaped from his labor camp and he and Raizel found shelter in Praga, Warsaw, in an apartment they rented from Wladyslawa [Władysława] Cygler. Although Cygler knew they were Jews, she prepared a hideout for them in case of danger and sheltered them from inquisitive neighbors. The only person who knew their address was Sister Malkiewicz, who, in the summer of 1944—five weeks before Praga was liberated—brought Ruth to them because a child in the orphanage had threatened denunciation. After the war, the Noy family immigrated to the United States

Max Noy provides the following testimony in Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, at pages 218–20.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Provided with the letter and certificate, Ruth started to cry once she was inside the orphanage. The nuns came down to see what was happening, and then they talked about whether the child was Jewish and if so, whether they could put the other children in danger if they took her in. My daughter went up to the mother superior at that point, and the mother superior reacted with these words:

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

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

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

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

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

Sister Ludwika Małkiewicz provided additional details of the rescue activities in an interview conducted in 1984. (Ibid., pp.157–61.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Daniel was a very thin child; he looked half-starved. He constantly had to eat, so he would go by himself to the kitchen to get a bite there. One day he got on top of a table to take a look out the window. Two German soldiers who were passing by saw him and rushed to the kitchen very angry and accusing us of hiding Jews. I ran to Mother Superior Getruda Marciniak, who knew German quite well. (In those days the populace in the General Government did not know German.) The mother superior entered the kitchen, and with a smile on her face, said:

"How can you possibly think that we have Jews here?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jurek Adin, who was born in Warsaw in 1933, was rescued by his prewar private tutor, a Polish woman who was assisted by others including a priest. He too found his way to the children's home in Otwock run by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth. Jurek Adin testimony was recorded soon after the war ended. (Testimony of Jurek Adin, Central Committee of Jews in Poland, file no. 301/3695, Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.)

I sometimes went to the Aryan side and many times wanted to remain there but no opportunities arose. ... I asked one boy to take me to my private tutor. I could not stay there because she worked as a nurse for the Germans and lived in a

Krankenstube. She placed me with her friend who was already hiding one Jewish boy named Borenstein. ... My tutor arranged for me to be taken to the home of Mrs. Adela. She told me to go to a particular shop at Belwederska Street from where I would be taken by Mrs. Adela. Mrs. Adela arranged a Christian birth certificate for me and registered me as Marian Podbielski. My tutor paid out of her own pocket to buy my false birth certificate. I spent some time at Mrs. Adela's home. She used to go to work in the morning and I was left on my own. In the summer of 1942, I went to a resort called Zielonka [a small locality in the vicinity of Warsaw] and in August I returned to Warsaw. The priest who baptized me was very good to me and placed me in St. Anthony's children's home in Świder [now part of Otwock, a suburb of Warsaw]. ... I stayed there until 1945, when my tutor came and took me with her to Rozalin. Again I felt so good. My family was found in the United States. They asked my tutor many times to place me in a Jewish orphanage. I am supposed to leave for the United States, but I would rather stay in Poland.

Halina Lewkowicz, who escaped to Warsaw from a ghetto in Upper Silesia, eventually found employment at a convent of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth in the suburb of Żoliborz. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.531.)

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

Rev. Ludwik Wolski, the elderly pastor of St. Vincent de Paul parish in Otwock, assisted Jews in various ways. He furnished false birth certificates and, when the ghetto was being liquidated, rescued 7-year-old Marysia Osowiecka with the assistance of Bronisław Marchlewicz, the captain of the Blue Police, and Aleksandra Szpakowska. After the liberation the young girl's aunt wrote to Rev. Wolski to thank him for his selfless deeds.

Ottock, December 12, 1945

Reverend Father Canon Wolski,

It is my pleasant duty to express to you my most sincere thanks for protecting my seven-year-old cousin, Marysia Osowiecka.

In August 1942, during the time of intensified terror of the Hitlerite thugs, when the ghetto in Otwock was being liquidated on August 19 and the following days, you did not hesitate to put your life at risk to save an unknown Jewish child. ... Together with Mrs. Szpakowska and Mr. Marchlewicz, then commander of the police, you were fearless in saving this defenceless Jewish child.

That there are people like you, Mrs. Szpakowska and Mr. Marchlewicz instils in us faith for a better tomorrow, in the victory of good over evil. I would only wish that my inadequate words could at least in part convey the sentiments that I hold for you, Mrs. Szpakowska, and Mr. Marchlewicz.

May Poland have as many people like you as possible.

Hanna Kamińska

(Sylvia Szymańska, *Ludność żydowska w Otwocku podczas Drugiej wojny światowej* [Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2002], pp.86–87.)

Joanna Kaltman, who was born in 1929, escaped from the Warsaw ghetto with her mother, Dr. Ewa Kaltman. Toward the end of 1943 they changed their hiding place, moving from Warsaw to the nearby town of Otwock. She described her stay in Otwock, until the Soviet liberation, and the assistance of the school chaplain, Rev. Jan Raczkowski, in her account found in Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, at page 82.

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

A branch of Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, also functioned in Lwów, headed by Władysława Choms (in Polish, she is known as Władysława Chomsowa). It received extensive assistance from the Polish underground and the Polish Catholic Church. (Gilbert, *The Righteous*, pp.34–36.)

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

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

The following additional information is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 143:

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

The assistance provided by an elderly priest in Janówka near Tarnopol, in southeastern Poland, identified as Father Joseph, was described by Irene Opdyke (formerly Irena Gut), a Righteous Gentile who is credited with rescuing twelve Jews. (Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers, eds., *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* [New York: New York University Press, 1986], pp.47–48.)

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

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

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

A more detailed account appeared in her memoir (Irene Gut Opdyke with Jennifer Armstrong), *In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), at pages 146–51. Irene Opdyke describes her encounter with the village priest after having smuggled some Jews from Tarnopol, where she worked in a German officers' dining room, to the forest near Janówka.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Thank you, Father Joseph," I said at last.

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

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

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

Irene Gut Opdyke vividly recalls the executions she, like countless Poles, was forced to watch with horror in nearby Tarnopol in November 1943; they were calculated to subjugate the Polish nation and strike terror into the hearts of ordinary civilians. (Irene Gut Opdyke with Jeffrey M. Elliot, *Into the Flames: The Life Story of a Righteous Gentile* [San Bernardino, California: The Borgo Press, 1992], p.139.)

I was running across the town square ... and the square, although usually active on a market day, was choked with a milling, bewildered crowd. SS men abruptly pushed me into the middle of the square, just as they had the others, with a command not to leave. A scaffold had been erected in the center of the square, and what appeared to be two separate families were slowly escorted through the crowd to the block. A Polish couple, holding two small children, were brought up first, followed by a Jewish couple with one child, all three wearing the yellow Star of David. Both groups were lined up in front of dangling nooses. They were going to hang the children as well! Why didn't somebody do something? What

could be done? Finally, their “crimes” were announced—the Polish family had been caught harboring the Jewish family! Thus we were forced to witness the punishment for helping or befriending a Jew. I thought I would die! I closed my eyes tightly, but I could still hear the horrible thuds, as the weight of the bodies hit the ends of their ropes. It is impossible that what I imagined in my mind could have been more terrible than what I might have seen, had I watched, but I felt as if it were. Nightmarish images passed in front of my eyes, unbelievable and horrible, as I heard the death sounds emanate from the scaffold. Not a soul moved; no one made a sound, although a sigh reminiscent of a moan seemed to sweep over the crowd.

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

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

Finally they released us ...

Dr. Natalia Weisselberg was sheltered in Sady, a village near Trembowla, voivodship of Tarnopol, along with her husband and young daughter. Her testimony is recorded in Waław Szetelnicki, *Trembowla: Kresowy bastion wiary i polskości* (Wrocław: Rubikon, 1992), at page 243.

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

Rev. Szetelnicki also paid regular visits (on the first Friday of each month) to an elderly Polish couple in Sady, by the name of Szajdek, who hid a Jewish couple by the name of Parille, from Tarnopol, in the cellar of their small one-storey home. The Parilles, who survived the war, would come out of their hiding place to converse with Rev. Szetelnicki during his visits. (Ibid., p.249.)

Rev. Jan Pawlicki, from Zborów near Tarnopol, was one of several Poles instrumental in saving the family of Maksymilian Droll. Rev. Pawlicki provided them with false documents and assisted them in finding a shelter. He was awarded by Yad Vashem in 1969. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.103.)

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

Rev. Pawlicki is mentioned in a number of testimonies as a very courageous defender of Jews who encouraged his parishioners to shelter Jews. The family of Leib Kronish (Kronisch) from Zborów, consisting of a couple and their two daughter, were among nine Jews sheltered by the Tyrz family in the village of Futory near Zborów. After liberation, in appreciation, a Jewish survivor made a cassock for Rev. Jan Pawlicki, who had counselled the rescuers to shelter these Jews. Another Jewish woman who was provided false documents by a priest, likely Rev.

Pawlicki, was Faye Shapira, who was rescued by a number of Poles. (Lucille Margules, *Holocaust Testimony* (HVT–1993), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, pp.832–33; Yehuda Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl* [New Haven, Connecticut and London: Yale University Press, 2009], pp.109–10, 185.)

Canon Adam Łańcucki, the pastor of Brzeżany near Tarnopol, provided a number of Jews with false identity documents that helped them survive the war. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, p.152; Michał Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych* [Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993], p.89; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, pp.561–62.)

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

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

[3] Zofia Sniadecka [Śniadecka], a teacher from Brzeżany [Brzeżany] in the Tarnopol district of Eastern Galicia, had been friendly with the Podhorcer family and the dentist Emil Ornstein before the war. Thanks to her fluency in German, Sniadecka was hired as a secretary with a German company that had warehouses in the Jewish quarter of the city. This enabled her to remain in contact with and help her Jewish friends. In the spring of 1942, Rosa Podhorcer approached her, asking her to help save her family. Sniadecka took the seven members of the Podhorcer family into her home, among them Emil Ornstein and his six-year-old son, Jacek. After she located a family of farmers that would agree to hide the Jews in their home, she transferred five members of the Podhorcer family to the farm and hid them in the hiding place the farmer prepared. Disregarding the danger to her life, she took the care of the family upon herself ... although she obtained false papers for Ornstein, she decided to hide him in her apartment because of his Jewish appearance. Sniadecka searched for a suitable hiding place for Ornstein's son Jacek for a long time until she found a place to hide him far from the city. In late March 1944, a member of the Podhorcer family, Ornstein's sister—who was in the advanced stages of pregnancy—suddenly showed up at Sniadecka's door. The farmer on whose farm they had been hiding refused to allow her to give birth in his home and she had come to Sniadecka to give birth in her apartment. Sniadecka called in a trustworthy midwife and little Danita was born. The baby remained with Sniadecka and the mother returned to the hiding place on the farm. [Sniadecka notified the parish of the child's birth and Rev. Adam Łańcucki registered her in the parish books and issued a birth certificate for her.⁶⁰] The Germans eventually discovered the Podhorcer family's hiding place and murdered them all. Sniadecka, who feared that the Germans would soon come to search her home, moved Ornstein to her brother's home and fled with the infant to stay with friends who lived outside the city. Sniadecka cared for the baby as best she could, but after she returned home the Germans demanded that she give up the Jews she was hiding. This happened on the eve of the liberation and only the entry of the Red Army into the city saved her life.

Rev. Michał Kujata of Liczkowce near Czortków, in Tarnopol voivodship, sheltered Anita Helfgott (now Ekstein). (Gilbert, *The Righteous*, p.42.)

⁶⁰ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.562.

Throughout Eastern Galicia, individual churchmen protected Jews. In the small town of Liczkowce, Father Michael Kujata hid eight-year-old Anita Helfgott, a fugitive from the ghetto at Skole, in his parsonage. Later a Catholic couple, Josef [Józef] and Paulina Matusiewicz, gave her sanctuary. She survived the war.

See also the account of Anita Ekstein in Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, at pages 193–94.

Rev. Stefan Ufryjewicz of Budzanów, in Tarnopol voivodship, came to the assistance of a Jewish family. (Gilbert, *The Righteous*, p.56.)

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

The Budzanów Memorial Book provides additional information about the rescue activities of Poles from that town, which was located in a largely Ukrainian populated area. (I. [Itzhak] Siegelman, *Sefer Budzanow* [Haifa: Irgun Yotzey Dudzanow in Israel, 1968], p.313.)

Only a handful managed to escape. And many of these Jews were caught by Ukrainians and murdered. A few managed to return to Budzanow [Budzanów] and hid in the homes of their Polish friends, or in the Klasztor [klasztor] (monastery).

Budzanów was home to a convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, where Sister Stanisława (Teresa Rusinek) sheltered two Jewish teenagers who survived the war. (Account of Sister Anna Jarosik.)

The assistance provided by Rev. Franciszek Bajer of Załóżce-Reniów, Tarnopol voivodship, is described by the owner of the house in which the priest lived with his widowed mother. (The account of Wiktoria Procyk, dated February 17, 1996, is in the editor's possession.)

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

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

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

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

... When the numbers got too large, some of these Jews were directed to the pastor of the neighbouring parish in Kokutkowce who also issued such certificates to Jews.

Rev. Jan Dziuban, pastor of Barysz near Buczacz, Tarnopol voivodship, assisted the family of Dr. Max Anderman to survive the war. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 2, pp.537–38.)

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

Jews from Buczacz also took refuge in the village of Puźniki where the local pastor, Rev. Kazimierz Słupski, sheltered Rozalia Bauer, a Jewish pharmacist from Buczacz, in his presbytery for more than three years without any remuneration. For part of this period the Germans installed an officers' school on the ground floor of the presbytery, thus making the rescue more precarious. Sisters of the Family of Mary also resided at the presbytery, and whenever the danger heightened, Mrs. Bauer donned a nun's frock. Rev. Słupski also provided a hiding place for Adolf Korngut, a high school teacher from Buczacz. Rev. Słupski approached trusted parishioners to take Jews into their care. Dr. Seifert from Buczacz, who was taken in by the Kret family in the village of Gotyszyn, also frequented the presbytery. Jews living in the forest would often come to the presbytery where they were fed by the nuns and given food to take with them. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.337–39.) Confirmation of the rescue activities and attitude of Rev. Słupski is found in the memoir of Renata Tannenzapf (later Renate Krakauer), a young girl from Stanisławów whose parents entrusted her into the care of a villager in Puźniki, which was populated by Poles. (William Tannenzapf and Renate Krakauer, *Memories from the Abyss / But I Had a Happy Childhood* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2009), pp.113–16.)

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

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

Marynia treated me like her baby girl and I even began to call her Mama. I can imagine that her two boys, aged six and three, must have felt some resentment at this little Jewish impostor suddenly parachuted into their poor little home. But in the same way that my own preschool daughter used to trail her adored older brother, I can see myself following the boys around, perhaps to their annoyance, on my newly sturdy legs. They knew I was Jewish. the boys soon began to show their affection for me. The first and last serving in the communal bowl on the table was always reserved for me whether it was potatoes, pierogi or cabbage soup. At night they squeezed over on the bed they shared to make room for their new "little sister," Tusia. I'm sure that it made the little boys feel important to be my protectors. They could have but didn't betray me to the Nazis and Ukrainians who came on regular inspections of the village. And on Sundays, I can see us all trooping off to church as a family, the cute little blond girl holding the hand of each brother. The priest knew I was Jewish, and people found out after the war that he had been hiding a Jewish woman.

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

There was great animosity between the Polish and Ukrainian people in this part of Poland. The Ukrainians had nationalist aspirations and had allied themselves with the Germans in the war. This left the Poles to face two enemies—the Nazis and their Ukrainian neighbours. One day Ukrainians from a neighbouring village attacked Pozniki, which was a Polish village, by torching the straw roofs. All the homes went up in flames except Marynia's.⁶¹ How was this one cottage spared? The peasants must have muttered and whispered that it was some kind of Jewish black magic.

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

Rev. Stanisław Mazak of the parish of Szczurowice near Radziechów, in Tarnopol voivodship, helped Jews and encouraged his parishioners to extend aid to them. He was instrumental in saving the lives of several Jews. Rev. Mazak was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.500.)

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

Michał Czuba, a seminarian from the town of Radziechów, Tarnopol voidvodship, helped the Wajsmans family to survive the war. He was awarded by Yad Vashem. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.161.)

In 1941, the Wajsmans, their two sons, and their daughters, Helen and Ziona, escaped from Lwow [Lwów] to the town of Radziechow [Radziechów] in the Tarnopol district, where they were interned in the local ghetto. At her parents' initiative, 13-year-old Ziona escaped from the ghetto and found shelter with peasants in the surrounding villages. A few months later, however, the Germans raided the area and Ziona had to be moved to another village. Although Ziona had Aryan papers, the local peasants were afraid to hide her and took her back to the deserted ghetto. Not knowing what to do Ziona made her way to the home of Polish acquaintances, where to her enormous surprise she came across her mother and sister, who were hiding there too. Although the hiding place was designed for one person only, room was made for Ziona, and later also for the girls' father. Although the Polish landlord feared for his life, Michal [Michał] Czuba, the landlady's brother and a graduate of a seminary, persuaded him to let them stay. Czuba himself took responsibility for looking after the Jewish fugitives and saw to their needs during the ten months of their stay. Although the Wajsmans paid his family for their upkeep, Czuba himself refused to take a cent. With the advance of the Soviets in 1944, all Poles were ordered to leave the area, but Czuba, disregarding the danger, stayed behind in order to look after the Wajsmans. When the Germans converted the house into a military post office, the Jews found a new hiding place in the deserted ghetto, where they stayed with Czuba until the Red Army liberated the town. After the war the Wajsmans emigrated.

⁶¹ More than 100 Polish villagers were murdered in the assault by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army on the village of Puźniki on February 13, 1944. See Henryk Komański and Szczepan Siewierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946* (Wrocław: Norkom, 2004), pp.170–71.

Another memoir mentions the assistance provided by an unidentified priest from the town of Skala Podolska, in Tarnopol voivodship. (Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, *Strange and Unexpected Love: A Teenage Girl's Holocaust Memoirs* [Hoboken New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, 1993], p.113.)

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

Eugenia (Gina) Hochberg of Brody was able to survive thanks to the help of a number of people, including a Polish railway worker and a Catholic priest, who came to her assistance and nursed her back to health after she jumped from a deportation train headed to the Majdanek concentration camp in May 1943. She managed to return to Brody where she lived in hiding until the liberation. (Bolesław Kulczycki, "Genocide in Brody," http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Brody/boleslaw_kulczycki_memoir.htm)

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

Gina Hochberg jumped from a train near the village of Zasków, to the north of Lwów, which was in the parish of Kościejów. An elderly Polish priest purchased a ticket for her to return to Brody under her new identity and escorted her to the nearby train station. (Interview with Gina Hochberg Lanceter.)

Anna Heller Stern, a native of Bolechów near Stryj, in Stanisławów voivodship, survived with the assistance of false documents that were supplied to her by an unnamed priest. (Daniel Mendelsohn, *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million* [New York: HarperCollins, 2006], p.390.)

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

The Roman Catholic church in Mikulińce, in Tarnopol voivodship, was used as a hiding place for a group of Jews who survived in that town with the assistance of Poles. (Article by Patt Morrison of the Los Angeles Times (1983), reproduced in Haim Preshel, ed. *Mikulince: Sefer yizkor* [Israel: Organization of Mikulincean Survivors in Israel and the USA, 1986]; English translation posted at <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Mikulintsy/Mikulintsy.html>.)

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

On Tuesday, the Redondo Beach man who once knocked on the right door for help and the Polish man who answered

the knock clasped hands again—openly this time—as they were reunited in a ceremony honoring the Pole, Jan Misiewicz, for concealing Leon Kahane and 10 other Jews from Nazi sweeps that sent 6 million others to death camps.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was as simple, Misiewicz said, as "loving my neighbor as myself."

(See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, p.521.)

Mila (Amalia) Sandberg (later Mesner) of Zaleszczyki, then a young woman, was interned in the ghetto in Kołomyja together with her parents and sisters. There they received help from Poles on the outside, and even a former Jewish employee of their father's who sent food by way of a priest from Zaleszczyki. After the ghetto in Kołomyja was liquidated, Mila and her sister Lola reached the ghetto in Chodorów. Mila and her sister Lola had befriended a Pole, Albin Thiel, who approached Rev. Ludwik Peciak, the dean and pastor of Kołomyja, to assist his Jewish friends by issuing baptismal certificates which would enable them to pass as Catholics. Rev. Peciak extended assistance to other Jews as well. Mila and her sister survived the war with the help of a number of Poles. (Mila Sandberg-Mesner, *Light from the Shadows* [Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2005], pp.30, 79–82, 90, 104–105, 106.)

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

We hid in the forest until the next morning, when we met some Jews on their way to work. They told us that we were near Chodorów, that the ghetto there was still open, and that we could temporarily hide there. In the Chodorów ghetto, the people welcomed us with warmth and sympathy. They seemed to be better off than the people in the Kolomyja [Kołomyja] ghetto. We were fed and put to bed. They even arranged for a telegram to be sent to Albin [Thiel], with a coded message

stating that we were alive. Albin arrived the next day with some clothes, money, and our papers. When he arrived, we all broke down sobbing. He cried with us. He loved my parents and mourned their fate.

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

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

Early in the spring of 1943, Albin's assignment arrived. It was with the *Liegenschaft* in Ernsdorf near the town of Bobrka [Bóbrka]. The job came with a furnished apartment, and this was where he moved in with his "wife," Maria Kabanowska-Thiel (Lola), his wife's cousin, Stanisława [Stanisława] Schmiedel (me), and his maid, Aniela Wojciechowska (Jasia). Shortly after, he arranged a job for me, first as a secretary and later as a statistician in the *Liegenschaft* offices. Being an employee of the Estate Administration, I received rations. We were no longer hungry. I worked for the Ernsdorf *Liegenschaft*, which administered some twenty estates. ...

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

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

I know that Albin sought his help in procuring copies of birth and baptismal certificates for many Jews. Jasia, Lola, and I were among the lucky ones he had helped, Albin having access to the City Hall registers. Father Peciak asked him to obtain a list of names of persons born in Kolomyja of the approximate age of those he intended to save. Albin passed the list of names to Father Peciak, who then issued copies of the birth certificates. I know Albin received many such life-saving documents from Father Peciak. Among those who obtained such papers were our friends, Iser and Toni Reisman. Sadly, the Reismans were later caught by the SS and murdered. The irony is, that it may have been Father Peciak's own signature on the Reismans' documents that led to his arrest and execution.⁶² Father Peciak truly merits the epitaph: "Perished for the cause, faithful to God's commands." ...

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

Memorial books record the assistance provided by priests in the voivodship of Volhynia (Wołyń), in southeastern Poland, where Poles, a small minority among the Ukrainian majority, were themselves being systematically murdered by Ukrainian nationalist factions. (Shmuel Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941–1944* [Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Federation of Volhynian Jews, 1990], pp.248–50.)

⁶² The circumstances of Rev. Peciak's death are unclear. He is believed to have been killed in prison or in a death camp on April 16, 1943. See Wiktor Jacewicz and Jan Woś, *Martyrologium polskiego duchowieństwa rzymskokatolickiego pod okupacją hitlerowską w latach 1939–1945, Zeszyt III* (Warsaw: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1978), 136.

Poles living in the cities had fewer opportunities to assist Jews in finding shelter. The German and Ukrainian administration watched them very closely. Polish Catholic priests formed a group apart in this respect. Thus in Rovno [Równe] a priest by the name of Sirkiewicz [actually Ludwik Syrewicz, the Dean and local pastor] together with a notary Szumski handed out birth and baptism certificates to the hiding Jews. A priest from Janowa Dolina (his name is unknown [actually Rev. Jan Leon Śpiewak]), who distributed baptism documents, was arrested and, as a punishment, sent to the Kostopol ghetto where he worked at hard labor together with the local Jews. The members of his flock brought him food which he shared with the ghetto residents. In Vladimirets [Włodzimierzec] the priest Dominik Wawrzynowicz volunteered to sell church treasures to help the local Judenrat to pay ransom imposed by the Germans. He also preached the duty to help the Jews. [He also preserved valuables which Jews had entrusted to him.⁶³] In his efforts he was assisted by priests of congregations of the villages in the district. The priest Ludwik Wołodarczyk [actually Włodarczyk, the pastor of Okopy] from the villages across the Slucz River rendered considerable assistance to the refugees from Rokitno and the environs.

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

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

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

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

Halina Mirska describes in her memoir how various people, including the aforementioned Rev. Ludwik Syrewicz, helped her survive the German occupation. After escaping from the ghetto in Równe, Volhynia, with her mother in 1941, 11-year-old Halina was taken in successively by Kazimierz Milewski; then for two months—in November and December 1941—by Rev. Syrewicz, who issued her a false baptismal certificate; by unknown benefactors; and by the family of Zielonko, a railway worker who took her to Warsaw. In Warsaw, Halina lived with the Rauch family, and was helped by the sisters Ania and Lonia Burzyńska. In May 1943, she was taken to the Sisters of Charity on Tamka Street. Afterwards, one of the nuns, Maria Stanke, kept her at the hospital of the Transfiguration of Our Lord where worked as a nurse. Her next place of residence was with the Sisters of the Family of Mary on Hoża Street in Warsaw, where she was accepted by Mother Matylda Getter. Halina was transferred to the nuns' orphanage in Płudy, where a number of Jewish children found shelter. She recalled being treated fairly, on par with all of the other children. She had fond memories of her instructor, Sister Ludwika, who cared for her lovingly. When the Soviet front approached, the Germans evacuated the institution. After escaping from a transport train headed for Germany, Halina, then 14, found herself in the town of Sierpc. She was taken in by a woman by the name of Czerwińska, who then passed her on to the Kłobukowski family, who treated Halina like a member of the family. She remained with them until 1946. (Halina Mirska Lasota, *Ucieczka od przeszłości* [Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2006], pp.18–29.)

According to Polish sources, Rev. Jan Leon Śpiewak, the pastor of Janowa Dolina, was arrested by the Germans in May 1942 and sent to a hard labour camp in Ludwipol. He managed to escape when that camp was attacked by Soviet partisans, after which he had to hide from the Germans. He became chaplain of a local Home Army unit, whose leadership was seized by the NKVD in December 1943 and shipped to Lubianka prison in Moscow. (Leon Popek, *Janowa Dolina* [Lublin: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Krzemieńca i Ziemi Wołyńsko-Podolskiej, 1998], p.x n.2.)

Rev. Ludwik Włodarczyk, of the Order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, was awarded posthumously by Yad Vashem at the behest of the brothers Alex and Samuel Levin, whom he had sheltered in the village of Okopy in Volhynia. Rev. Włodarczyk incurred the wrath of Ukrainian nationalists who tortured and killed him in December 1943 (“Sprawiedliwy wśród narodów świata,” *Misyjne drogi*, July-August 2001.) Alex (Joshua) Levin, born in

⁶³ Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, p.245.

1935, one of the many Jews Rev. Wrodarczyk assisted, wrote about his and his seven-year older brother Samuel's escape from the Rokitno ghetto in August 1942, in his memoir *Under the Yellow & Red Stars* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2009), at pages 21–22:

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

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

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

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

The rescue activities of Rev. Wrodarczyk—through his sermons, in private conversations with his parishioners, and by sheltering Jews in the parish rectory in Okopy near Rokitno, and feeding them in their forest hideouts—are also documented by Polish diarists. (Bronisław Janik, *Niezwykły świadek wiary na Wołyniu 1939–1943: Ks. Ludwik Wrodarczyk omi* [Poznań: Misjonarze Olbaci Maryi Niepokalanej, 1993], pp.167–68; Leon Żur, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: Którędy do pojednania* [Suwałki: Hańcza, 2007].) The following account by Yosef Segal, a Jewish survivor, is found in E. Leoni, ed., *Rokitno-Wołyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/Rokitnoye.html>>, a translation of *Rokitno (Volin) ve-ha-sevivah: Sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rokitno in Israel, 1967), at page 334.

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

The following account is from Yehuda Bauer, “Sarny and Rokitno in the Holocaust: A Case Study of Two Townships in Wolyn (Volhynia),” in Steven T. Katz, ed., *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2007), p.273.

Escapees from Rokitno went ... to the area of the three Polish villages [Okopy, Budki Borowskie, and Dolhań] ... The Polish peasants, who had been living there for generations, saw in the Jews poor creatures persecuted by the enemies of the Poles: the Ukrainian nationalists and the Germans. All of them were basically friendly to the Jews, especially the Catholic priest, Ludwik Wolodarczyk [Wrodarczyk], and the local schoolteacher, Felicja Masojada, who organized a Polish resistance group that established contact with the Soviet partisans ... The three villages (and the fourth, Netreba,

which was part-Polish) were on the edge of the thick forests in that area, and many Jews hid there. They spent the nights in the makeshift dugouts in the forest and begged for food—and sometimes worked for it—during the day. ... These Polish villagers were pro-Soviet for the simple reason that there was no one else who could save them from the Bulbovtsy [Ukrainian nationalist partisans]—and indeed, the Bulbovtsy in the end burned their villages and murdered many Poles; the rest fled into the forests and joined the Jews who were hiding there. During 1943, Ukrainian nationalists murdered tens of thousands of Poles in Wolyn [Wołyń] ... The four Polish villages mentioned, and both Wolodarczyk and Masojada, were among the victims.

A Polish rescuer in Ośnica near Łuck, in Volhynia, turned to her confessor for counsel when her family was sheltering David Pristal. (Gilbert, *The Righteous*, pp.10–12.)

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

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

Eve Wagszul (Rich) escaped from the ghetto in Kowel, in Volhynia, and later from a labour camp to the safety of a convent in an unspecified location. The convent is said to one run by the Carmelites, though this information cannot be not verified. The Benedictine Missionary Sisters ran an orphanage in Kowel. (Interview with Eve Wagszul Rich, dated August 23, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.)

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

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

Peppy Rosenthal (née Naczycz), born in 1935 in Rożyszcze in Volhynia, was an only child. The family escaped as the ghetto was about to be liquidated and was sheltered successively by three Polish families. Peppy's mother was separated from the family and was never seen again. After their Polish benefactor was killed, Peppy's father took

her to a Catholic convent in an unspecified location (perhaps in nearby Łuck where the Benedictine Missionary Sisters ran an orphanage) and joined a group of Jews in the forest. After some time the nuns placed Peppy with a Polish family, and her father reclaimed her after the liberation of the area. (Testimony of Peppy Rosenthal, July 1, 2009, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <<http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/rosenthal/>>.)

My dad and his partner worked outside the, the ghetto, and they found out that the ghetto was going to be liquidated, and we couldn't tell any of his relatives, my dad couldn't. So he came back with his partner, and he must have paid off the guards. They let us cross the river, and my dad was carrying me on his shoulders, and the six of us escaped. And we went to stay with one of the people that worked for my dad's bus company. Was a, was a Sunday. And they went to church, and we were looking out in the attic outside, and ... my mother tried to keep me away from the windows, so I wouldn't see ... And then we stayed there till the ... they came back from church, and they wanted us to leave, because they were afraid, you know, that somebody's gonna find out that they're hiding us. So my father and his partner went to the country to see if he can find the, one of the conductors, and see if they'd let us stay there. And then my mother and my father's partner's wife and their son, the four of us, stayed there. And we went and we stayed with the ... where the pigs were staying. So if somebody came, then he can say that he didn't know we were there. So we stayed there, and he insisted that we leave. And my mother said she'll leave, and go and see if she can find my father, but would he just keep me safe, you know, hide ... for them to hide me some place. So she left, and I never saw her again. ...

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

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

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

They knew that I was Jewish. So I, I don't remember how long it was that I stayed at the convent, but I know it was wintertime, because I was cold, and I remember not having warm things. And then they gave me to this family that lived way, way far away from the road ..., so, and it was safe there. And if I saw a person walking towards the house, I would immediately hide. I had a special place where to hide. And I stayed there I know one winter, and a summer, not whole summer ... and sometimes when it was nighttime I would go outside and play. Then one day I saw this man coming in the distance, and I went and I hid, and then, as he came closer, the woman recognized my dad. And she went and she got me ... my dad came and, you know, that was the first time I saw him in a long time. And we stayed together.

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

In the Tarnopol region of Eastern Galicia, two Polish villages were wiped out because, with the encouragement of

Catholic priests, their inhabitants offered refuge to Jews and Soviet partisans. (Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* [London: Paul Elek, 1974], pp.450–53.)

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

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

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

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

At the urging of Rev. Canon Aleksander Chodyko, the dean of Białystok, Rev. Emil Kobierzyński, the pastor of Brody, joined in the rescue effort and actively encouraged his parishioners to assist Jews. (Mordecai Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations* [Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: HarperCollins, 2007], pp.173–76.)

In September 1939, at the start of the war, Avraham Itzhak Rivkind [Rywkind], his wife, Chaya, and their children, Menachem-Mendel and Raaya, all living in Białystok [Bialystok], fled eastward to Brody ahead of the advancing Germans. Brody was then occupied by the Russians and remained in their control until the German attack on the Soviet Union. When the Germans struck again, in June 1941, Menachem-Mendel, at the time in his thirties, was married to Lonia, the daughter of the chief rabbi of Białystok, Rabbi Gedalia Rosenman. Acting swiftly to assist his son-in-law in Brody, Rosenman turned to the Catholic bishop [actually, the dean] in Białystok, Aleksander Chodyko, and asked for his intercession. Chodyko in turn approached a number of clerics in the Brody region and appealed to them to make an effort to save the Rivkind family. However before any of the clerics could act on the bishop's appeal, on November 2, 1942, the Germans and Ukrainians staged one of their murderous raids on the city's Jews. Avraham Itzhak Rivkind and wife Chaya were among the victims as was their daughter, Raaya. Only their son, Menachem-Mendel, and his two cousins from the Cygielman family were able to escape by finding temporary shelter and survived the bloody raid. ... Brody was one of the many Jewish communities in eastern Poland (today in Ukraine) that was totally obliterated by the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators.

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

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

After the war, Zbigniew wrote that on November 25, 1942, he or someone else in the family informed Rivkind of the family's decision and set up a meeting for the next day in Brody. The two Huzarski brothers, Zbigniew and Fryderyk, arrived at dusk and took the three fugitive Jews to their village home through fields and side roads. The three new

arrivals—Dr. Julian Cygielman, his brother Avraham, and Menachem-Mendel Rivkind—stayed there for a full 17 months, until the area's liberation in July 1944.

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

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

In light of this troublesome development, the Huzarskis prepared an underground shelter at the edge of the forest near their home, filling it with all the necessary items to accommodate their three charges. After transferring Rivkind and the Cygielman brothers to the new hiding place, the Huzarski family continued to supply them with all their needs on a daily basis, resolving not to abandon them even after the majority of the Polish peasant population of the village had deserted their homes.

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

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

Initially, the refugees hid in a hiding place that was prepared for them in the stable with an emergency exit. As raids by gangs of nationalist Ukrainians in the village intensified and a growing number of Polish farms were being burned down, Huzarski and his sons prepared an underground shelter for their three charges at the edge of the forest. The brothers Fryderyk and Zbigniew Huzarski were active in the Home Army. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, pp.281–82; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.189.)

Rev. Jan Zarzycki, a Home Army chaplain from Rymanów near Krosno, sheltered Jewish children and placed them in homes and convents. One child was taken in by the Michaelite Sisters in nearby Miejsce Piastowe. He also assisted a number of other Jews to survive. The assistance of Rev. Zawrzycki and nuns is described with gratitude by a group of Jewish beneficiaries living in Israel. Rev. Zawrzycki was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, p.340.)

Father Zawrzycki, living at 10, Legiony St. ... saved first of all the lives of Jewish children by hiding them in convents; often he personally went to the hideouts and Jewish bunkers and from there he took the children and put them in safe places, and it is thanks to this that those children lived and were delivered from Nazi satanism. Father Zawrzycki did this of his own accord, guided by the principle of unselfish love for his neighbour and fellow-man. As soon as he learned that a hiding place where Jews were concealed had no guarantee of safety, Father Zawrzycki, often at night and under great danger to his own person, came on his bicycle and took them away, especially children who he saved in this way. Here in Palestine there is a whole group of people who owe their lives solely and exclusively to Father Zawrzycki. Bronisława Fischbein from Krosno, Franciszka Leizer from Cracow [Kraków], Rubin from Korczyn, J. Szapira from Warsaw, Anna Majerans and her three sons from Łódź. Others in Palestine and in Poland owe their lives to the aforementioned Father Zawrzycki.

Survivors from Krosno also mention other priests who were instrumental in their rescue from the Nazis. ("Krosno" in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Volume III, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol3_00329.html>, translation from *Pinkas hakehillot Polin*, Volume. III [Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984], pp.329ff.)

A few Jews, old and young, managed to survive on the so-called other or Aryan side with the help of non-Jewish friends notably the priests Jan Gawnicki and Hodoreski Kandra, Mrs. Yadviga [Jadwiga] Naipukoi and the driver Neizgoda [Niezgoda]. Some of them perished while helping Jews.

Two of the priests in question appear to be Rev. Antoni Chodorski of Strzyżów and Rev. Michał Kędra of Rudki near Sambor. Accounts from Yad Vashem mention a priest—misidentified as Rev. "Chodorski-Kędra"—who helped Dr. Stefan Stiefel flee from the town of Krosno dressed in a soutane (cassock). Stiefel found shelter in the priest's home, where he was passed off as an ill priest. He obtained false identity documents in the name of Stefan Szymański and survived the war with the help of a number of other Poles. (Yad Vashem archives, no. 3421 [Alicja (Sala) Heiler née Stiefel] and Yad Vashem archives, no. 1270 [Helena Stiefel]. For a photograph of Dr. Stiefel (Steipel) dressed as a priest, with members of the Chodorski (Kodorowski) family, see <http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot/prog/image_into.asp?id=3198&lang=EN&type_id=2&addr=/IMAGE_TYPE/3198.JPG>.)

When some Jews arrived at the cottage of a Polish woman in Chobrzany near Sandomierz (they had been brought there temporarily by the woman's brother, who had sheltered them in Zwierzyniec near Szczepleszyn), the entire hamlet was alarmed by the attendant danger. Luba Krugman Gurdus describes the calming effect of the stance taken by a priest, unknown to them, in *The Death Train: A Personal Account of a Holocaust Survivor* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), at pages 105–106.

In order to throw off suspicions about our being Jewish, we accompanied Marysia [their hostess] to Sunday services. The compassionate, young priest sensed our problem and added a few words to his sermon on our behalf. He advised his congregation to respect their fellow men and not to condemn them too hastily for their beliefs and convictions. His effort proved beneficial, and the strained atmosphere around us eased.
No one betrayed the Jews for the duration of their stay there.

Zofia Zusman survived the war thanks to the assistance she received from Rev. Ignacy Życiński, the pastor of Trójca near Zawichost, in the diocese of Sandomierz. Rev. Życiński was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 6, pp.646–47.)

During the war, Maria Przysiecka and her son, Jozef [Józef], were living in Sandomierz. One day, Jozef met an old school friend, Zofia Zusman, in the street. Zofia had arrived in Sandomierz from the neighboring town of Ozarów [Ożarów]. Jozef invited Zofia to come with him to his house. Zofia followed Jozef to his house, where she was warmly welcomed by Maria. At the Przysieckis, Zofia also met her prewar friend Itka. ... Itka was being sheltered in the Przysieckis' home and Zofia joined her. One evening in October 1943, when Zofia and Itka were climbing down to the cellar, they heard dogs barking outside followed by the clatter of Polish security officers pounding on the Przysieckis' front door. ... The intruders subsequently made an extensive search of the property, turning everything upside down, but discovered nothing. Nevertheless, following this incident, Przysiecka and her son came to the conclusion that it was too dangerous to continue hiding Zofia and Itka. Maria then turned to the priest Ignacy Życzynski [Życiński], who knew that she was harbouring Jews. He told her to bring them to his house, where they could live in a garret. Under the cover of darkness, the fugitive Jewish girls moved to the rectory. In the meantime, Jozef prepared a new hideaway for them—in the woodshed. Zofia and Itka stayed there for the entire winter, lying huddled together and keeping absolutely still. ... In June 1944, Zofia and Itka were once more taken to Życzynski's home while Jozef began to construct a new shelter for them, this time in his garden. When it was complete, he ushered the girls into it. This was the last hideout used by Zofia and Itka on the Przysieckis' property because at the end of September 1944 the Przysieckis were ordered to evacuate their home. When they did Zofia and Itka had to look for a new shelter. They parted cordially with their courageous hosts and moved to Ozarów, where they found a new hideout. Itka later relocated to Zawichost, where the Germans caught and killed her. Zofia survived the

war.

Michael (Marjan) Rosenberg was assisted by a priest in Tczów near Radom, in central Poland. ("In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Six people whose lives were greatly affected by the Holocaust recently met at the Star to discuss their experiences," *The Toronto Star*, December 3, 1992; and accounts of Michael Rosenberg dated May 26, 1993 and August 10, 1993.)

When I was 17, I walked into a German police station and asked for papers ... I couldn't work without them. They called in a Catholic priest and he asked me to say a prayer. I still remember it in Polish. "Our Father, who art in heaven ..." The priest said, "Yes, he is Roman Catholic." They then took a photograph and gave me identification papers. It was a miracle that they didn't ask me to drop my pants and see if I was circumcised. If they had, I would have been put against the wall of the church and shot.

... Prior to escaping from the concentration camp, I had learned how to cross myself. But after passing myself off as a Catholic, it became necessary for me to go to confession. I was in fear. Not knowing how to make confession, I walked into the confessional box and said to the priest: "Father, I don't know what to do—I am a Jew."

The priest opened the confessional window, looked at me, and said: "Son, don't be afraid. I won't betray you." Then we prayed together. I still remember what we said together: "God bless Poland ... please help the oppressed." ... [Michael Rosenberg's visits not only helped him pass as a Catholic, but also provided him with much needed solace.]

I wrote to the priest [Rev. Władysław Paciak] ... Then in 1953, a letter came back to Toronto: Address unknown. I haven't heard anything since. [The interruption came at the height of the Stalinist terror against the Catholic clergy.]

Michael Rosenberg expanded on his story in Abram, *The Light After the Dark*, at pages 194–99.

The German police officer had an office in the church rectory. ...

In rural Poland, it is customary for the farmers to go to confession often. The farmer reminded me, I had not gone since my arrival and urged me to go that week. Again I was confronted with a serious dilemma. I did not know what to do. I had no clue what was expected of me or what the protocol was when confessing. ...

I entered the church and looked around trying to assess my surroundings. I had never been inside a Christian place of worship, but from what I overheard, I had a general idea what to expect. ... I knelt at the top of the aisle and crossed myself before proceeding down the outside aisle towards a cubicle. Inside, I could barely make out the silhouette of a man. I entered the empty side, closed the curtain, sat on a stool and waited. A few nervous minutes passed, while I became accustomed to the dark interior.

From the other side of the partition, a voice spoke. "Bless you my son."

I waited, unsure what to say. The priest remained quiet, and the silence became heavy. Confused and frightened, I blurted out, "Father, I don't know what to do—I am a Jew."

Again there was silence. The confessional window separating the two cubicles opened, and the priest looked at me, saying, "Do not be afraid my son, I will not betray you." We looked at each other for a few minutes, and finally he asked me if I knew any prayers.

I nodded.

He began to pray, "God bless Poland ... please help the oppressed ..." and I repeated the words after him. When he finished, we talked, and as I was leaving he said, "when the hyena leaves Poland, and if you do not find any of your family, I will sponsor you for baptism, if it is your wish."

For as long as I lived on the farm, the priest kept my secret. "Come to me whenever your heart is heavy and we will talk," he told me. Over the next fourteen months, we had many conversations on numerous subjects. At no time did he make any attempt to convert me to a Catholic, nor did he make any offer to help me to escape. [To where one wonders.—Ed.]

Bronisława Eisner, born in 1932, recalls the assistance she and her mother received from a number of families (the Twardziks, the Syndutkas, Mrs. Dębińska, Mrs. Szwestkowa, Mrs. Kaźmierczak, Mr. Sitek, Mrs. Światał, Mrs. Ronczoszkowa, and the Czaplas), both in Sosnowiec and in her native Katowice, after their escape from the ghetto in Sosnowiec in August 1943. Bronia Eisner stayed the longest, until liberation, with the Czaplas, Polish-speaking Silesians whom she remembers fondly as "good people." Among those who helped her and her mother

was a Catholic priest, probably Rev. Józef Szubert.⁶⁴ (Account of Bronisława Szwajca, née Eisner, “Among the Silesians,” in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, volume 2, pp.293–95.)

We were also helped by Dr. Schubert [Józef Szubert], the parish priest of St. Mary's Church [Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary], the second oldest and most important Catholic church in Katowice after the Cathedral. Mama knew him already from before the war, although I don't know how. He assisted us financially. We used to go to the parish where Mama would give his two sisters manicures. They clipped out food ration cards for us, which we ourselves, didn't receive at all. Following all the holidays, they would give us cakes to take home. The priest's sisters brought me shoes and tights, as I remember.

They knew that Father was a Jew. Father Schubert did not insist on baptizing me; he declared it could wait until after the war, and then he did indeed try to convince me. Anyway, he continued to visit us many times. But one time he asked, “Bronia, would you like to learn the prayers?” I answered that I already knew them. I recited “Our Father,” “Hail Mary,” and “Angel of God.” I knew how to pray because Mrs. Czaplă had taken me to church several times, and even before then, Zuza had taught me prayers—in Polish, of course. Dr. Schubert was very pleased and taught me several other things, gave me a little prayer book, and told me it would be good if I always carried it with me. He also presented me with a religious medallion, which I always wore from then on.

As fate would have it, Mama was quite soon able to repay the priest. Namely, he was arrested by the Germans and sent to Dachau. His terrified sisters pleaded with her to go there and give him a blanket into which they had sewn the names of some Germans who were willing to attest to his pro-German sympathies before the war. He was one of the few priests who had been willing to offer confessions to non-Polish-speaking Germans in their native language. [This claim is demonstrably untrue.—Ed.]

The sisters gave Mama cigarettes and vodka to bribe the guard, and Mama went there and delivered the blanket. After a few days, the witnesses from the list he received were interrogated, and Father Schubert was allowed to return to his parish. He was very grateful to Mama. Where did she, being a Jew, muster enough courage to go deep into Germany and mill around a concentration camp to bribe a guard? She was always very brave. Before the ghetto was set up, she traded in food products between Sosnowiec and Katowice. She could always keep a cool head in difficult situations. I assume she must have had some Aryan papers, but I don't know anything about it.

The priest, having been released from a German prison, after liberation, ended up in a Polish [Communist] jail. Someone reported that he had returned from Dachau suspiciously quickly, considering that so very few returned at all. Unable to help in any way at the local level, Mama this time set out for Warsaw to the Ministry of Religions. She told them everything about herself and about what Father Schubert had done for us and explained the circumstances of his release from Dachau. He was soon released from this second prison but was not allowed to return to his parish. He took over the parish in Godula, a district of Ruda Śląska. Grateful to us, he visited us nearly every month for many years. He passed away already a dozen years or so ago.

Open displays of solidarity with Jews by priests in Warsaw and in its environs of Kraków were recorded by Janina Bauman, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto with her mother and hid on the Aryan side until they were forced to abandon Warsaw after the failed uprising of 1944. Along with other refugees, both Poles and Jews concealed among them, they were scattered in villages throughout the German zone. (Janina Bauman, *Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond, 1939–1945* [London: Virago Press, 1986], pp.145 and 180.)

One time Staś, who was making desperate efforts to help them, had to abandon them in a church [in Warsaw], while he rushed off to find a friend who, he hoped, might take them to her flat. The friend could not be found at that moment, so Mother and Sophie [the author's sister] had to stay in the church for many hours. They were wearing their usual disguises and pretended to be praying all that time. The priest noticed them and took a deep interest in the two miserable figures. He must have guessed who they were and why they kept praying so keenly. When towards evening most of the congregation had left, he then brought them food and drink which they badly needed. He also found a few words of Christian consolation for them. Soon after Staś arrived with good news and took Mother and Sophie to his old friend Vala. ...

... The Mass [in the village church of Zielonki near Kraków] continued, the young priest [Rev. Jan Pietrzyk] knelt and

⁶⁴ Rev. Józef Szubert's biography does not coincide entirely with the details provided in this account. Rev. Szubert was arrested by the Germans in May 1940 and sent to Dachau, and then to Mauthausen. After his release in November 1940, he resided in a building belonging to Caritas, a charitable organization, in Katowice. In 1947, he was transferred to Godula, a suburb of Ruda Śląska. He was imprisoned by the Communist authorities in 1955–1956. He died in 1973.

stood by turns, followed by the crowd. He sang, he prayed, he performed various rites at the altar, then he climbed into the pulpit and began to preach. The sermon was simple and clear. It was about the equality of all humankind in the eyes of the Almighty God and the sacred duty of every Christian soul to help those who were in peril, no matter what race they belonged to or which faith they espoused.

Franciszek Orzechowski from Dobczyce near Kraków, identified as a priest by Yad Vashem historian Mordecai Paldiel,⁶⁵ was recognized as a Righteous Gentile for his rescue activities. He saved ten members of the Gletzer (Glecer) and Lipski families by moving them from one place to another, including assisting them to escape to Hungary. He had previously provided them with food and medicine while they were in the Kraków ghetto. Orzechowski's help was voluntary and without any compensation. The following account is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, at page 566.

The members of the Glecer family, who fled from Cracow [Kraków] in 1941 to the nearby town of Dobczyce, knew Franciszek Orzechowski after having once rented an apartment from his uncle. Orzechowski was a young man who inspired their trust and soon became their close friend and confidant. After restrictions were imposed on Jewish travel, Orzechowski became the go-between for the Jewish family. Without asking for or receiving anything in return, he carried out various errands for them, such as buying food and medicine and getting doctors for them when members of the family fell ill. The Glecer family was eventually forced to reenter the Cracow ghetto and they then renewed their contact with Orzechowski. [On one occasion, Orzechowski helped smuggle a child of Rena Glecer's family out of the ghetto.] In March 1943, during the liquidation of the ghetto, Rena Glecer and her mother escaped and Orzechowski found them a place to hide. In the summer of that year, Orzechowski made contact with a man who smuggled people across the border and he took Glecer and her mother into Slovakia, from where they made their way to Hungary and Romania and were saved. After the war, Glecer and her mother emigrated to Belgium, from where they made contact with Orzechowski.

A Jewish boy from Kraków was one of several Jews smuggled out of Poland into Slovakia and then Hungary. After his parents had been seized by the Gestapo, the boy was smuggled out of the ghetto by nuns and sheltered in a convent. (Testimony of Ewa S. (Stapp), September 2005, Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>>.)

We reached the border. The guide shows us where the border is. We can see the Germans, we can see the dogs, and the lights. The guide shows us that we will cross between two posts and not to worry, because they know when the guards make their rounds. And indeed, just as they said, we crossed to the Slovakian side. Slovakian guides would come to pick us up and take us to the Hungarian border, to the town called Mikulasz [Mikuláš]. So we're waiting for the Slovak guides and they never show up! So, to make things more exciting, for we have to have fun, we cross back to the Polish side. The Polish guides put us in a hay-loft which belongs to them. Apart from the two of us, there is a little boy, four people from the Kaczmarek family, an engineer from Lwow [Lwów] who escaped from the Yanovski [Janowska] camp and a woman from Warsaw, Hanka. Except for the Kaczmarek family, all of us are Jewish.

We sit there quietly. We can see the Germans and the dogs, we can hear German and there we are, not farther from the Germans than this balcony is from us [several meters]. We stay there for one day. Next day at night we start again. We walk for a long time, for the distance between Chabowka [Chabówka] and the border is about 20 kilometers.

We are in the care of two Slovak guides. They tell us that we will spend the night at their place and the next day they will take us to the train, buy us tickets and go to Mikulasz with us where the Hungarian guides will take over. The little boy spoke beautiful Polish. It was easy to tell he was an intelligent child. Of course, it was a Jewish child. He was from Cracow. He must have been from the family of the intelligentsia, for he spoke beautiful French, and nice German and Hebrew. He told us stories and sang French songs. We became very good friends. He was wearing a beret and a chain around his neck with a clover. I said, 'You know, you're inside, and one does not wear a hat inside.' And he says, 'I won't take it off!' I say, 'Do take it off, for the lady of the house will feel offended.' So he took off his beret and it turned out his hair was red! That's why he kept his hat on!

We felt very close to this little boy. He told us his grandparents sent for him from Switzerland. His parents must have belonged to some Jewish organization. The Gestapo came, together with the Jewish police and they found weapons. They took the parents away, but the Gestapo man left the boy behind. Later he was at a convent; the nuns got him out of the ghetto.

⁶⁵ Mordecai Paldiel, *Churches and the Holocaust: Unholy Teaching, Good Samaritans, and Reconciliation* (Jersey City, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 2006), p.224.

There were rich Jews in Slovakia. I decided to get through to a Jew to ask if I could wash up the boy and ask for some clothes for him, for he didn't have anything! I said, 'Excuse me, Mister, we have this child with us, who's been sent for by his grandparents. His grandparents paid for him and sent a man to Cracow. Please, help us take care of this child. Help me into a house so that the little one could wash up. Maybe you could get him some chocolate or something proper to eat, or maybe you have some old clothes? He only has what he's wearing.' But they didn't help. Until today, I can't understand why. Maybe because they had not yet been beaten and kicked themselves.

We came up to a booth on the border. The guide said goodbye to us. There were two Hungarians in the booth who said they will take us to Koszyce [Košice]. ...

Next day they took us to the local authorities in Koszyce. We walked in and there were soldiers there. They sent in two gendarmes to watch us. Finally, they called in Karol. Karol still had the papers to the name of Marian Warunek. I didn't show my papers. They told him not to worry, that they won't send us back to Poland and that we'll stay and go to Budapest.

It must have been Saturday. Our room was on the ground floor and I was sitting at the window, looking out. I said, 'Karol, look, they are making a movie!' There were three Jews walking with a little boy; such as I've never seen in Lwow: Jews wearing gabardine, fur caps, white stockings, patent leather shoes, and yellow stars, for the Hungarians wore yellow stars. I said, 'They must be making a film here.' For can you imagine Jews like that walking on the streets of Hungary in 1943 as real people?! But it turned out those were real Jews, to whom nothing happened. It was such a shock for me. I thought, 'Where on earth am I?'

Stanley Bors was sheltered in Grodzisk, outside Warsaw, in the home of his wife's uncle, who was married to a Polish woman. He and his family members passed as Poles with the assistance of a priest. (Sylvia Rothchild, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust* [New York: New American Library, 1981], pp.224–25.)

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

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

A Jewish woman identified as S.F. worked on a labour gang composed of Poles and Jews in the fields of a manor near Warsaw requisitioned by the Germans. She was separated from the group just prior to the outbreak of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, when the Jewish farm labourers were deported by the Gestapo. She ran to the manor of a Polish woman who had sheltered her earlier. After a narrow escape during a raid on the manor, she turned to a priest, Rev. Edward Wojtczak, the chaplain at a nearby convent, who was known as a "friend to the Jews." He provided her with temporary shelter at the convent before placing the Jewish woman with his sister in Warsaw, who also took in a Jewish child, and then with a doctor. Father Wojtczak also supplied her with false identity documents and found her employment. The story is recorded in Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), at pages 135–38.

The Gestapo squad called to the lord of the manor to come out. Fijalkowski [Fijałkowski] appeared and they pounced on him like wolves, slapping him and screaming: "Juden seinen bei dir!" It was no use when he protested that the German authorities had given permission. They beat him up so bad all his teeth came flying out of his mouth. Next, they ordered all the Jews to come out with their hands up. They were all marched off to a waiting truck and beaten and humiliated without mercy. I ran straight into Lady Fijalkowska's chamber, crying to her that I was finished. She led me down into the cellar and told me to wait there until they'd gone. But a Polish policeman broke into the house ... "I was told there's a Jewess in here!" The lady couldn't talk him out of it. He ran down to the cellar and found me right away. He dragged me up to the ground floor. I kept crying and kissing his hands: "Tell them no one's here! Give me a second and I'll be far away!" He did. He must have been an angel of some kind. He let go of me and in an instant, I flew through the back door and out of

the house. When the truck was gone, I went back into the lady's chamber. She wouldn't let me stay. She herself was still trembling from what had just happened. I knew I had to go now. I left the estate and walked through an open ditch by the side of the road. I stayed down there till morning.

As the sun was coming up, I fell into a panic. I knew no way of escaping my horrid fate. I went back to Lady Fijalkowska again. I clung to her, crying and pleading for her to save me. Her answer was telling me there was no reason to panic—I didn't look "too much" like a Jew. She talked me into going to the nearby monastery and asking for sanctuary from the father, Edward Wojtczak. He was supposed to be a kind man and a friend to the Jews. I went. What else could I do? A sister answered my ring and asked what it was I wanted. I told her I had to see the father. She didn't say anything—just looked me up and down as if trying to figure out who I was. She told me to wait. A long time passed. The father himself came out to see me. A tall man, gray-haired—he looked about sixty—with a kind face. I started crying and said I was a Jewish daughter. I took out my purse with the little money I had left and some jewelry I always carried with me for whenever I had to buy my way out of getting killed. I told him I would give it all away to the sick people in his infirmary. The priest looked at me with understanding and said: "I don't need it. You might have to use it someday. Where will you go now? It's night already." He took me inside the monastery, I felt lost in the darkness. There were only small candles flickering over the heads of the marble and bronze icons. It was all horrifying. I sank quickly into a sleep.

At five in the morning, the priest came to me. He took me to his cell, gave me some food. I was beginning to feel that my fate was changing. He told me that in two hours, his real sister was coming here to talk things over with me. It was true—she really came. A nearsighted woman, she stared straight into my eyes as we stood nose to nose. She was simply radiant with kindness. She kissed me and calmed me down. I offered her my little bag with all my possessions.

"I'll only hide it for you. Hitler won't be around forever," she said.

She combed out my hair so I'd look like a Gentile girl. She changed my clothes. She took me with her. We got on a trolley and she took me to Pulawska [Pulawska] Street, to her unmarried sister. This sister was caring for a Jewish child—a girl of about two. Such a beautiful and wonderful child you've never seen. The child treated her like a mother and she simply cherished the little girl.

"And you say, she says to me, "that I'm a cousin of yours."

The priest's sister had a buttons-and-notions shop downstairs. I stayed in her flat and sometimes I came down to help out. My Polish was perfect.

Soon, Germans came and took over the store, letting only Volksdeutsche run it. I happened to be there that day. You can imagine how scared to death I was. After that, I never left the room. That's right. I made it too obvious when I ran back to the room like that—but I was so scared.

The priest came. He comforted me. "Don't worry," he said. He told me to go back inside the monastery and to stay there till he got me papers and a job. I was now back inside the cloister. I learned all their prayers and the group recitations the nuns sang.

The priest went to see Fijalkowski—the lord of the manor where I worked on the labor gang. It turned out they were very well acquainted and he brought me back the Kennkarte of a real Gentile girl—Zofia Rychlinska [Rychlińska] of Białystok who had just died in the Warsaw Hospital. The father accompanied me—I was supposed to be a simple farm girl now—to the Gestapo, to have me registered. The Gestapo were completely cynical. They stared at me maliciously—they knew perfectly well who I really was—but since a Catholic priest had come along, they didn't feel like starting the investigation.

So now I had the identity card of an "Aryan" Christian girl and my name isn't S- V- anymore, it's Zofia Rychlinska. I keep attending the services in the convent and sing along with the nuns.

The priest did me more favors. He got me a job with Dr. Niewiadomski on Marszałkowska [Marszałkowska] 87—a completely Gentile street—and I worked for a Gentile family. The priest had mentioned me to the doctor a few times. The father didn't want to take on another person in times like these! The doctor finally agreed.

I got along in Dr. Niewiadomski's house. Sleep, food, and a couple of zloty [złoty] a week. I helped take care of his house, and also his office.

She turned to Father Wojtczak again, frightened by a Gestapo raid on a nearby building.

Three weeks later, I was in the priest's cell and Fijalkowski walked in. He was pale as the wall. He didn't say anything. I got scared—something must be wrong. He was the one who got me the identity card. I tried to keep up appearances and say something pleasant. But he was lifeless. The next day, I had to go back to the priest to find out what was going on and again, I met Fijalkowski. I tried sounding cheerful ... Then, it suddenly dawned on me that he was hiding out here, and it was because of me. His caretaker had denounced him to the Gestapo for giving the identity card of his servant girl, Zofia Rychlinska, to a Jew. The Gestapo rushed over to Fijalkowski's estate, found the place abandoned because he'd escaped through a back door, so they beat up his father and mother and arrested his wife and children. It was like this for many sad days until the priest was able—for a huge sum of money and through personal contacts—to free Fijalkowski's family and have the whole matter disposed of.

She remained in Warsaw until she was deported to Germany in November 1944, after the failed Warsaw uprising.

Most Jews who survived in Poland had to rely on any number of Poles—both long-term and casual benefactors—to survive the long years of German occupation. Róża Reibschaid-Feliks identified many benefactors, among them priests, who came to her assistance. (Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life* [New York: Crown Publishers, 1971], pp.284–85.)

My conscience would not leave me alone if I kept silent about the deeds of these "Righteous." Some helped me for a whole year, others for two months, some for a few days only, but I shudder to think what would have happened if they had not held out their helping hand just for those few days! Even he who gave me shelter for one night only—may he be blessed! ... Here are my saviors:

1. *The Reverend Canon Wojciech Bartosik, Wawrzeńczyce, district of Miechów*
 2. *Professor Sarna (W.S.H., Kraków), during the war owner of an estate near Kraków, now living in Kraków*
 3. *Władysław Bukowski, now living in Kraków (during the war owner of the Makocice estate near Proszowice)*
 4. *Helena Bukowska, wife of Jan, now in Łódź*
 5. *Jadwiga Goetel (wife of the writer Ferdynand), now living in Warsaw*
 6. *The Reverend Dr. Ferdynand Machay, Our Lady's Church in Kraków*
 7. *The Lach family, Kraków, owners of a house in ulica Dobrego Pasterza*
 8. *Wiktoria Krawczyk, janitor, Kraków, Kościuszki [Street] 52*
 9. *Jan Wiecheć, Kraków (employed during the war in the Krischer firm, Zwierzyńska [Street] 6)*
 10. *Engineer Karol Kulczycki, Warsaw (and his wife Julia)*
 11. *The family of Michał and Maria Stępiński, Makocice 12 near Proszowice*
- Every one of these people has done a great deal for me at the risk of his own life.*

Fela Rotsztajn, who lived in the village of Jeziorna near Warsaw, recalled her many Polish benefactors, among them a priest. (Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, p.308.)

I am a resident of Jeziorna near Warsaw where my family has lived for generations. I survived the occupation years in this area thanks to kind people. This wasn't for a day or a month, but my wanderings lasted more than three years. Risking their own lives people lent me a helping hand. These were: Wojciech Dominik of the village of Łęg, Edmund Komorowski of Konstancin, Rev. Antoni Konieczny of Słomczyn, Kazimierz Wandel of the village of Łęg, Władysław Moskaiewicz of Słomczyn, Stanisława Suchecka of Słomczyn, Władysław Zduńczyk of Słomczyn, Bolesław Zawadzki of Klarysew, Andrzej Rossman of the village of Bielawa, Kornelli of the village of Bielawa, Jerzy Mrówka of Mirków, and Zbigniew Kępka of Mirków.

Anna Forkasiewicz (née Niuta-Studnia), a Jewish survivor residing in Melbourne, Australia, described the assistance she and her family received from numerous Poles, among them members of the Catholic clergy. (Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, pp.26–27.)

So much is heard about the unsympathetic attitude of the Polish clergy towards the Jews that I want to place special emphasis on two names:

Father Bolesław Skwarliński [Bolesław Skwarliński], Prefect from Radom: Whilst I was hiding for six months at the parsonage in Garbatka near Radom, the Prefect was a frequent guest of Father Józef [Józef] Kuropieski, who provided me with all the care and attention a pregnant woman requires. I had to leave when my baby's birth was approaching and it was then that I went to live with the Stopiński [Stopiński] family.

Father Jan Podsiadły [Podsiadły], my husband's school friend: We were guests of his cousin during Easter of 1943 while he was still studying for the priesthood. In 1943 when the Germans evacuated areas on the right bank of the Vistula, we were taken to a camp in Pruszków [Pruszków], where I was separated from my husband who was sent to the Dachau concentration camp. I was left with my baby in Sochaczew in tragic circumstances. (My striking Jewish features were only partially offset by my faultless Polish accent.) With the help of the local curate (who did not know my origin) I reached Mszczonów [Mszczonów] near Żyrardów [Żyrardów] where Father Podsiadły was a curate. He took care of my child and me, by lodging us with a childless couple and visiting us frequently; although the visits could have led to his arrest and even death, they served to allay suspicion about my Jewish appearance.

Gustaw Alef-Bolkowiak, a Jewish partisan who fought in the People's Guard, recalled the assistance he received from a number of Poles, including members of the Catholic clergy, after he was wounded in partisan warfare. (Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.533.)

After I was wounded in a skirmish near Osa [Ossa] in Opoczno county, many people cared for me: Mirosław Krajewski, Elżbieta Krajewska, Mrs. Pieszczyk—the owner of a laundry near Jasna Street in Warsaw, Wacław and Ryszard Strzelecki, the teacher Gromelski, the engineer Bukowski, Rev. [Jan] Gałęza, Sister Stefania [Miaśkiewicz, of the Sisters of the Family of Mary], Irena Ciesielska and doctors whose names have faded in my memory because of the passage of time. Those are the people who, in the fall of 1942, during a period when the occupier heightened their terror, risked their lives and the lives of their families to come to my assistance.

A priest from Kielce, in central Poland, was sent to a concentration camp for assisting a Jew. (Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, p.33.)

Because I extended help to a sick Jew in Kielce, I was arrested by the Gestapo and spent three years in a jail and in concentration camps in Oświęcim (Auschwitz), Mauthausen, Gusen and Dachau.
Yours in Christ, Monsignor Witold Dzieciol [Dzieciol], Victoria Park, Western Australia

Milton Kestenberg, an attorney in New York City, related the experiences of his father, a Warsaw industrialist, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and was hidden with the help of several Poles. After the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, the Germans rounded up the population and shipped it out of the ruins of the city. After jumping from a train and spraining his leg, Kestenberg was found by a guard who took him to a parish rectory. The priest took Kestenberg in and cared for him until the liberation. They remained friends after the war, until their deaths. (Ewa Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności: Stosunki polsko-żydowskie 1939–1945* [Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Umiejętności, 2006], 216.)

Piotruś Kormiol, who was born in Warsaw in 1932, recounted the assistance he received from various priests. (His account, recorded in May 1945, is found in the archive of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Record Group 301, Testimony 489.)

The Majackis solved Aunt Basia's [Dr. Eleonora Reicher, who had converted to Catholicism in 1903 and was regarded as a Pole] problem by agreeing to take me to their house [in 1942]. And that was what happened. It was very nice for me at the Majackis' house. My aunt and Miss Helenka [her housekeeper] came to see me every week. Even though the time I could spend outside was limited, I was not bored. I had a friend there, the Majackis' son, Janusz. ...

I also did not behave the way I should have at the Majackis'. I was very talkative. This irritated Mr. Majacki. Luckily at that time Father Jacek Woroniecki was in Warsaw, a Dominican, Mrs. Potocka's brother. It was he who helped my aunt put me in the dormitory run by the Marian Fathers in Bielany [a suburb of Warsaw].

Part of the dormitory was occupied by the Germans and that was very dangerous. The people there were also very unfriendly towards me. Because of my completely Semitic features, they would call me a Jew in front of everybody. Once I even had problems with a German. One of my friends from the dormitory told him straight out that I was a Jew. Who knows how badly everything might have ended, if the rector, a priest, had not calmed the situation down. But I could not stay there anymore. It was dangerous for me, and the rector was afraid. . My aunt did not know where to put me. ... Finally, Mrs. Starzecka came up with a solution. She inspected orphanages of the Polish Red Cross. She put me up in the orphanage founded by my aunt. ...

In July [1944], the entire orphanage was sent to the country for summer vacation. I was the only one who could not go [doubtless because of his appearance] and I had to stay behind. ... So I stayed with Mrs. Bilińska and with several people from the orphanage's staff. This was where I was when the uprising [of August 1944] broke out. ... The uprising was put down, and the Germans sent me to the camp in Pruszków. ...

When I was in Pruszków, I did not know what was happening to my aunt, or to Miss Helenka. After three days, they took me with a transport to Kielce. I did not know anyone in Kielce, so I got on a train and went to Kraków. Mrs. Potocka's brother lived in Kraków, Father Jacek Woroniecki, who put me in a municipal orphanage [actually this was a reformatory for delinquent boys] in Bronowice, near Kraków. Life was miserable [for all the children], and there was lots of work. ... no one knew about my background. A few weeks later, my aunt found me, but she could not take me out of the orphanage. ... This is how I survived until Poland was liberated, without any real changes. ... When Kraków and Warsaw were taken

over [by the Soviets] I returned to Warsaw and am living at my aunt's house again.

Several unidentified priests in the vicinity of Włodawa, in the voivodship of Lublin, are mentioned in Jewish memoirs. Mirka Bram (Erlich), a Jewish girl born in 1936, recalls (as recorded in Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and Noe Grüss, eds., *The Children Accuse* [London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996], pp.139–40):

Mrs Szusterowa [from Adampol] told me I should go and see the priest in Włodawa, and that he would certainly help me. We went to Włodawa across the gardens and fields so that no one would see us. She left me by the church and forbade me to go back to her house, because she was very much afraid. I went to the church and went looking for the priest ... I saw the priest by the little house behind the church and I went up to him. I said: 'Good morning, Mr. Priest. I'm an orphan, please can you help me?'

The priest [Rev. Dean Józef Sobieszek] smiled and said: 'Go and see Mrs Orzechowska, the doctor's wife, and tell her that I sent you.' And he gave me Mrs Orzechowska's address, even though I knew where she lived, but I did not say anything because I was pretending not to be from Włodawa. But Mrs Orzechowska and her husband recognised me straightaway and told me not to be afraid. I burst into tears and told them everything. Then Mrs Orzechowska sent me into the country to a priest she knew who knew that I was Jewish. The priest taught me how to talk so that no one would know that I was Jewish, how you must not say 'Mr Priest' but 'father', and many other things. I stayed there for several days.

Harold Werner, a Jewish partisan active in that area, recalls in his memoirs, *Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), at page 191:

In a small village not far from the Bug River, we went at night to the house of a friendly local priest and asked him to take us to the shallowest point of the river. He led us to a spot where the water was waist deep, and with our weapons over our heads we crossed, with the priest leading the way. When we got to the other side, we directed him to go back.

Diane Armstrong (née Baldinger), born in 1939 and known as Danusia, together with her parents Henek and Bronia, spent the war years in the small town of Piszczac near Biała Podlaska under the protective umbrella extended to them by Rev. Roman Soszyński, the parish priest. The remarkable story is told in Armstrong's moving saga, *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations* (Milsons Point, N.S.W.: Random House, 1998), at pages 294–307, and 573–83. During a recent visit to Poland she visited the town where her family hid for three years under assumed identities and posing as Catholics—the Bogusławskis. There they were befriended by the priest who played chess with her father. The Gestapo was close by and they lived in fear of being denounced.

Ever since my father [Henek] had arrived in Piszczac, the problem of making friends had been on his mind. Being newcomers made him and Bronia too vulnerable, because all new arrivals were suspected of being Jews until proved otherwise. He'd noticed that all the other newcomers in the village, who were Catholics, soon found mutual friends or church connections which made them accepted, but neither he nor Bronia could claim such links. He'd already asked the church organist to enter his certificate of baptism into the parish records. Although it was a false certificate, once it was entered it would appear genuine and he'd be able to make copies if he ever needed proof of baptism.

It was vital to make friends and become part of village life as fast as possible. ... A few weeks after the new priest [Rev. Roman Soszyński, then 32 years old] had arrived, Henek was heading towards the post office. ... He was about to walk into the post office when he heard a cart rattle along from the direction of Chotyłow [Chotyłów]. The driver tugged the reins, the cart stopped, and out stepped the new parish priest, brushing the sleet off his black soutane. His heart beating at his own audacity, Henek hastened towards him and apologised for accosting him in the street. 'On the contrary, my dear Dr Bogusławski,' replied Father Soszynski with a disarming smile. 'I'm the one who should apologise for not having called on you, but I've been following the bishop's orders [not to call on his parishioners, but let them seek him out]. What can we do, we live in such dangerous times!'

Heartened by the priest's friendly manner, Henek pressed on. 'This evening my wife and I have invited some friends over to our place. If Reverend Father would come and have a glass of tea with us, we'd be honoured.'

Roman Soszynski looked with interest at this greying man whose neatly trimmed moustache and slight limp added to his air of distinction. He'd already heard about the new dentist from the organist, who'd reported the conversation about the baptism certificate with a look which had implied some doubt. But he liked Dr Bogusławski's sincerity and his direct gaze. 'I'll be delighted to come tonight and meet your good lady,' he replied.

When Henek told Bronia the good news, her forehead crinkled like a washboard. 'How do I know what to say to a

priest?' she fretted.

'Don't worry about anything, leave the talking to me,' Henek said. 'Anyway, he seems very approachable.' As it turned out, the evening proceeded better than either of them could have hoped. Roman Soszynski was an entertaining raconteur with an easy flow of conversation, and although his observant gaze missed nothing, he knew how to put people at ease.

He loved to hear what was going on in the parish and laughed at jokes as loudly as anyone, but with his Jesuit training he also enjoyed arguing, debating and exchanging ideas. One of his regrets about coming to this sleepy hollow was that there would be little opportunity to sharpen his wits, so he was delighted that the dentist was a thinking man, well read and cultured. ... Before leaving that evening, Father Soszynski told Henek that he'd welcome a game of chess in the presbytery. While they washed the glasses after their guests had gone home, Henek couldn't help smiling. 'Just imagine, the son of Reb Danil Baldinger playing chess with a priest!' ...

Not a day passed without some traumatic incident which threatened to reveal their secret. ... before long, rumours about the Boguslawskis were spreading through the village. ... Father Soszynski had heard rumours about the Boguslawskis. ... 'At school today one of the children said that Danusia was Jewish,' he said casually. Henek's eyes were boring into his face. 'I told them it wasn't true,' Father Soszynski continued. ... he [Henek] understood that the priest was letting him know that he was on his side.

Diane Armstrong's recent meeting with the priest, now in his 80s, restored a lost part of her childhood and gave her a new perspective on those years in hiding. She had always been angry at the villagers and their rumours. Now she understood that everyone had suspected they were Jewish, but no one had denounced them. The village, under the guidance of the priest, had protected them. Her anger now turned into wonder and gratitude.

Benevolence shines from Father Soszynski's face. In a voice that's surprisingly strong for a man of eighty-three, he says, 'I was thinking about you just two days ago. I thought about your parents and wondered whether little Danusia was still alive. While I was in town today someone said that people from overseas were looking for me. I thought of you straightaway. Danusia! I thought, and flew home like a bird!'

Why should this telepathy astonish me, when the fact that I am looking into the face of the priest who helped us survive the war in Piszczac is beyond anything I ever dreamed of? ...

While he speaks, I keep pushing back the question that is nagging at me. Not yet, I keep thinking. Not yet. Suddenly Father Soszynski stuns me by answering my unspoken question. 'Of course I knew that you were Jewish. We all knew.' ...

Father Soszynski continues his reminiscences. 'Not long after I arrived in the village, your father asked the organist to enter his certificate of baptism into the parish records. This seemed a strange request, and I wondered then whether he had bought this certificate somewhere. If so, it was a very smart move because once the information was recorded, he'd be able to obtain authentic copies. Still, in those days it was better not to know too much so I decided not to inquire too closely into it and we entered your names in the parish records.' ...

One day in 1944, Mrs. Forycka, the doctor's wife, came to see me and dropped a bombshell. "Has Reverend Father heard the latest? The whole town is saying the Boguslawskis are Jews!" I thought to myself, Jesus Maria, can this be true? Then I recalled that business with the baptism certificate, that embittered fellow Mr Jozek [Józek] who came to work with your father but turned out to be a Jew, your mother's nervousness, your father's constant vigilance ...

Next day, your father came to see me. He was not the same person. He had lost all his strength, he was a crushed man. Despair in his eyes. So sad to see.' ... "Catastrophe, Reverend Father!" he told me. "They're saying that we are Jews ..."

... 'When your father came to see me that day, I felt like weeping,' he says. 'Such a cultured, witty man, so intelligent and companionable. How could I not extend a helping hand? I said, "Doctor Boguslawski, let's look at it another way. There's no merit being born a Pole any more than there is disgrace being born a Jew. It's not up to us. It's up to God. I can't feel proud of being born a Pole any more than another should feel ashamed of being born a Jew. But the issue is that to accuse someone of being born a Jew today is to sentence them to death."' He leans towards me. 'You know, the Gestapo were stationed only three kilometres down the road in Chotyłow.

'So I said to your father, "Doctor, let me figure out how to climb out of this pit. I won't run from house to house, but what I will do is come to your place this afternoon with my sister, and we will walk down the centre of the main street of the town so that everyone will see that we're coming to visit you as if nothing has happened. Let them all see. Will you give us a glass of tea when we come?" ...

'I can still see the relief on your father's face when I told him that I'd come over that afternoon and keep coming to visit him,' says Father Soszynski. ... For the first time in my life I realise that our only hope of survival, however slight, rested entirely with Father Soszynski. ...

'After that visit with my sister, I kept coming more often than usual, to demonstrate my support. When the villagers saw

their priest socialising with your parents, they figured out that I must know what I was doing, and decided that they had no business gossiping about them.'

Leaning towards me, Father Soszynski says with great emphasis, 'And no-one in that village denounced you, even though everybody knew that you were Jews. In your case, Piszczac passed with flying colours. We had drunkards, thieves, and cheats amongst us, but on that occasion, everyone behaved beyond reproach.' ...

Throughout my life I had been angry that our existence in Piszczac had been so tenuous, that dangerous rumours had proliferated and that, had the war continued, one of our neighbours or acquaintances would have denounced us to the Germans. But Father Soszynski's account of our survival helps me to see it in a different light. During the Holocaust it took only one person to send hundreds to their death, but it sometimes took one hundred people to save a single Jewish life. For the first time I realise that by their silence the people of Piszczac had helped us to survive.

An unnamed village priest in the vicinity of Drohiczyn on the River Bug assisted Bella Bronstein, an orphan, by finding her a position with a local farmer under her new Christian identity, Antonina Bujalska. Later the priest visited her when she was hospitalized, provided her with money, and invited her to sing in the church choir. Bella Bronstein was helped by many Poles as she moved from village to village, even though she was recognized as or suspected of being Jewish. The priest also kept a Jewish housekeeper who went by the name of Wanda. (David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn*, [Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969], pp.29ff (English section).)

I came by a Catholic church, and sat down to rest a while chanting a holy Christian hymn. An old man came out of a little house and invited me in. I accepted the invitation willingly. The old man was the warden of the church. After he gave me some warm food in his cozy little room I asked him if I could find employment around the place. He suggested that we go in to see the priest who might take me in as help to his housekeeper. It turned out later that the priest's housekeeper was also a refugee Jewish woman who was not too anxious to have another Jewess around ... (not unusual in those terrible days).

The priest however, was glad to help a child in distress and sent me to one of his rich parishioners, with a recommendation. I was accepted and was again rechristened Antonina. My new patroness was the wife of a rich farmer. She offered me the job in the cow barn and sheep shed, in which they had over eighty heads. I was too timid and scared to refuse the job although I knew that it was really too hard for a girl. I was willing to try and so I remained in the service of this family.

The churchwarden left me there, and I again felt at home with good people. At night I heard them talk about the horrible situation and how the poor Jews were being exterminated. ...

The rainy season began. Every day I had to take the sheep to pasture, and I returned soaking wet. Yet I didn't mind the cold or the discomfort of my wet clothes. I was determined to go on; until one day I caught cold, and got sick; but I was afraid to tell anyone how miserably sick I was. However, my kind mistress noticed how I suffered, and when she measured my fever it was above 40 degrees C. The doctor came and I was ordered immediately to the hospital. Now it was a struggle for life and all my thoughts were how to get well again.

One night I dreamt that my mother came to me and said that soon I would get well; I should then try to get away from this hospital as far as possible. The priest also came to visit me. All the nurses took an interest in me, but I avoided all their questions about my past. I was afraid I might be discovered. During my recuperation period, I got acquainted with a nurse named Sophia. This nurse suggested that I should not go back to the farm. Instead she offered me a place with her sister who needed help with her little ones. I was considering the change but dared not tell my former patrons, who were very good to me. When I was well again I decided to leave the hospital under cover of darkness. ...

Sophia's sister received me gladly and offered me her home. I kissed her hand and immediately began to attend to the two little girls, who soon took a liking to me. They never asked me who I was and where I came from. Evidently, the letter I brought from Sophia explained everything.

Once I was so exhausted from work in the field that I fell asleep on the spot. I was brought home to rest, and was not even scolded. I felt happy in my new home, and even attended religious services with all the other children of the village. Once when I came to church I noticed that I was being pointed at. I thought that again I was recognized as being Jewish. So after the services I slowly slipped out into the street and was again on the road, feeling once more the gaze of hostile eyes on me. As I was walking along I found myself before a group of German policemen, two of which turned out to be Polish. I thought that the best thing would be to go on walking calmly and briskly. But then I heard one of them calling me to stop. They said "Gut Morgen" rather politely and walked away. One of them, however, remained behind. Now, I thought, is the crucial moment. It turned out that this was a young Polish policeman whose name was Solick. He was a native of Drohichin [Drohiczyn] and recognized me.

"You are Jewish, aren't you? Your uncle's name was Sholem. I know all about you. Let me see your identity card."

Trembling I handed him the card with the name of Antonina Bujalska. Again he looked at me and said: "You are not telling the truth, but I shan't do you any evil. You better clear out of here, for somebody else might recognize you. Then, you shall be among all the other dead of your people." He let me go but wrote down the place where I lived.

Again I was facing danger. I didn't sleep all night, planning how to find safety elsewhere. I did not run away the next morning for I was hoping that the war would end soon. So a few months passed and it was already the eve of Passover, the season when good Catholic Christians go to church to confess their sins. I, too, went to the "father confessor" with the other children of the village.

On the way to church the children were discussing how and what to confess and made fun of the whole thing. Wanting to be part of the conversation, I decided to say something positive and affirmative. So I said that we must perform the duties of our religion, and urged them to hurry lest we be late. I was glad to be last to remain in the church after everybody had already gone and made as if I was praying devotedly. I drew the attention of a fine middle-aged lady who came over to me and asked why I had remained in the empty church so late. I took the opportunity to tell the lady about my sad lot. I told her how difficult it was for me to stay with the family I was living, and expressed the wish to find work with some other family, attending to children or taking care of an old woman. She immediately offered to take me with her as she had two children and an old mother.

I couldn't believe my ears, but here I was already walking by the side of my new benefactress. As we were walking the distance of about 3 kilometers from church to her home, the woman told me how her Jewish neighbors were taken out to be killed. I listened to her story of horror but made no reply.

When we came into the house, I met the old lady her mother. I bowed, kissed her hand and greeted her in the manner that good Polish Christian children do. Her reply was also cordial and traditional, but I noticed tears in her eyes and a benevolent smile on her face. Later, when all left for the fields and I was left alone with the old lady and the two children I again felt at home hoping that now I would resume a normal life as a refugee Christian girl under the name of Antonina Bujalska. The old lady took a liking to me and told me her own story. It appeared that she too, was Jewish, but eloped with her Polish lover when she was only 16 and never returned to her family. Now she would recall her old father who never recovered from the shock of his daughter's conversion, while her old mother perished in the Warsaw ghetto.

Hearing her mention Warsaw, I burst out crying. The old lady then told me that she knew right away I was Jewish by my appearance and gentle manners. ...

I remained with this family for several months, and everything appeared normal for nobody but the old grandmother knew that I was Jewish.

One sunny Sunday morning I was in the fields with the children of my adopted family and I felt fine. The children wanted me to sing for them, so I began a church hymn I knew well. Just then I heard the voice of the local priest who remembered me from the time I was in the hospital. He was glad to see me again and said: "Good morning, Antonina ... what are you doing in my parish?" I answered that I was already a year with the Timinsky [Tymiński] family and was fine and happy. Complimented [sic] me on my singing he invited me to come and sing in his church choir. Without waiting for a reply he handed me some money to buy myself some decent clothes before I come to church.

I was in a real predicament. To appear in a church choir before many people where somebody might recognize me was dangerous. But it was equally dangerous not to accept the priest's invitation. I was also afraid to tell my patroness. So I decided to seek the advice of the old grandmother. I came to her room when everybody in the house was already asleep kissed her hand and sought her opinion in regard to the priest's invitation. The wise old woman listened carefully and advised me to accept the offer; buy new shoes, dress nicely and join the choir. She was sure my outward appearance could never betray my being Jewish.

Next morning I did exactly as the wise old lady told me to do. I washed and dressed neatly and went to the priest's house. From there I was taken by the priest's housekeeper (who was also Jewish) to buy the right sort of clothes for a good Christian choir girl. We bought a pair of sandals, a beret, and a nice blue knitted skirt. When I was all dressed, Wanda (that was the housekeeper's name) slyly remarked that now I really look like a "Jiduvka [Żydówka]" (a Jewish girl) ...

I was really frightened, but soon Wanda calmed me by saying that nowadays anyone who looked gentle and cultured is suspected as Jewish ... We both knew the truth about each other, but acted as if we didn't, and so parted, to our respective non-Jewish "homes."

I was nervous and impatient, during the last days of the week, thinking how it would be on Sunday morning—my hour of trial. At nine o'clock, when I heard the church bells ringing I was ready but jittery. I only plucked up courage when grandma, my old friend, wished me good luck saying: ... "Sing well. Think of me when you stand before the public, and have no fears".

So I did. Standing there among the other girls in the choir, I felt the priest's approving look, and saw the old man's lips whispering: "Dobrze [Dobrze]" (Polish: well done!)

My first appearance was successful. The next time it was easier. They got used to me and no one seemed to question my

origin. I was well liked in the village and at times I was even permitted to substitute my master on night watch duty with the other villagers. No one suspected my Jewishness. Yet, I was often tormented by the thought of being the only Jewess left in the world.

So the days and months passed. ...

The Sisters of Divine Providence in Międzyrzec Podlaski, as did other nuns, accepted Irena Likierman, born in Warsaw in 1932, whose family had shot refuge in that area. (Account of Irena [Agata] Bołdok, née Likierman, ‘Back to Being Myself!’ in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, volume 2, pp.30–32.)

I came from the train station to Mrs. Cydzikowa’s. I had jaundice. I remember that I looked completely different from the other kids. My mother’s friend let me stay for a little while, but then she said, “You know that I have two sons. I can’t take such a risk.” She turned me over to the nuns. These were the Sisters of Providence—located at 69 Lubelska Street, a place donated by Count Potocki. There was a barracks for orphans there. I was the oldest, but there were thirty other little ones. The nuns knew very well that I was Jewish. I was emaciated, with little braids, yellow like a lemon because of the jaundice.

I don’t know how long I stayed with those nuns. One time, Germans came and told the nuns that if they had any Jewish children, they would have to give them up. They ought to go back to wherever they came from. The nuns decided to send me back to the woman who had brought me there. You should have seen the expression on Mrs. Cydzikowa’s face when she saw me. She said that she was very sorry, but that unfortunately, she could not take me in and that I should return to the nuns. I didn’t really know what to do; I went back and forth maybe twice. ... I spent the night on the doorstep of a church mortuary. ... Gendarmes came in the morning. They asked, “What are you doing here, little girl?” I answered astutely that I was waiting for my mother ...

They came back once—I was still sitting there. A second time—I was still sitting. They said, “Come with us, your mother probably won’t come back.” They took me to the town hall, to the mayor. ... I think his name was Majewski. ... The mayor got the idea to send me to a home for the elderly, so that I could wait out the worst period there. He figured out that I was Jewish. When someone asked me what my name was, I answered “Irena Likierman.” What more did he need?

At the home for the elderly, I sat under someone’s bed. I would only come out to eat and wash myself. I was already there for some time (months or weeks), when I once went outdoors. ... In any case, some woman saw me and began screaming ... I ran back into the home, and the nuns that were running it, afraid that this woman would come after me, took me back to the sisters where I had stayed before. I spent the following year with them. ...

In 1944 the Russians entered. Some time before, when the front was approaching and there was nothing to eat, the nuns handed me over, as the oldest of the girls, as a servant to a woman teacher. ...

When the front passes, I went back to the nuns (those at the orphanage, not with the elderly), and in 1945 I went to school. I had never gone to school before ...

After her escape from the ghetto in Łosice, Stella Zylbersztajn took shelter in several villages in the vicinity of Łosice. In total, 25 Polish families helped her survive the war. The attitude of local priests proved to be beneficial in assuring her survival. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.288–89, 295–96.)⁶⁶

Having been taught by experience, we gave our most valuable belongings to Poles for safekeeping and they were all we had later. On the day that the ghetto was destroyed several women stood on the boundary in front of our window in order to help us out in some way. Out of the window we threw things that we had no hope of carrying off and we did not lose any of them. ...

I left my mother and fled to the garden of Mrs Piotrowska. This was only 200 metres (650 ft) from the market square where everyone had been assembled.

At noon Mrs Piotrowska’s sister-in-law brought me milk and bread. But too many children knew of my hiding place so in the evening I went to Świniarków [Świnarów]. Along the way I had to ask where Mr Śmieciuch, our customer, lived. Village patrols showed me the way but guessed I was a refugee and asked Śmieciuch to send me on further. So, after spending the night and eating a good breakfast I moved on towards Wyczółki. There I knew the head of the hamlet and his family. People were already returning from Church after High Mass. I avoided large groups but joined a peasant who was walking alone. I asked him the way and he asked me about myself, where I was from, and so forth. He quickly guessed the truth and put his whole heart in simple words:

⁶⁶ Stella Zylbersztajn provided additional details about her rescue in her memoir *A gdyby to było Wasze dziecko?: Wspomnienia antysemitki w getcie, komunistki w klasztorze i uniwersalistki wśród Ludu Wybranego, Umiłowanego* (Łódź: Oficyna Bibliofilów, 1994; Łosice: Łosickie Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Equus, 2005), especially pp.36, 52, 55–56, 58–64, 145.

'You still have time to get to Wyczółki; the Kalickis will take you in later, too. In the meantime come to my place; in the bay of my barn I have a hiding place for pigs, and no one will find you there, you can hide there.'

He was moved to pity at the thought of my pampered childhood and compared me with his daughter. [Her benefactor, a complete stranger, was Waclaw Radzikowski of the village of Szańków. At the mass he attended in the church in Łosice, the pastor, Rev. Zarębski, had spoken of the terrible fate of the Jews and urged his parishioners to assist them: "All people are brothers and you should help everyone."] ...

Whenever I went my hosts always guessed [that I was Jewish] but we got on well together and they kept me as long as they could. Only when the entire village started frightening them [about the danger and possible repercussions for the entire village] did they pay me for my work and advise me where I should go further. I was looking after children in Kornica where once again my hostess was 'advised' to send me away for I would bring misfortune down on the village. Shortly after that I heard at the Sunday sermon: 'Fear the Lord more than people. When they tell you to turn over your pigs, you know how to conceal them though you could give them up without a sin. But when they tell you to give away Jews, the Germans must not be obeyed for God said "Thou shalt not kill" and we must help them, give them food and shelter' ..., etc. I do not know whether or not the priest already knew something about me or whether he saw me under the organ loft but I do know that talk about me in the village died down. (And I know that he gave a lead by way of example more than by word—a female catechumen of the family of Abraham came to the presbytery daily for lessons in the catechism. [She later learned that Rev. Czesław Chojecki, the vicar, had informed the pastor of Radzików, Rev. Zygmunt Wachulak, that a Jewish woman was hiding in the area, and the pastor appealed to the congregation to extend help to Jews.]

Though I looked like a baited hare, the photographer took my picture and the community [county office] issued me a Kennkarte without any document of previous registration. Someone who wished me well brought me the card so that I would not have to show myself without need. I felt I was saved.

At Christmas the priest went around but he deliberately did not ask me about the catechism. On Christmas Eve, C.G. gave me verses of his sister and Renia X [Regina Hądyńska]. She was 13 years old. Father [Henryk] Sulej [from the Marian monastery in Bielany, a suburb of Warsaw] saved her and got her a Kennkarte and guardians. Since my hostess was too poor to keep me through the winter I got myself other work. It is with emotion that I recall that the poorest paid me best and showed me the most affection. How delicately Halina warned me not to tell anyone that 'Mother used to bake chała [plaited white bread]' or pretended that she did not notice my ignorance about the Catholic faith! They probably all knew who I was but they didn't let me feel it.

It happened that a woman known to have a long tongue recognized me to be the daughter of 'that sweater maker' ... I told the priest [the vicar] about it. He became gloomy for a moment, but then he immediately comforted me: 'I'll take care of that.' And the woman did not let the cat out of the bag.

During the bombing in 1944 a family I knew from Siedlce took shelter in the home of my host. They had previously concealed a small Jewess but she took ill and died, so they asked me to come to their home. After the war I gladly took up their offer because thanks to them I was able to resume my interrupted schooling. My former hosts and the priest [the pastor] continued to help me materially and gave me whatever I needed when I asked for it.

After so much proof of people's goodness I come back to what I started from. Was that relative correct when she said that 'If they could, the Poles would murder us all?' I know that there were such persons, although they were exceptions for me. But there were more true human beings ...

I once heard of a charge made by Mr. T., an engineer, that 'Catholics concealed us in order to convert us to Catholicism.' Though I passed through many homes which I could not even list here, I never ran across this. I was taught my prayers and how to behave in church so that I might not give myself away; the rest was left to God and His mercy.

A priest in Kurów near Lublin, probably Rev. Wincenty Szczepanik, assisted Hersh and Helen Kotlar in finding a Christian family willing to take in their young daughter Goldele. The placement fell through after a few weeks, however, because the Polish couple became frightened. The Kotlar family, consisting of the parents and two daughters, survived the war receiving shelter and assistance from numerous Poles along the way. (Helen Kotlar, *We Lived in a Grave* [New York, Shengold Publishers, 1980], pp.53, 89–90.)

The only money that was still ours was entrusted to the priest. ... The priest was a good-natured and just man. He was concerned about the great sufferings of the Jews. Hersh was friendly with the priest. ... When the Nazis began to confiscate Jewish belongings and the Polish zlotye [sic] was devaluated, Hersh endeavored to exchange both our textile and yardgoods for gold coins. Both of us realized that in the future there will be a need for this type of currency. Having succeeded in selling some of our merchandise for payments in gold, we looked for a place to hide our money as well as the unsold goods. The priest helped us immensely. He hid our gold coins for us in his house.

One day he said to us, "In case I will not be present when you will be in need of the money, it is important that you know the location of the hiding place." He also assured us that only one other person knows about the money. This person, he told us, is an honest man, reliable and trustworthy. ... Had it not been for the priest we would not have been able to make the payments to the peasants who gave us shelter. The priest was an honest man and was fond of Hersh because he knew of Hersh's good reputation in the community.

After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, Lily Fenster (née Lubaskurka) took refuge in Łuków north of Lublin, where she passed as a Pole with the help of Poles. She happened to witness the execution of a priest who assisted Jews. (Testimony of Lily Fenster, November 8 and 10, 1994, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <<http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/fenster/section028.html>>.)

If they caught her, they would kill her and burn her like, that's what they did to a lot of Gentiles. I've seen they killed a priest ... He saved a couple of Jews ... in the parish there. They took him out. I was going with ... [to] put flowers on the grave [of her mother] ... in the cemetery ... So we hid under the stones ... The whole city was crying that they killed [the priest] ... Shot on the cemetery because he saved some Jews.

Kitty Felix (now Hart-Moxon) was 12 years old when the war broke out. She fled from her hometown of Bielsko near the German border with her parents and younger brother, and took refuge in Lublin where they were confined in the ghetto. While in Lublin her mother made the acquaintance of a priest, who later provided them with false identity documents identifying them as Catholic Poles and devised a rescue plan. Kitty and her mother joined a group of Poles being sent to Germany for forced labour. (Account of Kitty Hart-Moxon in Wendy Whitworth, ed., *Survival: Holocaust Survivors Tell Their Story* [Lound Hall, Bothamsall, Retford, Nottinghamshire: Quill Press in association with The Aegis Institute, 2003], pp.204–205; Internet: <<http://www.hmd.org.uk/files/1161877643-120.pdf>>.)

My mother, who was a qualified English teacher, made contact with a Catholic priest whose vicarage was opposite the Gestapo headquarters. She gave him English lessons in return for food. Crawling through the city sewers, she too risked her life, but without our endeavours we would have died of starvation [in the Lublin ghetto]. ...

We hid in the forest some three weeks, living mostly on berries. Eventually [in September 1942] we made our way back into Lublin—not to the ghetto but to the vicarage of the Catholic priest, who had obtained non-Jewish documents for us that were to help save our lives. I now had a new identity. My name was Leokadia Dobrzynska [Dobrzyńska], born in Lublin.

The priest had worked out a survival plan, but we would have to part, as together we were unlikely to survive. My father was to go to Tarnow [Tarnów] to be employed in a sawmill. My mother (now my aunt with a different name) and I would go into a Lublin collection centre where the SS were holding non-Jewish Poles they had grabbed off the streets to dispatch them to work in German factories. We got to the centre and soon found ourselves in a train, on our way with a group of Poles into the German Reich.

Our destination was Bitterfeld, the ammunition plant of IG Farben.

A Jew who hid in the Skrzynice forest near Lublin with a group of Jews received assistance from an unidentified priest he happened to encounter in the forest. (Account of A.G. in Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, p.169.)

The next morning, we watched a priest and a peasant roll a wagon into the forest to get firewood for the church. We went up to the priest and asked for some bread. The priest said he had no bread with him, but in the afternoon, when he came to the forest for more wood, he'd bring us some. Later, he did bring us bread and two bottles of milk. The bread and the bottles were hidden under the straw in the peasant's wagon, and he didn't know it. While the peasant was busy gathering wood, the priest told us to go to the wagon, where to look for the bread and milk, we found it and left.

Gitel Hopfeld and her two young children moved from village in vicinity of Bielżyce and Wronów near Lublin until the arrival of the Soviet Army. While few farmers were prepared to shelter them for any length of time, almost no one turned them away empty-handed, and no one betrayed them to the authorities. Eventually, they

were taken in by the regional leader of the Home Army. Along the way they encountered the kindness of two priests. (Gitel Hopfeld, *At the Mercy of Strangers: Survival in Nazi Occupied Poland* [Oakville, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York: Mosaic Press, 2005], pp.87, 99.)

Samuel Gruber, a Jewish partisan leader, described the attitude of a village priest in Pyszczoła Góra near Lublin, in his memoirs, *I Chose Life* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1978), at pages 83–84.

The [Jewish] partisans, the priest told the assembled mourners, were not robbers but fighting men, regardless of whether they were Christians or Jews. They were human beings who wanted to live and not be caught by the Germans. Accordingly, the priest warned his congregants, if a band of partisans came to your farmstead you should give them food and shelter for the night and not tip off the Germans, at least not immediately. You could always make the report the next morning after the partisans had left. Just be sure you don't inform the Germans while the partisans are still in your house, because if you do, you will end up having trouble from both sides, from the Germans for having taken in partisans, and from other underground fighters for having reported their friends.

It seems that the villagers took the words of their priest to heart, for the next day they treated us with unusual deference and hospitality. They gave us food, clothing, and even shoes, "so you can march better," they said. However, this was not enough for some of our men. They went out on their own and, instead of asking peasants for what they wanted, acted the part of thieves and holdup men.

Tema Rotman-Weinstock, who was born to a poor family in a small town in the province of Lublin, had only four years of schooling, but her Polish was fluent and she was familiar with village customs. She too encountered the protective support of a priest. Her story is recounted in Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), at pages 227–29.

From the beginning of the Nazi occupation, Tema, dressed as a peasant, smuggled food from the countryside to the town to help support her family. During the last stage of the war she roamed the familiar countryside. She worked hard and had to move from employer to employer, most of whom were hungry themselves and found it hard to feed her. Constantly exposed to raids, cold, and hunger, Tema fought against her feelings of hopelessness.

One winter, while searching in vain for shelter, she suffered frostbite in three of her toes. A peasant woman who could hardly support herself and her retarded daughter took pity on Tema and kept her for three months. But the days when peasants were willing to keep her were [because of their fear—Ed.] coming to an end. Tema's frostbitten toes continued to hurt her, and hunger made her grow thin. Finding solace in prayers, she persevered. For a while she hid out with a few meager provisions in the attic of a small roadside chapel. But hunger drove her out, and she went on until she found a hut. There she met a cousin who had come in from the forest to buy provisions. He told her that he and his wife lived in a bunker in the forest. Tema begged him to let her join them. He refused. She continued to roam the countryside, sick and often starving. When she was on the verge of collapse, kind peasants took her into their home. She describes her stay.

"I could not regain my health. I stopped feeling hunger, vomited a lot, and suffered from headaches. I was hardly able to work. And after a month, afraid to keep me, this peasant, Popko, directed me to a woman who lived on a farm with her daughter. This woman had a hard time running the farm, yet she was too poor to hire a farmhand. The village was called Kajtanówka [Kajetanówka], and the name of the peasant woman was Niedźwiedzka. Her hut was far from the main road, and the Germans were unlikely to come there ... She was not [visibly—Ed.] afraid to take me in; and I worked for her as much as I could. ..."

The year 1944 brought the Russian front closer. Tema's health continued to deteriorate. She could barely eat, yet she had to work hard. Her employer seemed pleased with her; then somehow the word spread that Tema was Jewish. Fortunately, no bad consequences followed because she found a powerful protector in the local priest. He baptized Tema and defended her against those who still saw her as a Jew. "The priest stood up for me, arguing that conversion was a wonderful Christian deed ... Slowly, I began to feel better, my health improved, and the wounds on my toes healed ... Then a miracle happened. I saw my mother, dressed the way she had been when we parted. She entered the hut, smiling, and said that we wouldn't be suffering much longer because on the 23rd of July the Soviets would come to liberate us." When Tema reported this vision to her employer and neighbors, they laughed at her. She herself began to doubt her dream or vision. But "the miracle happened—on July 23, 1944, the first Soviet soldiers came to our village and to the next one."

After the Soviets came, a group of women rushed into Tema's house, calling her Santa Teresa. Each wanted her to come and stay. Each brought delicious food, insisting that Tema eat it. Like the people around her, Tema believed in miracles and saw herself as a saint. Eventually, however, Tema decided to return to her Jewish faith. She settled in Haifa, Israel ...

Tema stayed in touch with the peasants who were kind to her.

Krystyna Modrzewska, a twenty-year-old woman, and her mother, Maria Mendelbaum, survived with assistance of nuns and a priest from Lublin, Rev. Paweł Dziubiński, a prelate of the Lublin chapter. Rev. Dziubiński provided temporary shelter and other assistance to his former neighbours, then known as the Mendelbaums. Through his housekeeper, Sister Pelagia, the mother superior of the Sisters of the Family of Bethany, Krystyna Modrzewska was put in contact with a convent of that order in Melgiew near Lublin, whereas her mother was sheltered in a small convent of that order in Międzyzlesie near Warsaw. Rev. Dziubiński also provided baptismal certificates to the Bass sisters, whose account is found later on. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.277–80.)

(At the beginning of March 1941 the landlady of the flat found out that the Jews were to be deported the following day.)

She was afraid to share this news with anybody, but she simply had to tell us, her lodgers. ... Unfortunately, I have no illusions. We began nervously to pack our suitcases, but that of course was no answer. What were we to do with ourselves? My mother and I were invited for lunch on the same day by a priest (Father Dziubiński), our former neighbour, who throughout had been taking a genuine interest in our welfare and assisted us whenever he could and as much as he could. Mother was very upset and told him about our new trouble. He said not to worry at all for we could simply stay with him and wait until the deportation was over—if it really did happen—and we would see later what could be done. He said this in a matter-of-fact voice, as if it were quite obvious and needed no comment, though sheltering a Jew was punishable by death then. We stayed at his parsonage.

Our fellow lodger was promised a new place. Should her new flat prove too big for her, we could move in. But only my mother went to live with her, since I, following the priest's advice, got out my hidden 'Aryan' documents and from 15 March 1941 began the life of a new person. The priest recommended me to Sisters [of the Family of Bethany] from a convent (in Melgiew, near Lublin).

Winter passed. The spring of 1942 began grimly. One of the Sisters returned one day from Lublin with hair-raising news. Piles of bodies lay in the streets following several days' massacres of Jews in that town. Blood was flowing in the gutters. Ukrainian soldiers of the SS were breaking into homes, killing whole families, throwing children out of windows, ordering sons to hang their parents, husbands their wives. Terrible manhunts were taking place in the streets. 'Your mother is probably no longer alive,' the Sister concluded her story. It was quite probable. I prepared myself for the worst, and in the evening held council with Marysia (a clerk the author got to know in the Village Council, where she was working). She kept vital statistics records and promised to help me should anything happen. She already knew about the massacre in Lublin. They had talked about it in the Council. Marysia promised to search the archives for the necessary documents: somebody's birth and marriage certificates and to issue a provisional identity card in that name. I was to give it to my mother and perhaps with the help of friends she would be able to find a hiding place somewhere. But there was a great deal of work in the office the next day and Marysia could not spare the time. The next day was Sunday. Thus it was Monday by the time we set off for Lublin. Marysia did not want me to walk about the town in those terrible days all by myself. She dressed me in a big country-style scarf, and I took a basket and we went by train to Lublin.

In Lublin, I went first to the priest who was in touch with my mother but he said he knew nothing about her. In the Jewish quarter terrible things were happening; it was impossible to go there. The four of us: the priests, Sister Pelagia (his housekeeper and at the same time Mother Superior of a convent), Marysia and I held council as to what should be done. The bell suddenly rang and my mother entered. She had come to say good-bye to the priest and ask him to take care of me. She brought a letter for me and her wedding ring. She was to report to Majdanek the same day at noon. All Jews with names beginning with the letter M were to go there. The priest ripped off the band from her arm.

'You'll stay here,' he said quietly. And mother stayed at the parsonage. She was rapidly coached on how to be an 'Aryan'. Sister Pelagia taught her to pray and after a few days sent her in the company of another Sister to Międzyzlesie near Warsaw, where the nuns had a small place. It was really of no importance, just two attached houses in a garden, looked after by one Sister. There was peace and genuine, literal poverty. Mother went to live there as an elderly lonely woman, a resettled widow. For the time being I could stop worrying about her. But I was filled by apprehension, by a nagging fear. ...

I escaped again to my village but, afraid to appear with my suitcases, went first to Marysia. She was really glad to see me and told me at once that the head of the village was sorry that I had left, that they were about to offer me a permanent position, and that I should not be afraid, everything would be all right! She would defend me if I were suspected, but I should keep up a bold front and on no condition admit who I was. Naturally! I went to the Sisters after I had arranged for a job at the Village Council, and though they were not particularly enthusiastic, they took me back—as a Village Council

employee—into their uninviting home. There followed long days of dull office work. Marysia stood guard over my life, she constantly watched everything and everybody. When she saw through the window that strangers were approaching the office, she prudently hid me in the archives. Later she would come to inform me: 'It's all right. You can go back to the office, it's a local girl dressed in town clothes.' Or sometimes: 'Stay here. It's some woman from Lublin. I'll come again when she's gone.'

Several times I had to hide with a beating heart among dusty volumes of old documents waiting for some 'suspicious' person to go.

Another Jew recalls some of the Jewish survivors, who had received help from priests and nuns, whom he met in Lublin just after the war. (David Zabłudovsky, "Horrors, Death and Destruction (Experiences of a Holocaust Survivor)," *Chosen Pages From the Zabłudow Yiskor Book*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/zabludow/Zabludow.html>>, translation of Nechama Shmueli-Schmusch, ed., *Zabludow: Dapim mi-tokh yisker-bukh* [Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Zabłudow in Israel, 1987].)

I meet with remnants of the survivors of our nation. ... I speak with a few sisters that wandered in the forests and the priest of the village provided them in secret food and clothing; he consoled them and foresaw for them "God tells me that you'll remain among the living."

Everyone has the miracle of their staying alive and their experience: A Jew in mid-life, hidden in an attic in a house outside the city by a priest. On the day of liberation when the Russian forces entered the city, he wanted to greet the liberators, full of happiness and enthusiasm. To his misfortune, the priest removed the ladder from which he would descend on the same day. The Jew fell and broke his spine and limbs. ...

The kitchen manager of the Jewish town representatives in the branch where I got my meals, was a Jewish woman with Aryan features. Her husband, a well-known surgeon, was cremated with all the Jews. She wandered as a Christian; they said that only recently she left a cloister but still wears a crucifix on her neck. It's impossible to convince her that there is no reason to fear that as a Jew nothing bad will happen to her. But no reason would help. She has a fear complex and cannot escape it.

Assistance was provided by the pastor of Wąwolnica parish near Lublin. Rev. Józef Gorajek extended protection to Danuta Winnik and her seven-year-old son, Eugeniusz, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto in 1942. Rev. Gorajek was awarded by Yad Vashem. At a Holocaust remembrance ceremony in Los Angeles on April 14, 1988, Rev. Gorajek stated:

In Wąwolnica, where I am living, before the war the Jews constituted fifty percent of the entire population. ... From the very beginning of the occupation, the Polish residents, being motivated by feelings of compassion and love of their fellow man, helped the Jews, even though helping Jews was punished with death without judicial process. At the beginning of the occupation, an organization called Ruch Oporu or the Opposition Movement, consisting of partisans to oppose the enemy, was created. I belonged to this organization as a chaplain. I did not use arms. At the organizational meetings, we decided on the type of warfare and assistance for the persecuted and this included the Jews. In order to save Jews, I issued [baptismal] certificates at the parish attesting they were Catholics, and thus enabling them to secure identity documents. Many of the Jews were placed with religious communities, for others we found jobs with a certain amount of security. ... There was real solidarity, solidarity and mutual aid between the Jews and the Poles ...

I recall from those days a rescued Jewish girl who, as a child, was found on the property of the Polkowski family. I advised them to help save this child since her parents had been killed. At night I baptized the child, recording another name for her in order to safeguard these good people who together with me, were risking their lives in the performance of this good deed. The Jewish girl now lives in London, England, under the name of Barbara Tennis. I am in contact with the Polkowski family, for whom a tree was planted in Jerusalem.

One of those assisted by Rev. Gorajek was Eugene Winnik, who gave the following testimony:

I was born in 1933 into an affluent Jewish family in Warsaw. My father was a dentist and my early years were spent in a large home with servants and a nanny. When we were relocated to the Warsaw Ghetto, it was apparent to my father, David Winnik, that the only chance my mother and I had for survival was to escape. My mother was an elegant, beautiful woman who spoke perfect Polish without any identifiable accent and whose face revealed no specific nationality. ... A Christian family from Warsaw had friends in a town called Niezabitów. They did not inform these friends that my mother and I were

Jews, and, one night we escaped from the Ghetto and went to live with this family. I never saw my father again.

I was expected to attend the small church in Wąwolnica. Father Józef Gorajek was the priest and he was aware that my mother and I were Jews. I attended church daily. When it came time to receive my First Communion, it was given to me by Father Gorajek. A group of villagers had begun to suspect that we were Jews and they went to the priest and said that he must not under any circumstances give me Communion because I was a Jew. The priest was very angry with the villagers. He told them that I was a Catholic, that I would continue to receive Communion and that they were never again to say such a thing. The villagers, having respect for the word of the Father, were silent throughout the years.

During the entire war, Józef Gorajek continued to protect me. My mother was deeply involved in the Polish underground and had formed a strong friendship with Stanisław Witek, the leader of the partisans in the village area. Together they spent much time away from the village and I was alone, under the protection of Father Gorajek. [Father Gorajek arranged for the young boy to care for the village's herd of cattle.] At no time did this courageous priest, who risked so much, ever encourage me to leave my faith or my people.

A further account appeared in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* on April 15, 1988, under the heading "Priest's 'deed of love' remembered."

"The entire village could have been destroyed were it known he offered us protection."

Gorajek said he quieted the local townspeople after hearing rumblings that protecting was dangerous.

He said he took in other Jews during the war, placing them in convents and religious orders, and issued Christian birth certificates to Jewish babies he had never seen.

"I knew I could be executed, along with the entire village, without any question," Gorajek said. "I only meditated for a moment: Did I have a right to affect so many people?"

(See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, p.246.)

A Polish priest in Sobieszyn, in the Lublin region, sheltered a Jewish girl. The story is related by Zofia S. Kubar, who passed as a Catholic Pole, in *Double Identity: A Memoir* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), at pages 154–58.

To be safe and inconspicuous, we decided to teach not in the school building in Ryki but in a nearby hamlet, Sobieszyn. ...

The first Sunday after our course began, all the teachers were invited to the parish priest's house for afternoon tea. Although most of us were atheists, we accepted the invitation; it was customary for newcomers in small parishes to visit the local priest. For myself, the visit had a special meaning. For the first time in my life, I was going to meet a priest socially.

The Reverend Alexander [Aleksander] Żalski was a tall, somewhat bulky man in his forties. Although he was kind, good-humored, and hospitable, my fellow teachers—young intellectuals—immediately attacked his theological beliefs, taking full advantage of his lack of argumentative skills. ...

Suddenly we heard a child crying, "Father! Father!" A girl, about four or five years old, ran into the room. I had rarely seen a child of such beauty and natural grace. Her curly hair and eyes were raven-black. Her complexion was dark. There could be no doubt that she was Jewish. I was startled by her presence in the priest's home.

The next moment she was in his arms. Still sobbing and out of breath, she reminded him to tell the story he always told her at mealtimes. "Father" is the term by which people usually address a priest, but I felt that this child actually considered him her protector, as she would have looked on her own father. Later I would see how he fed her, comforted her, and stayed by her bedside until she fell asleep.

During our first visit, Father Żalski seemed slightly embarrassed by the little intruder, but he did not reprove her. Solemnly he promised to tell the story later, and Marianna, happy and reassured, left the room. Afterward, he mumbled a few words of apology. Although as a priest he had no experience in raising children, he said, he had undertaken to care for this child because her parents, both dead, had been distantly related to him. ...

I deeply admired Father Żalski's devotion to the Jewish child and his courage in harboring her. His risk was great, for the punishment meted out by the Nazis was merciless. I personally knew of seven Sisters of Charity at the orphanage of St. Stanisław in Warsaw who were executed for hiding Jewish children. ... The Polish priests were widely engaged in helping Jews. This was but a part of their activities in the Resistance for which they were subsequently persecuted by the Nazis. More than 4,400 Catholic priests and brothers were put into concentration camps, where half of them were killed. Of 1,100 nuns imprisoned in concentration camps, about 240 perished.

I regretted that I never had the opportunity to express my feelings to Father Żalski, but the Jewish child was not a topic

to be discussed then. ...

Only recently I learned about the fate of Father Żalski and the child. Father Żalski stayed in his parish until his death in the 1960s. Little Marianna, whose real name was Rachela, survived. Her mother had taken poison in Siedlce during the deportation. An old school friend of her mother's had rescued the child. Later, after being passed from hand to hand, she was entrusted to Father Żalski's care. In 1946, with the help of Mrs. Glazer-Olszakowska, Marianna was sent to an uncle in Israel and was brought up in a kibbutz there. Eventually, she studied economics, married, and has two children. Mrs. Glazer-Olszakowska visited her in Israel and reported that she had become a highly respected civil servant. I never saw her after that early spring of 1944 in Father Żalski's parish house in Sobieszyn.

Rev. Jan Poddebniański of Krężnica Jara near Lublin, was the chancellor of the diocesan curia. He helped many Jewish youths from Lublin, among them Lea Bass, Sara Bass-Frenkel, and Manfred Frenkel. With his assistance the Bass sisters were able to register for labour in Germany. Rev. Poddebniański corresponded with the sisters so as to allay suspicion as to their identity, but their lack of discretion could have cost him his life. He was awarded by Yad Vashem. Rev. Paweł Dziubiński, a prelate from Lublin, provided baptismal certificates to the Bass sisters. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, pp.296–97.)

In September 1942, during the liquidation of the Lublin ghetto, 20-year-old Sara Bas and her 13-year-old sister, Lea, escaped from the ghetto after their entire family had perished. Since none of their Polish acquaintances were prepared to take them in, they roamed from village to village for about a month vainly trying to find shelter. At night they hid in abandoned ruins and in Lublin's old cemetery. In early November 1942, when they were on the verge of despair, Władysław [Władysław] Janczarek, an old acquaintance of their father's, noticed them and approached them cautiously, offering them help. Since Janczarek was unable to put the two girls up in his home, he arranged to meet with them the next day and bring them two Aryan birth certificates of relatives of the same age, so that they could register for work in Germany. The two sisters, however, continued wandering around Lublin for several months until they found work in the home of a Polish woman. Since they were well known in their hometown, the sisters feared discovery and therefore decided to ask the nuns who worked in the local hospital for help. The nuns [Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul⁶⁷] put them in touch with Jan Poddebniański [Poddebniański], a priest, who advised them to register for work in Germany. Enlisting the help of the Chief Recruitment Officer, Father Poddebniański arranged for the two sisters to be sent to Germany, where they worked in a hospital for foreign workers until the area was liberated. Father Poddebniański made a point of sending them letters to allay suspicion as to their identity.

Rev. Jan Gosek, the pastor of Kanie near Chelm, provided false documents which enabled a Jewish woman to pass as a Pole and survive the war. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, p.649.)

Until the war broke out, the five members of the Wagner family lived in the village of Wolka Kańska [Wólka Kańska] near the city of Chelm [Chelm], in the Lublin district, and had been friends of the Puch family. During the occupation, after the Germans began liquidating the Jews, the Wagner family tried unsuccessfully to find a place to hide in the area. By 1942, of the entire family, only the 15-year-old daughter, Gita Wagner (later Stanisława [Stanisława] Konopka), remained alive. In her despair, she arrived at the home of Antoni and Maria Puch, who, although unable to take her into their own home, did not wish to abandon her to her fate. With the help of the local priest [Rev. Jan Gosek, the pastor of Kanie⁶⁸], they arranged to have a Christian birth certificate issued to her with their own surname. Their daughter, Danuta, who was a young woman at the time, took responsibility for the care of Gita upon herself and tried to find a safer place for her to hide. Despite her young age, Danuta set out on her own at her parents' behest to distant Warsaw to the home of Janina Wroblewska [Wróblewska], an acquaintance of Jewish extraction who was living there under an assumed identity. After Wroblewska agreed to take Gita under her wing, Danuta traveled with her by train to the capital and got her a job with a dentist. Gita Wagner stayed with Wroblewska until the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1944 and survived. After the war, Gita Wagner remained in Poland.

⁶⁷ Testimony of Rev. Jan Poddebniański, in Anna Dąbrowska, ed., *Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata. Relacje* (Lublin: Ośrodek Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN, 2008), 191–94. The Bass sisters wrote postcards from Germany in which they addressed Rev. Poddebniański as “Mr. Priest” and thanked him for what he had done for them.

⁶⁸ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.440. See also Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, pp.348–50.

Diana Topiel, a native of Warsaw, was deported to Majdanek concentration camp. After she succeeded in escaping, she was taken in and cared for by Rev. Świątlik in the village of Urzędów near Kraśnik, posing as his relative. (Account of Diana Topiel-Czerska, Yad Vashem archives, no. 0-33/1310; Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, p.244.)

During the liquidation of the ghetto in Opole Lubelskie in October 1942 two young Jews escaped and arrived unexpectedly at the home of the vicar, Rev. Władysław Krawczyk. His account, “Żydzi zwracali się ku kościołowi,” is found in *Opoka*, London, no. 11 (July 1975), at page 83.

When the ghetto in Opole Lubelskie, in the county of Puławy, was being finished off in 1942, I had the misfortune of seeing from the church tower the market square of the ghetto which was covered with corpses and blood. They [the Jews] had all turned toward the church when they were being shot at. A few days earlier some had visited the church and said that this was their nemesis for having once called out: “His blood be on us, and on our children.” [Matthew, 27:25]. The Schupo, dressed in green, shot them. Our police, dressed in navy, refused to do so. The dean, who had also ascended the tower, almost fainted. I held on to the frame of the window. We descended quickly but awkwardly since I had to hold up the dean. It is difficult not to have a great deal of sympathy for that nation and it is entirely understandable that one would have wanted to protect them from that historical nemesis and hatred. That day, the 23rd of October 1942, when they were being liquidated, two young Jews managed to arrive at my home. I had only one room. The office of the Gestapo was next door and a [German] commander occupied the dwelling above mine. The building was well guarded. The punishment for hiding a Jew was death. Despite this, I fed them, gave them provisions, and around midnight led them across some fields to a forest about three kilometres away. There there already were [Polish] partisans and among them the son of the local rabbi.

A similar eyewitness’s testimony—that of Maria Bill-Bajorkowa—is recorded in Shmuel Meiri, ed., *The Jewish Community of Wieliczka: A Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: The Wieliczka Association in Israel, 1980), at page 75.

Beaten, kicked, shot, fainting, the Jews fall to the ground. They cry, they scream, we hear their voices: “Jesus Christ, since our Jehovah has forsaken us, take pity on me and I will convert to Your faith.” Others cry out: “If there was a Jehovah he would not have allowed what they are doing to us happen. There is no Jehovah, there is no God. We perish and no one helps us. Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.”

The theological ramifications of accepting the tragedy that befell the Jews as the will of God, something that strikes one as particularly harsh and glaring in retrospect, are explained by Leon Wells, a Jewish survivor from Lwów, from the traditional Judeo-Christian vantage point. (Harry James Cargas, *Voices from the Holocaust* [Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993], pp.91–92.)

I read the Lubavitch in '43, '44—it's not proper to mention—Soloveitchik and all the others, they said the Holocaust was sent from heaven and did good because it is the time of the coming of the Messiah. Even the Lubavitch in '43, I have here the document where he said enjoy, enjoy, because the Messiah is coming. And he said that Haman does not come by himself. He's sent by God. I said to a major Jewish theologian recently, “Why are you only condemning the Pope? Or about what Cardinal O'Connor in New York said about the Holocaust?” I said, “Didn't the Lubavitch and others say the same, that it's God's will and we should believe it? It is only cleansing, because of our sins. God threw us out from our land because of our sins.” And he said, “Yes, if you are a religious man and if I would be the Pope, I couldn't behave differently because I cannot say it's not God's will because he can stop everything.” I said, “Fine. So why don't you as a leading Jewish theologian come out and ask why are we jumping so much about the Pope and all?” He said, “What should I do? It is the people, it is their will. They know what they want to hear and I know what I want.” And I said to myself, it is theological, they have no other choice. There is no other choice. If you believe in a God, then it's the will of God. We'd have to change the whole religious outlook in order to see it differently. But as of the moment, we believe in God's will.

Rabbis throughout Poland were inclined to attribute the calamities that befell the Jews to divine presence in terms of punishment. When the Jews of Brańsk were being rounded up on November 7, 1942 to be transported to Treblinka, that town's chief rabbi, Itzhak Zev Cukerman, addressed the crowds in the following words: “The judgment was passed in Heaven. We have to die. But I believe that those who survive will inform the world of our

suffering.” (*The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyszek: An Overview of Polish-Jewish Relations in Northeastern Poland during World War II*, Part Two [Toronto: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1998], p.78.) Similarly, in the face of imminent annihilation, Rabbi Shimon Rozovsky was reported to have said to the Jewish community leaders of Ejszyszek: “Jews, you see our end is approaching rapidly ... God did not want us to be saved. Our destiny has been decided, and we must accept this.” (Perets Alufi and Shaul Kaleko (Barkeli), eds., *Eishishok, koroteha ve-hurbanah: pirke zikhronot ve-‘eduyot (be-tseruf temunot)/liket* [Jerusalem: Committee of the Survivors of Eishishok in Israel, 1950]; translated into English by Shoshanna Gavish, “*Aishishuk*”; *Its History and Its Destruction: Documentaries, Memories and Illustrations* [Jerusalem: n.p., 1980], p.62.)

Another observation by a Jewish survivor, now an American sociologist, is also worth noting. (Samuel P. Oliner, *Restless Memories: Recollections of the Holocaust Years* [Berkeley, California: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1986], p.98.)

During the tragic moments in the Bobowa ghetto [near Gorlice], the rabbis had one standard answer. All the rabbis I ever met or saw said the same thing: “Children, go and pray because the day will come when the Messiah will appear and he will protect us. The Lord knows what he is doing. He will help us.” There wasn’t one rabbi or other leader I know of who said to his people: “Children, let’s take up arms. Let’s train ourselves. Let’s fight. Let’s barricade ourselves and save our lives. Let’s not obey the German laws any longer.”

As one scholar observes, “There are many such stories in the literature, describing rabbis who encouraged their followers on the way to execution by singing, reciting psalms, even dancing, so as to prepare themselves spiritually for the great honour and privilege that God had given them—to die for *kidush hashem*.” (Jonathan Webber, “Jewish Identities in the Holocaust: Martyrdom as a Representative Category,” in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, volume 13: *Focusing on the Holocaust and its Aftermath* [London and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2000], p.140.)

Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, a prominent Hasidic leader, wrote in the Warsaw ghetto: “We must persist in our belief that whatever God does is exactly what must be done.” (Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939–1942* [Northvale, New Jersey and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 2000], p.306.) While confined in the Wilno ghetto, Zelig Kalmanovich, the wartime voice of the Orthodox community, kept a diary that is replete with scriptural and rabbinical quotations. Why, Kalmanovich asks, did God allow the Jews of Wilno to be destroyed? Because the destruction would serve as a sign (1) that what was once a proud Jewish community was already rotting, crumbling from within, and (2) that future generations—unaware of this decay and left only with the detritus of the external destruction—would have something useful, even inspiring, to remember.

God’s purpose in destroying the community of Vilna [Wilno] was perhaps to hasten the redemption, to alert whomsoever might still be alerted that there is neither refuge nor hope for life in the Exile. ...

But if we take a hard look we can see that it was necessary for the destruction to come from without. The fortress had already been destroyed and laid waste from within. Vilna had put up no resistance to the assimilation and the obliteration of the Jewish character, had not stood up to the spiritual destruction decreed by the Red conquerors. ...

And these undesecrated stones will serve as a memorial to our Exile, for their merit was not to have been desecrated through the hands of their own children, by those who had once built the walls, but rather, through the hands of a savage nation, acting as the emissary of God.

(David G. Roskies, “Jewish Cultural Life in the Vilna Ghetto,” in Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *Lithuania and the Jews: The Holocaust Chapter. Symposium Presentations* [Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2004], pp.36–38.) Similar views were expressed by Rabbi Hirsh Melekh Talmud of Lublin in endeavouring to comprehend how God could allow His “Chosen People” to be punished to the point of destruction. (Gershon Greenberg, “The Theological Letters of Rabbi Talmud of Lublin (Summer–Fall 1942,” in Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *Ghettos 1939–1945: New Research and Perspectives on Definition,*

Daily Life, and Survival. Symposium Presentations [Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2005], 113–27.)

Such views are still held by some Jewish religious leaders today:

Many Haredi rabbis, for example, assert that the Holocaust, including most particularly the deaths of one-and-a-half million Jewish children, was a well-deserved divine punishment, not only for all the sins of modernity and faith renunciation by many Jews, but also for the decline of Talmudic study in Europe. The Haredim and their traditional Jewish followers attribute the death of every Jew, including each innocent child, not to natural causes but to direct action of God. The Haredim believe that God punishes each Jew for his or her sins and sometimes punishes the entire Jewish community, including many who are innocent, because of the sins committed by other Jews.

(Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, New edition [London and Ann Arbor, Michigan: Pluto Press, 2004], 31.) Some religious Jews also continue to share those views, as attested to by the following account of a woman who was rescued by Poles in Volhynia. (Testimony of Peppy Rosenthal, July 1, 2009, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <<http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/rosenthal/>>.)

I have two boys. One lives in New York, he's a religious Jew, very religious. ... their idea about the Holocaust is enough to ... upset you. ... My grandson in New York called and asked me if it would be too hard for him to tell him some things. He had to write it for one of his yeshiva classes. And I was really surprised that ... they believe the Holocaust ... happened because we didn't follow God.

Religious Poles, who witnessed this cataclysm, also endeavoured to find an explanation for the horrific and unimaginable events occurring around them. As historian Andrzej Bryk explains, their “rationalization” had little, if anything, to do with actual malice toward the Jewish victims. (Andrzej Bryk, “The Struggles for Poland,” *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989], volume 4, p.378.)

For the average Polish peasant, Jews were an integral part of the landscape, like the things of nature, the sky above, and himself. He might not have liked them, might have maintained only the most superficial trading relations with them, but their disappearance was unimaginable. They were part of God's universe, even if an inferior part, viewed with suspicion. [This was, essentially, the mirror image of traditional Jewish attitudes toward Christian Poles—Ed.] The complete extermination of his neighbours in a small town or village was for that peasant not only a crime in human terms but a fundamental violation of the universal order, of God's order. It was such a monstrous and absurd deed, that it could have been possible only through the will of God himself. Had he not, after all, been taught that Jews were guilty for the death of Jesus, the death of God? So, perhaps, this was the sentence for that deed? Hence the fatalism in perceiving the Holocaust, a certain self-defence through rationalisation against the madness of a deed equal only to the anger of God. Of a deed which must have been inspired by some hidden logic. The extermination was so terrible, surpassing human imagination to such an extent, that there had to be some hidden meaning in it.

Some Poles embraced the same sort of theological explanations to rationalize their own fate. In the final days or hours before their execution condemned priests often spoke of their acceptance of the will of God. The conservative Catholic author Zofia Kossak, a co-founder of Żegota, the wartime Council for Aid to Jews, wrote in her postwar diary that the suffering and humiliation of Polish women she witnessed as a prisoner in Auschwitz was God's punishment for enjoying themselves before the war, for wearing lipstick or silk stockings. (Władysław T. Bartoszewski, *The Convent in Auschwitz* [London: The Bowerdean Press, 1990], p.19.)

Occasionally one encounters charges that priests urged the faithful not to provide assistance to Jews or even incited the populace against them. Almost all of these charges are based on second or third-hand accounts. Priests in rural areas were required to read, at the conclusion of Sunday services, official German decrees such as notices about the delivery of mandatory foodstuff quotas imposed on farmers and warnings not to assist partisans and Jews under penalty of death. Not to do so not only put the delinquent priest personally at risk, but also subjected

him to the moral dilemma of withholding from faithful information about the serious risks that such activities entailed for their families. Hearsay accounts of these announcements have led uninformed observers, including Holocaust historians, to accuse the clergy of preaching against the Jews. It is telling that no first-hand accounts of such alleged sermons are known even though thousands of Jews passed as Christians and regularly attended church services throughout occupied Poland. In some accounts, readings from the New Testament during Holy Week (especially on Palm Sunday and Good Friday), which were part of the universal Catholic liturgy mandated by Rome, are represented as sermons delivered by priests to incite Poles against Jews. (Sermons were traditionally not part of the Good Friday liturgy.)

An example of such a notice is the circular issued to the local pastors by the reeve of the village of Zakrzówek near Kraśnik, pursuant to instructions from the Kreishauptmann (German county head), dated December 4, 1942, which is reproduced in Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Polacy i Żydzi 1918–1955: Współistnienie, Zagłada, komunizm* (Warszawa: Fronda, 2000), at page 185. The circular reads: “In accordance with the orders of the Kreishauptmann of October 10, 1942, ... all residents and their neighbours will be punished by death for sheltering Jews, providing them with food or assisting them in escaping, in particular anyone who allows Jews to use their carts.” In some regions of Poland, however, there was widespread resistance on the part of priests to reading any German notices in church. See, for example, Marian Matysik, Małgorzata Rudnicka, Zdzisław Świsłak, *Kościół katolicki w Jasielskiem 1939–1945* (Przemyśl, Brzozów and Stalowa Wola: Biblioteczka Przemyska, Muzeum Regionalne PTTK [Polskiego Towarzystwa Turystyczno-Krajoznawczego] im. Adama Fastnachta, and Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski—Filia, 1991), pp.19, 88, 103, 211–12; Jerzy Adamski, Mieczysław Ligonowski, Franciszek Oberc, and Tadeusz Śliwa, *Kościół katolicki w Brzozowskim i Sanockim 1939–1945* (Brzozów and Przemyśl, 1992), p.202; Witold Jemielity, “Diecezja łomżyńska,” in Zygmunt Zieliński, ed., *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945: Metropolie wileńska i lwowska, zakony* (Katowice: Unia, 1992), p.74.

The attitude of Rev. Józef Michałowski, a priest in Olsztyn near Częstochowa where several Jewish families survived the war passing as Poles, was described by Frank Morgens, whose family the villagers suspected of being Jewish, in his memoirs *Years at the Edge of Existence: War Memoirs, 1939–1945* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), at pages 97 and 99.

Mrs. Michalska, a young woman with a boy of about seven. ... He had a light complexion, his features were Semitic and our suspicion that they were Jews in hiding proved later to be correct. ... When the war ended, we learned through the grapevine that Mrs. Michalska's husband had also survived in Olsztyn and that the entire family had emigrated to America. ...

The name of Judge Horski was uttered with respect, but always with a sort of knowing look which we did not comprehend at first. ... It was obvious he, too, was Jewish. His wife and daughter were Semitic-looking as well. The Horskis had moved to Olsztyn from Cracow at the beginning of 1941, a fact that was vastly reassuring to us. That a man with such a face could pass for a Pole and not be denounced to the Germans by those who suspected him of being Jewish, made us feel much safer.

The village of Olsztyn, only 8 miles from Czesłochowa, and having a population of under 2,000, could not possibly sustain a dentist, and yet there was one. The minute we opened the door of Dr. Nawrot's office on Villa Row, we knew that we were with one of our own. Dr. Nawrot was of medium height, his hair was dark, his face though not typically Jewish, was not Slavic either. His short, plump, dark-complexioned wife would never have survived a confrontation with the Gestapo, and neither would their young son. Yet Dr. Nawrot had been practicing in town for about two years without incident. This, too, reinforced our belief that we had settled in the right place. So far, I could count four Jewish families casting their lot with the Poles of Olsztyn.

But the greatest influence on the people and the tranquility of the village was exerted by the parish priest, Father Jozef Michalowski. About 60 years old, of medium height, slim and bespectacled, he evoked reverence when walking in the street and gently greeting his parishioners. His sermons preached love and humaneness, and during the crucial period of 1942–1944 his urging to save lives and not to betray fellow citizens gave us fortitude and courage to go on with our fight for survival. A denunciation to the Gestapo about this kind of sermon would have meant deportation, at least, for Father Michalowski, but he was fearless and steadfast in his activities, as dictated by his conscience and his faith.

The misconduct of one person could not only frustrate a rescue action supported by the actions of many, but also unfold a chain of disaster and fear, as in the case of Yehudis Pshenitse, a young girl from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki near Warsaw, who turned to the local priest for assistance. Her testimony, found in the Nowy Dwór Memorial book, is reproduced in *From A Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*, Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin, eds., (New York: Schocken Books, 1983); Second, expanded edition (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), at pages 177–78.

I went to see the priest, who had known me as a small child, when I used to go into the church with our Christian maid. I wept and begged the priest to save me. I told him what had happened to my parents. He calmed me and promised me that he would give me as much help as he could. He hid me in his cellar. Every day I went to church with him, and I became one of the best singers in the church choir. After a time he gave me false papers, with my name listed as Kristina Pavlovna [sic]. I began to feel like a genuine, born Christian.

That didn't last long, however. One day, when I was walking to church, a Christian stopped me on the street and said, "What are you doing here?" I ran away in terror. When I told the priest, he calmed me, telling me to go back into the cellar and be as quiet as possible.

The same day two Germans went to the priest, demanding that he surrender the Jewish girl whom he had hidden. He denied that there was anyone in his house. They threatened to shoot him, but he continued to insist that he was hiding no one.

The Germans tortured him in various ways, but he continued to refuse to give me up until he fell to the ground covered with blood. His body was pierced in several places, and his face was unrecognizable. Then the Germans left him as he was and went away. Before he died, the priest asked his housekeeper to take me out of my hiding place and bring me to him because he wanted to bless me.

When she led me to him, all I saw was a pool of blood and the priest's body, torn into pieces. I fainted. When I came to, he raised his crushed and broken hand and caressed me. Finally he told his housekeeper to give me over to trustworthy people, to behave toward me like a mother so that no one would suspect I was Jewish. Thus, leaning against him, I felt his body grow cold.

Once again he asked that I be hidden in a safe place, and then he died. I can't remember the priest's name. He was a parish priest in Nowy-Dwór.

The housekeeper led me away from the priest and cleansed me of his blood. She changed my clothes, and at five in the morning she led me to Modlin. She left me there and disappeared.

William (Wolf) Ungar had taken refuge in the town of Nowy Dwór, north of Warsaw, in territory incorporated into the Reich, where he lived with the family of his Jewish friend. He decided to leave that town and return to Lwów, when it appeared that the ghetto in Nowy Dwór was about to be evacuated. In March 1943, Ungar approached a Polish smuggler who agreed to take him and another Jew, who had a very bad appearance, across the border to the General Government. The smuggler directed Ungar to an unidentified priest in Warsaw for assistance. (Ungar, *Destined to Live*, pp.235–36.)

We waited as the chief smuggler talked to the fisherman. When he finished he came over to me and said, "You shouldn't stay here. It's not safe. ... This man here,"—gesturing toward the fisherman—"can take you to the other side. There's a railroad station not too far off. You can get a train there for Warsaw."

"Okay," I said, "that's what we'll do. We want to thank you for your help."

"One more thing," he said. "Take this." He gave me a piece of paper. "It's the address of a priest in Warsaw who can help you get train tickets. You might not be able to do so yourselves."

The fisherman had a rowboat tied to a little pier that jutted into the river. We climbed in and two minutes later we were on the other side. There the fisherman led us to a path. "Follow this a mile or so," he said, "and it'll take you right to the railroad station."

... At the station the ticket window was already opened and I bought two tickets for Warsaw while my friend hung in the background keeping out of the ticketmaster's view. ...

I Warsaw we found our way to the priest's address the smuggler had given us. My impression was that this priest was probably working for the Polish underground. He didn't ask a single question, he just did what he could to help. He gave us food, then went out and bought us train tickets to Lvov [Lwów]. With hindsight, I guessed he was part of the organization that was working with the Jewish underground, helping Jews acquire arms, or escape, or putting children into monasteries and other safe places. There were networks that did such things, as I learned later on, and more than a

few Catholic priests were involved.

Jola Hoffman, who lived in the Warsaw ghetto together with her family, recalled their rescue and the assistance they received from friends and a priest in the Polish underground. (Testimony of Jola Hoffman, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, November 3, 1987.)

Anna Kovitzka fled during a German *Aktion* in Grodno and remained in the countryside for several weeks until things quietened down and she was able to return. An unidentified village priest sheltered her during that period, made enquiries about her husband, and drove her part of the way home in his cart. (Donald L. Niewyk ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998], p.208; Anna Kovitzka's account is also posted on the Internet at <http://voices.iit.edu/frames.asp?path=Interviews/&page=kovit&ext=_t.html>)

The Germans were grabbing the people and dragging them to work in Germany. I wanted to return to the ghetto. Then thousand Jews were deported that day. The ghetto was surrounded. One couldn't get in, nor could one get out. Part were going to Treblinka, and to get in one also didn't know how. I ran into a Christian—he was a working man. I told him I am a Jewess—"I can't get into the ghetto." And he said, "Get out of the city. You do not look Jewish. Go where ever you can, but don't remain here. You see here it burns." And so I departed alone, without papers, into the woods. I did not know the roads. Through the woods, into a village. I entered. "Give me some water." If one is alive, one has to drink water. And sometimes one has to eat. Everybody gave me something. I did not look Jewish, but they knew—what else could be driving me in the snow through the woods? Everyone kept me for one night.

The Christians—I can't complain. Everybody gave me warm water to wash myself. They gave me food, so that I should have strength to wander farther. And there was a preacher—a Christian, a Catholic. He hid me "for strength" for eight days. But it drove me back to Grodno to find out what was going on. The priest encountered some Jews that were going to work. She he asked them: "Do you know whether Jack Kovitzki is there?" So they said: "He is there, he has remained alive." Three thousand Jews were still in Grodno. So he said, "Tell him that his wife is alive—that she does not want to remain among us. She wants to go back, and in a few days she will be back." The next week he took me out part of the way in a cart—to go further, he was afraid. And I went alone towards Grodno—I can't remember how many kilometers. I arrived in Grodno. It's the same story again—how does one get in—into the ghetto? And then it occurred to me that my father had a chauffeur, a Christian, a decent man.

He was a good business man; so he had an automobile and a driver—a very decent person. He lives now in the yard of the house that once belonged to my father-in-law. So I went to him. He didn't know me, but I gave the name of Meyer Kovitzki, and he said: "Don't be afraid. You can be with me as long as you want." But he had a wife and a child, and I did not want to cause him anxiety. So I went down to the cellar, and he went to the ghetto to find out about things, and Friday morning his own wife went with me through the streets, and she led me to the ghetto. Then another Pole helped me to get in. But before I went in, he told me: "You know where you are going?" And I said, "Where is my man, and where is my place?" That was on Friday noon.

Sometimes, Christian benefactors were put at risk because of internal rivalries and bickerings within the Jewish community, as in the case of Lida, in the Nowogródek region. (Shmuel Spector, ed., *Lost Jewish Worlds: The Communities of Grodno, Lida, Olkieniki, Vishay* [Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996], pp.212–13.)

In December 1941, all the Jews of Lida were concentrated in a ghetto ... At this time Aktionen were being carried out in Vilna [Wilno], and a few hundred Jewish survivors fled from there to Lida. By paying off Polish municipal clerks, the Judenrat was able to obtain residence permits for the refugees. However, not long afterward a group of Jews was caught while trying to steal the Jewish property that had been left for safekeeping with the local [Orthodox] priest. The thieves were taken to prison. Their wives demanded that the Judenrat intercede to obtain their release. When the Judenrat refused to act, the detainees told the authorities about the permits the Judenrat had arranged for the Vilna refugees and promised to disclose the identity of the latter as well. On March 1, 1942, all the town's Jews were assembled in the square next to the new post office. They were then made to walk through a narrow passage, where one of the thieves identified five people. They were immediately arrested and two days later were shot in the prison courtyard. Some 200 sick and elderly Jews who could not get to the site were murdered in their lodgings. A week later a number of the Judenrat's senior figures, including the chairman, Lichtman, were arrested, tortured, and murdered.

Eliahu Damesek describes the events in the Lida memorial book as follows (Alexander Manor, Itzhak Ganusovitch, and Aba Lando, eds., *Sefer Lida* [Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Lida in Israel and the Committee of Lida Jews in U.S.A., 1970], pp.viii ff.):

One day, a party of Jewish thieves made an attempt on the life of a Russian [Belorussian] clergyman in the town and tried to rob him of the property which the Jews of Lida entrusted to him. The attempt did not succeed and some of the attackers were arrested. The wives of the thieves appealed to the Judenrat for assistance in obtaining the release of their husbands. The Judenrat could not take upon themselves their request and turned them down. Upon the thieves being informed of this fact, they decided to revenge themselves upon the Judenrat.

They then approached the Nazi authorities offering them cooperation in finding out the Jews of Vilno [Wilno] who had infiltrated into Lida.

The Nazis chose a day in March 1942 for the betrayal of the Jews from Vilno. ... all the Jews were driven from their homes and ... were led to a square opposite the new post office. There they were lined up in the snow and cold and forced to enter a narrow passage so that the thieves could point them out. Fifty Jews were arrested and shot shortly thereafter in the courtyard of the prison. ... All the children whose parents had left them at home due to the intense cold, and all the aged, the sick, and the dying who did not go out to the identification parade, were found lying in their own blood ... In this manner, on that day, over 200 souls were murdered.

A week after the betrayal by the Jewish thieves, the heads of the Judenrat were arrested ... These people were tortured and met a violent death.

Scores of Jews jumped from trains headed to the Treblinka death camp and some managed to escape from the camp itself. These destitute fugitives received extensive assistance from Polish villagers.⁶⁹ Often they knocked

⁶⁹ Examples of assistance received from farmers and railway workers by escapees from Treblinka or, more frequently, from trains headed there, are plentiful, despite the frequent manhunts carried out by the Germans looking for Jews and the death penalty facing those Poles who extended any form of assistance to Jews. Short-term help was particularly frequent. Waclaw Iglicki (then Szul Steinhendler) from Żelechów, who jumped out of a train headed for Treblinka near Łuków or Siedlce, stated: "People used to really help out. I have to say that objectively: when it came to bread or something else, they shared. But finding a place to sleep was a problem. People were afraid. They wouldn't really agree to have us over for a night, or for a longer stay. That was understandable, because if you consider that in every village, in every community, there was a sign saying that for hiding, for any help given to a Jew, there was the death penalty, it's hard to be surprised that people didn't want to have Jews over and so on. They could tell by my clothes that I was a Jew. Because I looked poor, obviously. Ragged, dirty. Wandered around, as they say, aimlessly, didn't know where to go. ... Because of that, many knew immediately they were dealing with a person of Jewish origin." See the testimony of Waclaw Iglicki, September 2005, Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>> under "Biographies." In his account dated May 1994 (reproduced in this compilation), Joseph S. Kutzzeba writes: "During the first days of September 1942, at the age of 14, I jumped out of a moving train destined for Treblinka, through an opening (window) of a cattle car loaded to capacity with Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. Wandering over fields, forests and villages, at first in the vicinity of Wołomin, and later of Zambrów, I found myself, in late November, in the area of Hodyszewo (near Łomża). Throughout my wandering, the peasants for the most part were amenable to put me up for the night and to feed me—some either suspecting my origins or pressing me to admit it." Ruth Altbeker Cyprus, who jumped from a train headed for Treblinka, recalls various instances of assistance from railway guards, villagers, passers-by, passengers, and even a gang of robbers. See Ruth Altbeker Cyprus, *A Jump for Life: A Jump For Life: A Survivor's Journal from Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Continuum, 1997), pp.97, 102–110. A Jew who escaped from the Treblinka death camp recalled the help he received from peasants: "I was free. I walked to a village. ... I knocked to ask for bread. The peasants looked at me in silence. 'Bread, bread.' They saw my red hands, torn jacket, worn-out slippers, and handed me some hard, gray crusts. A peasant woman, huddled in shawls, gave me a bowl of hot milk and a bag. We didn't talk: my body had turned red and blue from the blows and the cold, and my clothes, everything proclaimed *Jew!* But they gave me bread. Thank you Polish peasants. I slept in a stable near the animals, taking a little warm milk from the cow in the morning. My bag filled with bread." See Martin Gray, with Max Gallo, *For Those I Loved* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1972), p.178. A.L. Bombe, an escapee from Treblinka, was helped by several peasants in the area: "Lying in the field, we saw a peasant in a wagon go by. We called him over and told him that we had escaped from Treblinka and, perhaps, it would be possible if he could take us into his barn. ... In the end, we convinced him and he showed us his barn in the distance and we went inside. But he doesn't know of anything. And if they would ask, we should say that we sneaked in. That is what we did. We were there the entire day. At night, the head of the village came and told us that he would lead us out of the village and show us the way to go. He indeed took us to the main road, and we traveled all night until the morning. In the morning, we came to a village. We saw, in front of a house, that a woman opens the door. We went over to the house and the woman told us to come in. We were there for a week. The second week, we were at the friend of the peasant in the same village. I remember this peasant's name: Piotr Supel. ... This was in the village Zagradniki [Ogrodniki] near Ostrovek Vengravski [Ostrówek Węgrowski]. The peasant traveled with us to Warsaw." See A.L. Bombe, "My Escape from Treblinka," *Czenstochov: A New Supplement to the Book "Czenstochover Yidn"*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Czenstochowa/Czenstochowa.html>>, translation of S.D. Singer, ed., *Tshenstokhover: Naye tsugob-material tsum bukh "Tshenstokhover Yidn"* (New York: United Relief Committee in New York, 1958), pp.57ff. The brothers Leibel and Efraim Tchapowicz, who jumped from the Treblinka-bound train during the liquidation *Aktion* in Kałuszyn, were hidden for a few months

on the doors of parish rectories seeking assistance. As historian Philip Friedman has noted (*Their Brothers' Keepers*, p.126),

A number of priests in the neighborhood of the death camp at Treblinka gave food and shelter to Jews escaping from transports on the way to the camp.

The following account was recorded in Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, at pages 151–52.

... they took him and his wife to Treblinka. They were ordered to throw all their valuables, jewellery, dollars onto a sheet—death if you didn't. Everyone did, but Grandpa thought to himself, they'll kill my anyway, but what if I survive? So he bent

by a Pole named Strychalski, who continued to provide them with necessities while they were living in the forest. See Leibel and Efraim Tchapowicz, "Hiding," in A. Shamri and Sh. Soroka, eds., *Sefer Kaluszyn: Geheylt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kaluszyn in Israel, 1961), 397ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn*, Internet: <<http://jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>>. Abraham Kolski escaped from Treblinka with nine other friends during the uprising on August 2, 1943; they were hidden in a cellar of a home near the camp for the remainder of the war. See the oral history interview with Abraham Kolski, by Linda Gordon Kuzmack, March 29, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. In spite of the death penalty for the slightest assistance to Jews, local Polish peasants helped Samuel Willenberg on no less than nine separate occasions in the first days after his escape from Treblinka. Willenberg stresses the risks involved in assisting Jews. When a group of Jews broke out of Treblinka, the Germans mobilized their forces (including the Ukrainian camp guards) and conducted a thorough search of the entire area, setting up checkpoints on the roads and combing nearby villages and searching villagers' homes. See Samuel Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989), pp.25, 143–48. The most significant impediment was the fear of German retaliation. A Jew who had escaped from Treblinka and managed to return to Warsaw recalled: "The peasants near Treblinka didn't want to shelter me even for just one night. They happily gave me food and even money, but they wouldn't hear of my spending the night, because the Ukrainians who were permanently stationed in Treblinka often showed up ... The local peasants told of things that were unbelievable but unfortunately true. ... Everyone I talked to near Treblinka spoke of nothing else. They all told the same thing, in horror. The ones closer to Warsaw let me stay the night, but there was no question of staying there permanently." Michał Grynberg, ed., *Words To Outlive Us: Voices From the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), p.210. The brothers Sandor and Shalom Spector jumped out of two separate trains headed for Treblinka and both of them survived with the help of friendly Poles. See Sandor Spector, "I Jumped From the Death Trains," in Yerachmiel Moorstein, ed., *Zelva Memorial Book* (Malwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 1992), pp.81–82. According to three separate testimonies by Jewish escapees from the death camps of Treblinka and Sobibór, they "walked about the villages" where they were "known to everybody," including the farm-hands and school children, without being denounced. See Teresa Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993), p.108. For additional accounts of Jews who escaped from Treblinka, or trains headed there, and who returned safely to their homes with the aid of random Poles along the way, see: account of David Wolf in *Entertainment and Ball Given by the United Wisoko-Litowsker and Woltchiner Relief*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Vysokoye/Vysokoye.html>>, translation of Samuel Levine and Morris Gervitz, eds., *Yisker zhurnal gevidmet diumgekumene fun Visoka un Voltshin* (New York: United Wisoko-Litowsker and Woltchiner Relief, 1948); Feivel Wolf, "After the Departure from Treblinka," in *Memorial Book of Kryнки*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Krynki/Krynki.html>>, translation of D. Rabin, ed., *Pinkas Kryнки* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kryнки in Israel and the Diaspora, 1970), p.290; Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: From Mercy Killing To Mass Murder* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), pp.149–56; Alexander Donat, ed., *The Death Camp at Treblinka: A Documentary* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), pp.135, 142, 248–89 (one of the Poles who helped was a member of a rightist-nationalist organization); Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), pp.100, 123; Benjamin Mandelkern, with Mark Czarnecki, *Escape from the Nazis* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1988), pp.59, 66–67, 73–75; Michał Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993), pp.438–39, 481; Richard Glazer, *Trap With a Green Fence: Survival in Treblinka* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995), pp.149–53 (the author passed through a long series of localities and when he was finally caught it was not by a Pole but by a Volksdeutsche); Luba Wrobel Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: n.p., 1998), p.98; Alina Bacall-Zwirn and Jared Stark, *No Common Place: The Holocaust Testimony of Alina Bacall-Zwirn* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), pp.32–35; Eddi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel: The Story of an Escape from Treblinka* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002); Irene Shapiro, *Revisiting the Shadows: Memoirs from War-torn Poland to the Statue of Liberty* (Elk River, Minnesota: DeForest Press, 2004), pp.189–90; Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, pp.246, 348, 362–63, 364, 366–65, 384, and vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, p.703; Michael Maik, *Deliverance: The Diary of Michael Maik. A True Story* (Kedumim, Israel: Keterpress Enterprises, 2004), p.87; Halina Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2007), pp.73–74; Israel Cymlich and Oscar Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 2007), p.188; Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), p.310; Krzysztof Czubaszek, *Żydzi z Łukowa i okolic* (Warsaw: Danmar, 2008), pp.203, 206, 251; Joseph S. Kutzreba, *The Contract: A Life for a Life* (New York: iUniverse, 2009), pp.50ff.

down as though he were throwing, and picked things up again and again. Then, they selected several stronger men, put them back in the train, and Grandpa was one of the chose. As they rode at night, they managed to push out the bars of the window. The German shot, but missed him. Cut and bruised, he dragged himself to a settlement where he saw a church. The priest gave him clothes and money for the train, because he couldn't pay in dollars. When he got back to Warsaw, his friends said: "We'll introduce you to Jędrzek Korczak of the HA [Home Army] who is hiding in the Ujazdów [military] hospital." In this way, Grandpa became one of General Horodyński's charges. [Horodyński was head of the surgical department—Ed.] ... the colonel on the officer's ward is a Jew, a pharmacist who'd studied along with Horodyński. And the major is also a Jew, a music teacher. And the quiet, devout soldier with the bamboo walking-stick who wears a crucifix on top of his pajamas. And that rheumatic lady who claims that we're suited to each other, Grandpa knew her well in Kraków. Even poor Lieutenant Doliński had a Jewish mother.

Priests were known to have stood up to malfeasants who harassed and robbed Jewish fugitives. (Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, 245, based on on Czyżew Memorial Book.)

Jentel Kita recounts the following incident which occurred in the village of Lachow [Perki Lachy?], Wysokie Mazowieckie county. Several villagers assaulted a rather well-dressed woman, trying to strip her of her clothes. A priest suddenly appeared, approaching the attackers and asking them why they were harassing a lone woman. They told him that she was a Jewess who had jumped out of a Treblinka-destined train. Upon hearing that, the priest demanded that they leave her alone: he told them that she had suffered enough. The victim of the assault too advantage of his intercession and of the ensuing argument to withdraw speedily. Then the priest also walked swiftly away.

Joseph S. Kutrzeba, then known as Arie Fajwiszys, recalled the assistance he received from several priests and a bishop in the Łomża area. In particular, Rev. Stanisław Falkowski, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, played a key role in the rescue of this 14-year-old boy from the Warsaw ghetto who had jumped off a train headed for Treblinka. After wandering in the countryside for several months, hiding in forests, fields and barns, the boy asked farmers to give him work and shelter. In Hodyszewo, he turned to a priest, Rev. Józef Perkowski, to whom he disclosed his identity. The priest referred him to Rev. Falkowski, a young vicar who was posted in the off-the-beaten-track village of Piekuty Nowe, on whose door he knocked in the dead of the night. Rev. Falkowski gave him a warm reception and tended to his wounds. He arranged a hiding place in his courtyard near the church, where the boy stayed for four months. Later he arranged for the boy to stay with several Polish farmers in the area. The pastor, Rev. Roch Modzelewski, was aware of the boy's true identity and helped in the rescue all along. To allay suspicions, Rev. Falkowski arranged for Aryan papers under a new identity, which enabled the boy to register as a volunteer for work in Germany. Even there, while working in a factory, Rev. Falkowski kept in touch with the boy the whole time, writing him letters to keep up his spirits and sending him food parcels. Rev. Falkowski also helped other Jews, which the boy was not aware of at the time. Joseph Kutrzeba penned the following statement, which is the editor's possession, in May 1994. (See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, pp.211–12; Joseph S. Kutrzeba, *The Contract: A Life for a Life* [New York: iUniverse, 2009], pp.59–60, 80–164, 197–98, 203, 207, 217–18.)

During the first days of September 1942, at the age of 14, I jumped out of a moving train destined for Treblinka, through an opening (window) of a cattle car loaded to capacity with Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto.

Wandering over fields, forests and villages, at first in the vicinity of Wołomin, and later of Zambrów, I found myself, in late November, in the area of Hodyszewo (at the time district Łomża).

Throughout my wandering, the peasants for the most part were amenable to put me up for the night and to feed me—some either suspecting my origins or pressing me to admit it.

I am the son of the well-known musician, composer, professor and conductor, Izrael Fajwiszys, and of Malka Hakman, murdered by the German Nazis together with my sister Rela.

Generally, I was aiming to reach the forests of Lublin as I'd heard within the resistance movement in the Warsaw Ghetto, Hashomer Hatzair, to which I belonged (and whose leader was Mordechai Anielewicz) that a Jewish partisan unit of that movement was being formed there. The peasants were afraid to shelter me longer than overnight since an officially announced death penalty had been decreed by the German occupiers for any assistance rendered to Jewish escapees.

Several times I was advised to seek out "a priest" who, as the peasants believed, could baptize me and thus to "save" me. While still in the area of Wołomin, I looked up a pastor (whose name I don't remember). He had handed me a prayer book advising me to somehow take care of myself and to learn the basic prayers etc., and to look him up again after I have

mastered the prayers. Then “we’ll see,” he said. Because, as he stated, he was afraid to shelter me. I never saw him again.

But at the end of November 1942, when heavy snow covered the ground, I followed the advice of a peasant who suggested that I look up, as it turned out, the parish priest (canon) Józef Perkowski in the church at Hodyszewo (housing the Miraculous Image of the Virgin Mary), the post-war rector of the Catholic Seminary in Łomża, with whom I corresponded after the war. Rev. Perkowski, having fed me, suggested that I repair at night, over heavy snow, to find a young vicar, Rev. Stanisław Falkowski, in the village of Piekuty Nowe, near Szepietowo.

Rev. Perkowski maintained that German gendarmes were constantly milling about in Hodyszewo and thus it would be difficult for him to hide or shelter me. However, as he put it, Piekuty Nowe was a small village, out of the way (as it turned out, there was also a gendarmerie post there), and that Rev. Falkowski was a “young idealist” who might agree to help me.

Father Falkowski opened the door for me on a dark evening, asking me to come into his one-room dwelling unit where, as a young vicar, he’d found a locum with a family, since the parish house in Piekuty Nowe had been requisitioned by the Germans, and the parish priest, Father Roch Modzelewski, had had to move into the house of the organist.

At first, Father Falkowski had put me up in his only room where I slept on the sofa. I had been covered with lice and with sores over my body. Father Falkowski fed me, arranged to clean me up, boiled my clothes, somehow coming up with an ointment for my sores. At the same time, we held many conversations evenings, rising at five in the morning to attend dawn Mass during Advent (December 1942).

From the start, Father Falkowski’s superior, pastor Modzelewski, had been fully taken into confidence (I often visited him—a short walk) and fully cooperated in assisting me. Both priests resolved that it was most important that I learn the catechism and the basic Catholic teachings—that is because that, if they would eventually attempt to place me with a peasant as a “working hand,” or to tend the cows—due to my “good” appearance and Polish speech—I would not give myself away with regard to my origins.

Over time, as I learned later, the bishop of Łomża, Stanisław Łukomski, had been taken into confidence; also, when the time came, in the spring of 1943, he had also granted permission to Father Falkowski to baptize me. When I took ill with jaundice, Father Modzelewski took me by sleighs to another village where a well-known homeopathist-priest cured me with herbs.

Another young vicar [Father Janiecki], a friend of Father Falkowski, had also visited us several times; he’d brought over a violin which he and I both played. He, too, was taken into confidence. However, active assistance was rendered to me mainly by Father Falkowski and Father Modzelewski including the subsequent placements with several peasants, as a Catholic, and later even with the head of a cluster of villages (wójt).

Father Falkowski suggested a new last name for me—Kutrzeba (the first name remained as at my birth)—and that for two reasons: 1) it had a very “Polish” ring to it, and 2) to honor Gen. Kutrzeba who resisted the German invasion to the last moment.

When, during a particular stay with a peasant, things began to get “uncomfortable”—either owing to very hard work ... or due to gradually emerging suspicions which I’d promptly report to Father Falkowski, the priests would move me to yet another peasant—usually located at an isolated homestead, away from the main village where I would not be regarded with suspicion by passers-by or by visitors.

Over time, steeped in prayers, I began to cling to them, as they became my only inner refuge and a spiritual nourishment, especially while co-existing with simple people with whom I shared very little, nor could I share anything about myself or about my past in order to alleviate some of my inner torment. Owing to much hard work and security reasons, I was allowed to visit Father Falkowski and Father Modzelewski solely after church on Sundays or holidays where I wouldn’t attract much attention among throngs of people. (After the war I learned that the housekeeper of Father Modzelewski whom I got to know well, was also a Jewess, and that Father Falkowski also helped to shelter several other Jews.)

These visits meant spiritual rescue for me. As time went by, Father Falkowski became my only source of survival and hope, spiritually and otherwise. When, at one point, he proposed baptism to me, I agreed. Now, recalling my mental state of the time, I believe that: 1) I came to believe in Christ in whose name Father Falkowski had extended to me an unequivocal love of one’s neighbor, constantly risking his life in the name of his ideals; 2) to a certain extent, I felt neither could I disappoint my benefactor whom I came to love; and 3) it seemed to offer a better chance for survival. In addition, I recall as how Father Falkowski expressing it with some levity perhaps, added the conversion of souls was not only a priest’s mission, but that it would also put him “in good stead” with his bishop (I remember also that I had to write a formal letter to Bishop Łukomski stating my reason for my desire to be baptized, in order to receive his permission therefor.) I felt that I could not disappoint him, although he’d assured me that even if I should eschew baptism, he would still care for me.

When, toward the end of summer, things started to get “hot” (as I was almost found out by a certain mason—a

“wiseguy” from Warsaw who worked there), Father Falkowski took me in again and, together with the parish priests, put together the following scenario:

The plan was for me to report to the general population registration, then in progress in the German-occupied Białystok voivodship, where new identity cards were being issued; with the partial cooperation of the village elder (who had to verify my identity, based on the priest’s assurance—not being aware of my true origin), I was granted a new identity card (Polish Catholic).

With it in hand, I “volunteered” for civilian labor in East Prussia, as the Germans, in addition to forcibly deporting young people for labor, were also conducting a broad propaganda campaign to recruit volunteers.

With tears in my eyes, I took leave of Father Falkowski who felt that my only chance to survive would be “in the lion’s den,” since the Germans embarked on a wild hunt for Jewish escapees, and a death penalty—often on the spot—was meted out to those assisting them.

I was received by the German Amtskommissar in Szepietowo who dispatched me by train for labor in a factory in Insterburg, in East Prussia.

From September 1943 to January 1945 I worked there, all along corresponding with Father Falkowski. Because nourishment was very scarce, Father Falkowski would continuously provide me with packages containing bread loaves; inside the bread, in a hollowed-out cavity, I usually found a ring of kielbasa [sausage], which, by the way, was strictly against the law (the remittance of meat products during the war-time food rationing). In the event that I would be found out (as four other Poles were employed in that same factory), without doubt it would have caused a tragic end for my friend.

Moved to Germany proper where I was liberated by the American Army (in the city of Erfurt), I reestablished contact with Father Falkowski. Since then, allowing for some interruptions, we’ve been in constant touch for over 50 years: twice I brought him to the United States for visits, and to Israel (where he received the highest honors); I visited him in Poland a number of times. Currently he is retired, following two heart surgeries, at age 78, residing in the village of Klukowo, district Łomża. ... Throughout his entire life he displayed great dedication in restoring churches, in furthering education, especially among children (he was imprisoned for two years in Białystok under Stalin), and always leaving parishes behind in an improved state. ... (As far as I know, he also assisted, and possibly sheltered, the well known deceased writer, Paweł Jasienica.)

Leaving him, en route to East Prussia, I had been asking him how I would ever repay him (taught by my parents that one should not take from others without intending to give). He replied, I remember, “don’t even try, only pass it on to others.” ... Fifty years later, from a present perspective, I asked him, among others, whether he’d received any instructions from his Church superiors with regard to aiding or sheltering escapees or Jews. He answered: “I didn’t need any, for I had my instructions from Christ—‘Love thy neighbor’ or ‘I am my brother’s keeper.’”

In the course of our long conversations when I was under the care of Father Falkowski (1942–43), I was asking him, among others—as a 15-year-old boy, why were we being persecuted and murdered. His answer then, apparently the product of his state of mind at the time, or else his scope of “knowledge” acquired in the seminary, or in the environment, expressed itself thusly: “The Lord Christ told the Jews: ‘My blood will fall upon you and your offsprings.’ (I am not able to quote directly but such was the contents.) And this has to be fulfilled.” When I questioned that—“but why upon us, the innocent?” “Father, you have imbued me with the love of one’s neighbor as the foundation of Christianity, and the Germans are a Christian nation ...” He would reply: “Certainly, every Christian has the duty to realize these principles of faith, but apparently, in order to fulfill the prophecy of Christ, the Lord, in ways incomprehensible to us, is using Hitler as His Attila’s whip.” In addition, he told me that one could attain salvation solely through Christ and through a belief in Him.

These days he does not recall having said the former, and as for the latter, he maintains that such an approach is undergoing changes in the philosophy of the modern-day Church—many roads can, apparently, lead to salvation.

In addition to helping Joseph Kutrzeba, Rev. Józef Perkowski, the aforementioned pastor of Hodyszewo, is known to have helped other Jews survive the war including Zofia Kamieniecka and her young son, Unk. He sheltered Teresa, the 5-year-old daughter of Josl Tykocki, a merchant from Brańsk, in the parish rectory. (Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.829; Waldemar Monkiewicz and Józef Kowalczyk, “Pomoc Żydom w regionie białostockim podczas II wojny światowej,” *Studia Podlaskie*, volume 2 (1989): p.372.) Together with Maria Kuzin and some nuns, Rev. Perkowski provided shelter to Mina Charin, whom he baptized as Maria Jadwiga. (Testimony of Fania Charin, dated August 6, 1948, Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, no. 301/3950.) The following account is from Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, volume 4: Poland, Part 1, at page 433.

Mina Charin, later called Omer, was 16 in 1942, when she escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and arrived in the town of Łapy [Łapy], in the Białystok [Białystok] district, where her brother [Józef or Julian Charin] worked as a doctor in the local hospital. After meeting with her brother, Mina began working in one of the estates close to the town, until one day all the Jews of the vicinity were ordered to report to the nearby police station. The owner of the estate, considering it her lawful duty to obey the German order, decided to drive the [registered] Jewish worker to the Gestapo and hand her over. When they were on their way, Mina asked her employer to stop near the home of Maria Kuzin, a practical nurse who worked with her brother, so she could say goodbye to her. Kuzin, who knew very well what fate awaited Mina, asked the owner of the estate to continue on her way and promised she herself would accompany the Jewish woman to the Gestapo. Mina was hidden in a hiding place arranged for her in the yard of Kuzin's home, where she remained for a few months. When the German searches of the houses in the vicinity became more frequent, Kuzin transferred the Jewish refugee to a nearby village, where she found shelter in the home of the local priest [Rev. Józef Perkowski], who looked after her with devotion and generosity. She remained there until her liberation in July 1944. Even while Mina was in the priest's home, Kuzin continued to visit her, to provide her with her needs and to boost her morale.

Mina Charin's brother, Dr. Józef (Julian) Charin, was assisted and sheltered by Rev. Henryk Bagiński, the pastor of Łapy, and Rev. Feliks Zalewski, the pastor of Topczewo. (Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.829.) Rev. Józef Perkowski also took in a young Jewish girl from Białystok who had been thrown out of a train headed for the Treblinka death camp. The girl survived the occupation and moved to Israel. (Luba Wrobel Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope: An Autobiography* [Melbourne: n.p., 1998], p.98.)

In a separate bunker near the village Hodyszewo [Hodyszewo] was hiding Chaim Wrobel, they called him kewlaker with a nine year old girl, Stella Szcrecranska [sic]. This is her story how she came to the Bransker [Brańsk] group. Stella was born in Białystok [Białystok] at the polish [sic] end of town. Her father was a chemist and they talked only polish. She was on a train with her parents on the way to Treblinka gas chambers when her mother wrapped her in a towel and threw her out of a train window. Polish people were walking alongside the train where dead bodies of Jews were laying shot while jumping from ther [sic] trains. ... In between the dead they found Stella alive. The people picked her up and took her to the priest in Hoduszewo [Hodyszewo]. Haim Kewlaker came to the priest for food, so the priest gave him lettle [sic] Stela [sic] and told him to take care of her. The priest helped Chaim with food and Chaim took Stella to his bunker.

Zalman Sukman of the village and parish of Pietkowo near Łapy (just north of Brańsk) also turned to priests when he hid in the countryside moving from place to place. (Zalman Sukman, "In the Village of Pietkowo," *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>>, translation of Shmuel Kalisher, ed., *Sokoly: B'ma'avak l'hayim* [Tel Aviv: Organization of Sokoly Emigrés in Israel, 1975], pp.221–23.)

Sometimes I would go to Christian friends, even priests who were among my friends, and [from them] I received bread and other food. Without this, we would have died of hunger.

Assistance from various priests in and around Brańsk, in the Podlasie region, is recorded in Eva Hoffman's *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), at pages 205–208, 224, 232, and 235.

One night early that month [i.e., November 1942], someone jumped over the ghetto fence and ran into the pharmacy. It was Lejb Shapiro [Leon Szapiro], the pharmacy's prewar owner. He told [Janina] Woińska that the ghetto was surrounded, and nobody knew what was going to happen. He wanted to hide with his wife, his two sons, and his brother's fiancée in the basement of the pharmacy. Woińska, and the two other women living in the building, decided that this was a suicidal plan: the pharmacy was right in the ghetto, and frequented by Germans and Poles. Instead, it was agreed that the Shapiros should go to another building, close by but outside the ghetto area. There, Woińska made a hiding place behind the piles of lumber. Together with the two other women, she brought the fugitives food for the next few days. ...

Her sense of danger was sharpened, however, after a close call with the Gestapo, who came to the pharmacy a few days later and ordered a search. By that time, with the help of a young priest [Rev. Józef Chwalko], the Shapiros had gone on to another, safer place outside Brańsk. The Gestapo found their suitcases, left behind in the pharmacy's attic. ...

... As it happened, the whole "aristocracy" of Brańsk had gathered in the pharmacy, including a doctor, a priest, and a

teacher. They all knew about the hiding place. No one said a word.

During the search, another Gestapo man started hitting a peasant quite viciously. ... He ordered the pharmacy cordoned off more securely from the ghetto.

"It's a miracle we survived," Woińska says. ...

The young priest who arranged for the Shapiros' second hiding place, and who escorted them on their short but hazardous journey, was Vicar Józef Chwalko. His superior, Rector Bolesław Czarkowski, reiterated in his sermons that "one must help people" who were in need. A priestly word, a priestly example, carried enormous moral authority in a congregation such as Brańsk's ...

... the Nazis announced a hunt for the hidden Jews. The Catholic priest, to his credit, preached a sermon in which he told people to "wash their hands" of such murderous activity, and enjoined them to help those in need. ...

... in July 1943 a priest named Henryk Opatowski, who was a member of the Home Army, was executed for helping Jews and Soviet deserters from labor camps. ...

The forest partisans continued to function and even to grow, adding people who escaped from Białystok after the liquidation of the ghetto and even from the train transports to Treblinka. From 1943 on, there were more than eighty Jews trying to survive in this way. They organized themselves into a unit, consisting of a "family camp," which sheltered those who could not use weapons, and a defense camp. Their supply of arms was replenished by "intelligent Poles," who were sympathetic to their plight and who included schoolteachers and a priest.

(See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, p.880.)

Eugenia Wirszubska, the wife of a lawyer from Wysokie Litewskie, obtained Aryan papers for herself and young daughters Regina and Ada from a family friend, Lidia Lichnowska, the daughter of the prewar mayor of Wysokie. They managed to survive in that area with the help of a number of Poles including a priest from the town of Narew where they took refuge. (Account of Regina Szymańska, "Fear and Dread," in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, volume 2, pp.301–302.)

Just before the establishment of a ghetto in Wysokie Litewskie (one was created there as well), thanks to the intensified effort by Lidka Lichnowska, we obtained Aryan papers. We could then leave for Narew. It was Lidka Lichnowska, I believe, who brought us the news that a ghetto would be created. Her father, who was the prewar mayor, continued to carry out his duties during the war. His attitude toward us remained very friendly. ...

I think that people did not treat us any differently as Jews in Wysokie Litewskie, because of our assimilation and the type of life my parents led.

During the war, on two occasions, we managed to escape virtually "from under the knife," once, from the ghetto in Próżana, the day before its liquidation, and afterward, from Wysokie just before a ghetto was established there. From Wysokie we found our way first to Bielsko [Bielsk Podlaski]. We stayed with friends of Lidka Lichnowska, physicians. We were there for two or three nights. From there, equipped with letters of recommendation, we went to Narew, where we spent the rest of the occupation. We were helped by a Catholic priest to whom we were referred by Mrs. Lichnowska. It is difficult to say whether the townspeople knew we were Jews.

My mama was very likeable, pleasant, hardworking, and very obliging. We did not go to school. We played practically the whole time with the local children. My sister, in spite of having very dark brown hair, had a sub nose and never looked Jewish. Therefore, she could move around freely. With me, it was different; I have a long nose and chestnut-colored hair. During the entire occupation, Mama kept me hidden and bleached my hair with peroxide. My hair was so damaged by these treatments that I had to wear a white crocheted beret the whole time. Mama told everyone that I had bad sinuses, and that is why I had to be shielded from the sun. I think that people might have suspected the truth; however, they were tolerant.

We lived through the rest of the occupation relatively peacefully. ...

Later, Mama was offered a tiny room in exchange for her cleaning. We lived there until the end of the occupation. ... The landlady was the mother of a priest. She was a very decent old woman, who embraced us warmly. She later arranged for a better job for Mama, cooking dinners for the clerks in the community office. Such a job made it possible to always get something to eat.

Accounts from Białystok speak of priests imploring the faithful to assist and show compassion for the Jews, assisting Jews to escape from the ghetto, and providing them with false birth and baptismal certificates. (Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, volume 3, p.129; Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem*, pp.417–18; Gustaw Kerszman, *Jak ginąć, to razem* [Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2003], p.51; Halina Grubowska,

Father Andrew of Jesus (Andrzej od Jezusa, actually Franciszek Gdowski) was the superior of the Carmelite monastery in Wilno and the pastor of St. Teresa of Avila church, adjacent to the ancient city gate which housed the chapel and revered icon of Our Lady of Ostra Brama. Father Gdowski collaborated closely with Anton Schmid, a sergeant of the German army from Austria who was stationed in Wilno, and who was executed by his superiors in April 1942 for helping a large number of Jews escape from the ghetto. Father Gdowski supplied false baptismal certificates to a number of Jews, including Luisa Emaitis, Hermann Adler, and his wife Anita Distler. With those documents Anton Schmid obtained passports for the Adlers, which allowed them to escape to Hungary. Father Gdowski also hid some Jews in the monastery and took care of their spiritual needs by setting aside a well-camouflaged room in the church which was used by his “guests” as a synagogue. The Gestapo arrested the Carmelites in March 1942, and Father Gdowski was imprisoned for the duration of the war. Hermann Adler wrote about the heroic deeds of Father Gdowski in his memoir *Ostra Brama: Legende aus der Zeit des großen Untergangs* (Zürich: Helios, 1945). Although Anton Schmid was recognized by Yad Vashem, Father Andrzej Gdowski was not. (Friedman, *Their Brothers’ Keepers*, pp.125–26; Manfred Vienna Ingersoll and Christiane M. Pabst, “Feldwebel Anton Schmid,” *Gedenkdienst*, Ausgabe 3/02.)

Father Gdowski is also credited with rescuing Jewish children at the Carmelite boarding school in Wilno. One of the Jewish charges at this institution was Michael Stołowicki (Stolowitzky), who had settled in Wilno at the beginning of the war, after fleeing from Warsaw with his mother Lydia and his Catholic nanny, Getruda Babilińska. His mother died shortly after their arrival in Wilno and the young boy was cared for by his Polish nanny, who passed the child off as her own. After the Germans occupied Wilno in the summer of 1941, Babilińska had to seek protection for young Michael, who was not only circumcised but also did not have proper identity documents. She confided in Father Gdowski, who agreed to take him into the church boarding school without charge. Father Gdowski was known to preach sermons about the importance of helping one’s neighbour. (Ram Oren, *Getruda’s Oath: A Child, a Promise, and a Heroic Escape During World War II* [New York: Doubleday/Random House, 2009], pp.188–93).

She [Gertruda Babilińska] concluded that the church could be their only refuge. Michael remembered the first day he went there with Gertruda. In a blend of fear and embarrassment, he followed her into the big hall of the Ostra Brama Church. The cement arches supporting the ceiling, the paintings of the crucified Jesus, and the gilded altar stirred mixed feelings in him. It didn’t take Gertruda long to make him understand why he had to go with her. He understood very well that, for the outside world, he was the son of a Christian mother, and the pretense he had to adopt was a pledge for his life. ...

The church was full of local residents and a group of German soldiers and officers who came to Sunday mass. The priest, Andras Gedovsky [Andrzej Gdowski], passed among the worshippers, nodding to people he knew. Michael looked at him with curiosity, examined his kind face and his white robe as he moved like an angel hovering toward the altar and sank down in prayer. ...

Father Gedovsky mounted the pulpit and preached a sermon about the importance of helping your neighbor, quoting the appropriate passages from the New Testament. ...

After mass, the priest stood in the door of the church, smiling, shaking hands with the worshippers, and exchanging a few polite words with everyone. ...

Gertruda waited until everyone had gone and then went to the priest, who looked at her affectionately. Ever since Lydia’s death, Gertruda had come to church with Michael almost every Sunday.

“Father,” she murmured, “can I talk with you in private?”

The priest looked at her gently, “Of course, my child.”

She asked Michael to wait for her on a bench in the church, and let the priest lead her to the office. Once inside, the priest closed the door. His eyes looked at the woman’s face lined with distress and anxiety. Out the window, the day turned grey and long shadows crept into the room.

Gertruda wanted to speak, but tears choked her voice. Uncontrollable weeping racked her body. The priest put his warm hand on her shoulder.

“How can I help, my child?” His voice soothed her.

“I don’t know what to do, Father,” she said at last. “I don’t know who to turn to.”

He waited patiently for her to tell him her distress. ...

"It's about my child," said Gertruda.

"The sweet child with the blue eyes sitting there outside?"

"Yes."

Fear of what she was to reveal in this room nailed her to the spot. Her body was shaking, but she knew she had to go on. The priest was the only person she could pour her heart out to, the only one she could trust.

She told him the truth and he looked at her with eyes opened wide in surprise.

"I didn't realize that the child was a Jew," he said.

She called Michael.

"Do you know who Jesus was?" asked the priest.

"The man everybody prays to," replied the child. He remembered the prayers he had heard in church.

"And what is the Holy Trinity?"

Michael frowned and repeated what Gertruda had recited to him: "The Father ... the Son ... the Holy Spirit."

The priest sprinkled holy water on him and said a prayer.

"From now on, you're a Christian like all of us," he said. "Tomorrow morning you'll start attending the church school."

"But," she stammered, "I don't have money to pay."

"I'm not worried," he said. "God will reward me."

The priest sat Michael on his lap and stroked his hair.

"You want to hear a story?" he asked.

"Yes."

"In chapter two of the book of Daniel, there's a story of a king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who woke up one night in panic after a horrible dream. In his dream, the king saw a statue with a head of gold. A big stone suddenly smashed the statue into slivers. The king called the sages of Babylon and asked them to interpret his dream. None of them could. When the prophet Daniel learned of this, he came to the king and interpreted. The statue, he said, is your kingdom. The stone symbolizes the kingdom of Heaven that decided to smash your kingdom to dust."

A slight smile hovered over the priest's lips.

"You know what is the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar?" he asked.

Gertruda nodded. The comparison with the Nazis was obvious.

"I promise you," said the priest, "that the end of the wicked will be as the end of Nebuchadnezzar's statue."

She left with Michael and hurried home. The child was saved, at least for the time being, and that was what was most important. She wasn't worried about his Christian baptism. She was sure that, just as Michael was born a Jew, he would go back to being a Jew when the war was over

On the morning Michael was about to enter the school of Ostra Brama Church, Gertruda dressed him in his best clothes, packed up his belongings in a small suitcase, and went with him to Father Gedovsky's office, where they were greeted warmly

"Leave the boy here and go in peace." He said. "Here he'll be protected from every evil."

Gertruda kissed Michael's sad eyes.

"Don't worry," she said. "I'll come to visit you often."

The priest went with Michael to the school building next to the church, showed him his bed in one of the dormitory rooms, and then put him in class. The children looked at him with curiosity and at recess tried to size him up. He said what Gertruda taught him to say: that his mother was the widow of a Polish officer and that he was her only son. ...

Despite the strict studies and the fear that accompanied Michael day and night, life in the boarding school was rather comfortable. There was enough food, he had his own bed, and Father Gedovsky kept an eye on him. The children in the boarding school were divided, as always, into better and worse. Some wanted to be his friend. Other looked for his weak points and teased him a lot. He was glad to make friends with children he was fond of, and avoided responding to the teasing from the others.

Michael Stolorowitzky recalled that he even beamed an altar boy. (*"When They Came to Take My Father": Voices of the Holocaust*, Leora Kahn and Rachel Hager, eds. [New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996], p.150.)

I grew up as Gertrude's son. We lived together in an apartment in Vilnius [Wilno] very near the Vilnius ghetto. I used to see how they took Jews from the ghetto. I was outside it thanks to her. There was this very large sign outside our house that said, If you are caught hiding a Jew you will be executed without a trial.

Just outside the ghetto was the main church of Vilnius. Gertrude was Catholic, and she enlisted the priest's help in

hiding me. I became an altar boy. Every Sunday, there I was, dressed in a white gown with a red apron.

This rescue is also described in Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*, at page 227, and in Gay Block and Malka Drucker, *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust* [New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1992], at pages 166–69. The following account appears in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at pages 65–66.

At the outbreak of war, Mr. Stolowicki [Stołowicki] was living in Paris. When the Germans occupied the city of Warsaw, Mrs. Stolowicka decided to escape with her four-year-old son, Michael, and his nanny, Gertruda Babilinska [Babilińska], a teacher by profession and a native of Gdańsk [Gdańsk] (Danzig). The three made their way to Vilna [Wilno], Lithuania, en route to Paris. When, however, the mother discovered that her husband had died, she suffered a stroke and, realizing that her days were numbered, asked Babilinska to do all she could to take her son to Israel. After Stolowicka died, Babilinska continued looking after Michael. After she informed some priests that the boy was Jewish, they took Michael on as an acolyte in a church in Vilna. Although the Germans were in the habit of conducting impromptu raids on the apartments of the refugees from Warsaw, Babilinska continued to look after Michael and care for his needs. Babilinska, who was fluent in German, worked as an amanuensis, writing petitions to the authorities on behalf of local farmers, for which she received eggs, dairy products which she used to smuggle into the ghetto for her friends. After the war, Babilinska returned with Michael to Gdansk to take leave of her family. Although her family tried to persuade her to stay, she stood by her promise to Michael's mother and took him to the displaced persons camps in Germany, and a passage was arranged for them on the SS Exodus. Despite assurances by members of the Hagana that they would look after the boy and make sure he reached Israel safely, Babilinska insisted on coming with him, declaring her willingness to throw in her lot with the other clandestine immigrants. Babilinska and Michael endured hardships on the journey to Israel, until the ship was ordered back to Hamburg. Undaunted, Babilinska embarked with Michael on the SS Transylvania, reaching the shores of Israel in 1948. Babilinska settled in Israel, where she raised Michael as her son, and was awarded Israeli citizenship. She passed away in Israel at a ripe old age.

Isaac Kowalski, who was active in the Jewish underground in Wilno, described the attitude of a number of priests, as well as a cross-section of the city's population. (Isaac Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe: The Story of a Jewish United Partisan Organization* [New York: Central Guide Publishers, 1969], pp.216–25.)

Professors [Aleksander] Januszkiewicz and Michaida [Kornel Michejda] helped their friends who were Jewish doctors. ... [Rev.] Dr Jazas Sztakauskas [Juozas Stakauskas], director of the government archives, together with a Lithuanian teacher Zemajitis and the Polish [Benedictine] nun Milkulska [Maria Mikulska], hid 12 Jews: Dr. Alexander Libo with wife and daughter, Grigori Jaszunski and wife, Engineer Jacob with wife and daughter, Miss Ester Jafe, Mrs. Bak and her son, the young artist Zalman.

Profesor Aka, Professor Czizowski [Tadeusz Czeżowski], Professor Petruszewicz [Kazimierz Petruszewicz], lawyer Josef Czelecki helped hide some Jewish acquaintances. Merila [Maryla] Abramowicz-Wolska made counterfeit papers for Jews. At 16 Puhulanka [Pohulanka] Street she hid tens of Jewish people and helped them with food and money. Mrs. Wiktoria Grzmiliewska hid scores of Jews in every apartment and showed friendliness to them. It is in place here to mention Mrs. Maria Fedeka [Fedeka], who saved a lot of Jews from death, by helping them to run from the ghetto. The above women carried out their mission from pure human motives.⁷⁰

A great many Aryan domestics showed human feelings for their employers, by helping them with food and in some cases, even hid them. Aryan governesses hid Jewish children, whom they helped to raise. Some help for Jews came from Catholic priests. Markowicz [Rev. Tadeusz Makarewicz, pastor of St. John the Baptist church], a Pole, and Lipniunas [Alfonsas Lipniūnas] had spoken to their people to give back Jewish property. Lipniunas was arrested. Father Krupowicius [Mykolas Krupavičius], who showed sympathy to the Jews was sent away to a German concentration camp, Tilzit [Tilsit]. Father Waltkaus [Mykolas Vaitkus] hid the Trupianski child in a Catholic orphanage, and helped save other Jewish children.

... There were occasions when priests met Jewish workers on the street and encouraged them by telling them that they would soon be free.

Our friend, the old Masha, told me one day, when she met me on the way to the ghetto from work, that her Pastor [Rev.

⁷⁰ On the rescue activities of Professor Tadeusz Czeżowski, Dr. Jan Janowicz, and Maria Fedeka, see the account of Alexander Libo in Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, p.320. See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, pp.160, 212.

Bolesław Sperski] from the “Wszystkich Świętych” [All Saints] church which was located only a few feet from the ghetto gates, advised her during confession that she should help us with everything possible.⁷¹

The Jews in the ghetto knew about his human attitude to our suffering people and dug a tunnel from the ghetto to the church. A few escaped on the day of the liquidation of the ghetto through the church to the city and then to the woods.

Eta Lipenholtz tells about Leokadia Piechowska and others. ... “We were 24 people saved at this place called Tuskulany farm. ... The Polish people who kept us for a whole year until the liberation, were Mrs. Stankiewicz and Mrs. Gieda.”

Dr. Anthony Panski [Antoni Pański], the Social Democrat, helped the writer Herman Kruk financially. ...

In his book Balberiszki describes a neighbor, Kozłowska [Kozłowska], who returned golden valuables even after the Balberiszki had been in the ghetto for quite some time and thus helped them to overcome hunger and need.

Victoria Nazmiewski, Maria Feddecki [Feddecka] ... Maria Wolski [Wolska], at one time or other, helped the partisan-poet Smerke Kaczeginski and other Jews. ...

Jadzia Dudziec was a practicing Catholic. She was in contact with the Scheinbaum-group and supplied them with small arms. She perished August 13, 1944.

Irena Adamowicz was also a devoted Catholic. She was a very active scout-leader and very friendly with some Chaluz-leaders. Irena volunteered to be a courier for the Hechalutz and travelled many times to various ghettos in Poland and Lithuania. ...

In the last days before Vilna [Wilno] was liberated, Esther Geler, wounded by a bullet, Robotnik and Feiga Itkin, the last survivors of the H.K.P., managed to escape. They came to a Polish woman in the Antokol section of Siostry Miłosierdzia [Miłosierdzia—Sisters of Charity] Street, where Mrs. Guriono let them sleep in the basement and gave them food, until the liberation of the city. ...

It is also worth while commenting those nationals who, although they did not proffer any direct help, yet they made believe they did not see the Jew, disguised as an Aryan, when they met him in the street; they did not run as informers to the authorities ...

Herman Kruk, the chronicler of the Wilno ghetto, describes the reaction of the largely Polish population of that city to the ghettoization of the Jews in September 1941 and later events. (Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944* (New Haven and London: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and Yale University Press, 2002), pp.109–110, 112, 280–81.)

Today [September 8, 1941], at Ostra Brama [in the chapel located above this ancient gate was the holiest Catholic shrine in Wilno which housed the icon of the revered Madonna of Ostra Brama—Ed.], there was a prayer in honor of the martyrdom of the Jews. People say that Jews are now bringing in full bundles, which they got in the city as gifts from Christians in the street.

In the street, at a Maistas [meat cooperative established by the Soviet authorities], masses of Christians brought packages of meat and distributed them to the Jewish workers marching to the ghetto.

The sympathy of the Christian population, more precisely of the Polish population, is extraordinary.

[September 15th] Christians come to the ghetto. People say that Christian friends and acquaintances often come. Today a priest came to me, looking for his Jewish friends.

[May 6, 1942] From Vilna [Wilno] and the whole area, masses of young men are being taken for work in Germany. Yesterday one of those groups was led through Szawelska Street and a lot of Jews saw them. In the street, guarded by Lithuanians, they stormily sang the national battle song [actually, the Polish national anthem—Ed.], “Poland Is Not Yet Lost,” and as they approached the Jewish ghetto, they shouted slogans:

“Long live the Jews!...”

A mood I only want to note here.

Raizel Medlinski (later Nachimowitz), a widowed school teacher, and her daughter Batia (born in 1938), managed to escape from the Wilno ghetto and survived the war in the countryside with the help of a number of Poles including two priest, Rev. Hieronim Olszewski, the vicar of St. Teresa’s Church (the adjoining ancient city gate known as of Ostra Brama housed a revered icon of the Mother of God), and Rev. Aleksander Łukaszewicz, pastor

⁷¹ In her memoir *Poza gettem i obozem* (Warsaw: Volumen, 1993), pp.17–18, 83–84, Pola Wawer, a young Jewish doctor from Wilno, mentions the assistance of Rev. Julian Jankowski (a vicar at All Saints church), who procured for her a birth and baptismal certificate in the name of Zofia Januszkiewicz from the parish in Podbrodzie.

We were in the ghetto on the Gaon Street, near the main gate. Real troubles began. There was no food to eat, but I was always a vigorous woman. I got a connection with Polish people, who sent me packages from the lofts tied to a rope. ... I thought all the time about how to escape from the ghetto. ... Another day, when I lay with my daughter, a Polish man appeared. This was probably the doorkeeper of the building. They sent him to check and to report if Jews were left in the building. I told him that I was a teacher; and I worked not far from there. He understood our situation and had pity on us. He went away; I didn't even notice when. He came back with some bread and milk. He told me that if I want to survive, I have to come to the same place and he will take us to a wide road. I learned that they used to put a ladder to the loft; and the corridor led to a tailor shop, where Jewish tailors worked for the Germans.

I went back to the ghetto early in the morning. I found my mother-in-law in the ghetto. She was an old woman; I couldn't escape together with her. I already thought of leaving the ghetto. Sunday, before the action, before the liquidation of the second ghetto, I went to the loft, keeping my daughter by hand, I knocked. The doorkeeper came and took us through the ladder to a wide street. I didn't have an exact plan but I wanted to go to Lipówka. I knew some people there. It was a suburb of Vilna [Wilno]. I knew a Polish woman there, who worked in my house. They received us in a friendly way. We spent a few weeks there, with my daughter, but the neighbors began to look and understand that Grisha is hiding a Jewish woman with a child. I had a feeling that we had stayed there long enough and had to leave the place. One nice day, early in the morning, I took my girl and went to the town. I knew that our ghetto was already liquidated. Nobody survived. I didn't know what to do. ... My plan was to leave my daughter in an orphanage and escape Vilna. I went to Rase [Rossa Street]. A cloister [of the Sisters of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary] was there, full of priests. A priest was coming toward me. I saw him for the first time in my life. I asked him who was in charge of the orphanage. ... I spoke to him Polish and I told him that I am a teacher and he was a teacher too. He pitied us and took us to his room. I cry out there all the bitterness of my heart. He already planned how to save me. He told me to come back in a few days. When I came back, he asked me what I want to be called. He probably kept stamps, so I got a birth certificate for me and my daughter. When I got the documents, I went back to Lipówka, to my Pole. People from the neighborhood used to visit him. One of them took my daughter and me to Wielkie Soleczniki [a town distant 45 km from Wilno]. We came to the governor [reeve?]. He already had the information from my Pole, that I am not entirely "kosher" in spite of speaking not bad the Polish language and having Catholic papers. One must run the risk a little. We learned that the Goy didn't want to take a risk. He was afraid to lose his head. He often declared that he can't keep me any more. He told me that not far from him, just a few kilometers away, is a big forest. In the forest lived a forester, a very good man. He would be able to hide me for some time. So I went to meet the forester. For the time being, I left my girl there, in Wielkie Soleczniki. When I came to the forester, he told me that he could not take such a risk, but that not far from there, I don't remember how many kilometers, I could find a property named Umiastów with a very good priest and an orphanage. They would receive me there. I came to Umiastów and found no priest living there. He lived in a town named Konwaliszki and had some influence over the orphanage. So, I went to the priest from Konwaliszki [Rev. Aleksander Łukasiewicz] and told him all the truth about me, who I was and who gave me the papers. He took out a book with the addresses of all priests and saw that I was not lying. He wanted to help me. He went to the orphanage in Umiastów and asked the woman-master of the house to take me with the child into the property. ... She didn't want to accept me in the house in any terms. It was Sunday. The priest received me very well with good food on the table. I don't remember his name, but the other priest, who provided me the papers, was named Olszewski. He used to pray in Ostrobrama [Ostra Brama]. When the priest from Konwaliszki didn't obtain anything, I sat with him and asked for advice on what to do next. We decided, both of us, that I had to visit Umiastów once again and beg the orphanage master to let us join the house. I went alone. I left the child behind. Her first question was: "Why did you come again? I already spoke to the priest. I can't accept you. I don't have enough maintenance for the children." I told her: "Listen to me. You are still a religious woman, a Catholic. You go each time to the priest to confess and when you see a woman being drawn down, you don't want to help.

After a long discussion, after many ups and downs, she finally allowed me to stay the first few weeks in Konwaliszki. I took my daughter with me; and we stayed there three to four weeks. After that, I couldn't stay any longer in Konwaliszki. I got a connection with one teacher from the area, who advised me go to Dziewieniszki to find a teacher who was now a village head. His name was Kucharski. "Go to him; show him your documents; and ask him to book you in." One morning, I went to Dziewieniszki. I didn't tell him the truth. I showed him the certificate of birth and he asked me about the other documents, but he understood everything. He quoted the sentence of the Polish poet Słowacki: "Shall the living not loose hope." He took my document, went out to his office and told to his secretary Stieszka: "Take her document from the woman and book her on the list of our village." To Stieszka came many people from the area; and he turned to Kucharski, the head of the village in these words: "I will not do it! How do you know who the woman is?" The head of the village answered nothing, opened the door in silence and stepped in into his office. The secretary booked me in temporarily in

Umiastów. During the time, when I was in the property of Umiastów. I worked as a nurse, but most important, I didn't have to appear as a Jew. When Christmas came, I knew all the Christmas carols, which I learned years ago in the Polish teacher's seminary. I joined in the Christmas carols with them. I used to sit with all the children, about 40–50 orphans, on my knees, together with my daughter, making the sign of the Cross, praying all the right prayers, and going to the church from time to time. My daughter was exceptionally religious. She used to sit at night near the bed on her knees and pray all the prayers. One day two young and pretty girls came to visit us, Zosia and Wanda. Zosia told Wanda not to say who she is. But when I looked at Wanda. I recognized her as one of my students from school, a Jewish girl, probably a member of Arkin family. They owned a bonbon factory in Vilna. She was a cousin to them.

Wanda, of course couldn't tell that she doesn't know me. Silently, they used to say that a Jewish community grows up here. But from where did the girls come? Kucharski knew all my secrets. The girls worked near Vilna, in a place with an aerodrome; and one day a German said to them: "Dear children, run away from here. They are going to get rid of you. At the end of the war, I will know where to find you." They were young and pretty girls ... Kucharski knew my secret; and he let them stay here for a while. Meanwhile this event happened: a Polish woman, whose two sons were with us in Umiastów, informed [the authorities in Lida], that Kucharski employed Jews and she, the former wife of an officer, can't get a job there. Finally, came a complaint against Kucharski. They sent a German Commission to find the truth. When the Germans came, the girls hid themselves. I walked around with a kerchief on the head. They didn't even notice that I am Jewish and went away. After this, the girls couldn't stay with us one minute longer. The Polish woman who informed Lida was shot as a black market dealer. ... In 1943, when they changed our master, a Lithuanian came to replace her. This was a time when some Belarus regions became a part of Lithuania. All the benefits went to the Lithuanians. Then, the Lithuanian government came and sent us a Lithuanian master. The old woman master knew all my secrets. She went to meet the priest who said: "Let her still stay here." It seems that the priest did for others what he did for me, so they caught him and shot him. ...

I had a feeling that the earth is burning under my feet; and I wanted to run away from there. But at this time, our master was still a Pole, Wołkowski. He told me: "Everybody knows everything about you here and nobody will hurt you. ..." This held me back and thanks to this, I could stand it. Sometimes, we had to hide in the fields and in the woods. I stood it until 1944, before the end of the war. I saw Vilna in flames. I was 65 kilometers from Vilna. It was a terrible fire. We saw a big part of Vilna houses burned out.

Many village priests in the archdiocese of Wilno, in northeastern Poland, extended help to Jews. A Jewish memorial book identifies the following priests from Brasław and surrounding area: the dean and pastor of Brasław, Rev. Mieczysław Akrejć, died of apoplexy, on June 25, 1942, the day the Jews were being shot by the Germans and some Jews had taken refuge in the parish rectory⁷²; some Catholic priests urged the peasants who confessed to harbouring Jews to give them food and clothing; the local Catholic priest supplied David of Bizne and a young boy with crucifixes to wear round their necks; a priest from Krasław (Krāslava in Latvian, a city on the Polish border) and another priest from Plusy (or the older spelling of Plussy) assisted in finding a safe home for the Barkan family; a priest by the name of Bilcher (from Plusy?) provided medicine to Anna Zelikman and others; a priest named Petro from Belmont; a priest from the village of Prozoroki (given as "Prysaroki"); a priest from the village of Ikażń (given as "Ikaznia"); the local priest near the village of Urban (Urbanowo near Druja?), who cared for Rachel Gurewicz and her two daughters Hanka and Riwetka. (Ariel Machnes and Rina Klinov, eds., *Darkness and Desolation: In Memory of the Communities of Brasław, Dubene, Jaisi, Jod, Kisłowszczizna, Okmienic, Opsa, Plusy, Rimszan, Slobodka, Zamosz, Zaracz* [Tel Aviv: Association of Brasław and Surroundings in Israel and America, and Ghetto Fighters' House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1986], pp.111ff., 124ff., 571–72, 575, 595–96.)

Additional examples of assistance by village priests in northeastern Poland are described in northeastern Poland is described in Peter Silverman, David Smuschkowitz, and Peter Smuszkowicz, *From Victims to Victors* (Concord, Ontario: The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, 1992), at pages 246–47.

We were taken to the main jail [in Głębokie]. In front of the building a police commander motioned to the guard to take us to the basement. In this two storey building the basement held all those who were condemned to death. ... As we descended the steps to the basement two Belorussian guards welcomed us with a severe beating. We were told to sing Russian songs

⁷² On Rev. Akrejć see Tadeusz Krahel, "Ks. Mieczysław Akrejć—dziekan brasławski," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 12, December 2001.

and dance. Each time we were struck by their rifle butts until both of us collapsed bleeding and unconscious on the cement floor.

When we regained consciousness we were lying on wooden boards covered with straw. Two Roman Catholic priests had dragged us into the room and lifted our bodies onto the boards. They were sitting by us as we awoke. The priests had been arrested by the Germans and condemned to die. One was from Prozaroki [Prozoroki] and the other was from Ikażno [Ikażń]. They knew from their training how to speak to people near death and they tried to give us moral support. The other prisoners were escaped Russian prisoners of war. They all knew we had only hours to live.

When my mother heard we had been arrested and we were to be shot she ran directly to the Judenrat (Jewish Council). Her screams and tears caused a great commotion and forced the council to take steps to try and save us. Within hours a large amount of gold coins and jewelry were collected. The Judenrat had a connection with the Gestapo, a Jewish girl named Peske. She was young, extremely good looking and intelligent. She had developed an intimate relationship with the captain of the Gestapo and we found her in his office when we were escorted to see him. The gold had been used to arrange our release. Peske understood that the only way she could save our lives was by claiming she knew us well and that we had worked for the Germans in Głębokie [Głębokie] for a long time. ...

Several days later we discovered that all the prisoners in the basement had been taken to Barock [Borek forest near Berezwezc] and shot. The actual executions were performed by the local collaborator police under the supervision of the Żandarmeria (Gendarmarie) and German police. The two priests were in that group. ... Later, when we met Jewish survivors from the vicinity of Prozaroke [Prozoroki] in the forest, we discovered more about the priest. He had been personally friendly towards Jews. In his Sunday sermons he had urged his congregation to keep their hands clean of the slaughter of Jews and to aid them where possible.

According to Polish sources, Rev. Władysław Maćkowiak was the pastor of Ikażń and his vicar was Rev. Stanisław Pyrtek. They were arrested in December 1941 for their ardent preaching and illegally teaching religion to children, and detained in the jail in Brasław. They were transferred to the jail in Głębokie, together with Rev. Mieczysław Bohatkiewicz, who was arrested in the border town of Dryssa in January 1942. All three of these priests were taken by German gendarmes and Belorussian policemen on March 4, 1942 to Borek forest near Berezwezc, outside Głębokie, where they were executed. (Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, pp.38–39, 58; Walerian M. Moroz and Andrzej Datko, eds., *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945: Duchowni i świeccy z ziem polskich, którzy prześladowani przez nazizm hitlerowski dali Chrystusowi ofiarę życia świadectwo miłości* [Marki-Struga: Michalineum, 1996], pp.9–18; and Tadeusz Krahel, “Nasi Męczennicy,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, May 1999 and his “Błogosławieni Męczennicy z Berezwezcza,” March 2001.) The pastor of Prozoroki at the time was Rev. Czesław Matusiewicz, who continued to work in this area for the duration of the war. (Tadeusz Krahel, *Doświadczeni zniewoleniem: Duchowni archidiecezji wileńskiej represjonowani w latach okupacji sowieckiej (1939–1945)* [Białystok: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne–Oddział w Białymstoku, 2005], pp.84–85.)

The following account refers to assistance provided to Jews by priests in Dunilowicze and Wolkołata, as related by Joseph Riwash in *Resistance and Revenge, 1939–1945* (Montreal: n.p., 1981), at page 144.

I know of heroism also among the village priests in White Russia [prewar Eastern Poland] during the years of Nazi occupation. The parish priests of Dunilowicze [Dunilowicze] and Wolkołaty [Wolkołata] were feeding and sheltering Jews along with escaped Russian prisoners of war in their parsonages. When the Gestapo found out that the priest of Wolkołaty [Rev. Romuald Dronicz] was hiding Jews, they sent a local policeman to arrest him. The policeman, however, felt uneasy about arresting a man of God.

“I can’t arrest you, Father,” he said to the priest. “Why don’t you ask your guests to leave your parsonage and then go underground yourself?” The priest, for his part, did not want to endanger the policeman’s life and insisted that the policeman carry out his orders. When this valiant priest arrived at Gestapo head-quarters, he was shot at once.

In fact, Rev. Romuald Dronicz was arrested by the Gestapo in June 1942, imprisoned in Głębokie, and executed together with other Polish priests in Berezwezc on July 4, 1942. (Tadeusz Krahel, “Ks. Romuald Dronicz,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, July 2000.)

During the liquidation of the ghetto in Łyntupy by Lithuanian police, Irene Mauber Skibinski, then a young girl of

about six, and her mother escaped and took shelter with Rev. Józef Pakalnis, the local parish priest, who hid them in the cellar of his rectory. They remained there for about ten days before moving on. They survived the occupation with the help of a number of Polish peasant families. (Irene Mauber Skibinski, "Through the Eyes of a Child—My Childhood in Lyntupy," in Shimon Kanc, ed., *Svinzian Region: Memorial Book of 23 Jewish Communities*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/svencionys/Svencionys.html>>, translation of *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svitsian* [Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Svintzian in Israel and the U.S., 1965], column 1446.)

My mother crawled through the window and fell on the ice. She lost her shoes on the way. She pulled me out and we ran. People were peeking through windows and quickly hiding behind the curtains. My mother ran to the local priest, whose name was Father Pakalnis. We knocked at the door. His housekeeper opened the door and told us to leave immediately, but Father Pakalnis overheard our voices and asked us to come in. He was happy to see us alive. He told my mother he owed his life to her because my mother had protected him from being sent to Siberia by the Russians. He told his housekeeper to take us to the cellar and keep us there until things quieted down.

We stayed in the cellar for about ten days. ...

It was time for us to leave. Father Pakalnis gave my mother his old boots. We had to find other clothes for me to wear, since it was a small town and people could easily recognize me just from my clothing. My mother always dressed me in the finest clothes she could get. At that time my coat and hat were of a blue color, and my mother wanted me to be less conspicuous.

And so we left. We walked in the snow, and once in a while villagers gave us rides. Most of the villagers knew my family because they had worked for my father, transporting wood from the forest to the processing place at the railroad station. When we asked for shelter, they refused, saying they could not keep us, but they said they would not report us to the police because my parents had treated them well.

With no place to hide, my mother decided to go to the Svenciany [Święciany] ghetto. I do not remember much about life there. We had a corner of the floor in a very crowded room. There was no food. Our former housekeeper Amelia, who lived in Svenciany with her sister, found out we were in the ghetto. She started bringing bread whenever she could and passing it to us through barbed wire. ...

When we saw the first Red Army unit, we felt free. In Pabradzie [Podbrodzie], we met some Jewish families. We did not stay long, because we were anxious to get to Lyntupy. ...

We went to see Father Pakalnis, the priest who helped us at the moment of extreme danger. My mother did not coach me, she did not have to. I understood quite well I owed my life to him and many other kind people. I buried my face in his kind hands and cried.

Pola Wawer, who escaped from the ghetto in Wilno with her parents, also recalled a Catholic priest in Łyntupy who worked closely with a local rabbi to provide material assistance to refugees from other towns, including her family. (Pola Wawer, *Poza gettem i obozem* [Warsaw: Volumen, 1993], p.36.)

Rev. Witold Szymczukiewicz, the vicar of Rukojnie near Wilno, was instrumental in saving the lives of several Jews for whom he provided false documents and found shelters. He was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, p.807.)

Witold Szymczukiewicz, a priest, lived in Rudomino, near Vilna [Wilno], during the war. One day an old acquaintance of his told him that she had recently been in Lida where she bumped into Faiga Reznik, a high school friend of Witold. Faiga asked her to relay a message to the priest that she needed help in getting Aryan papers for her son. "Obtaining such documents was not a hard task for me. Therefore, I sent the documents that Mrs. Reznik and her son needed via an acquaintance. I was glad that I could help them and save someone from death. I did this not as a priest, but as a human being," wrote Szymczukiewicz in his testimony to Yad Vashem. Witold "took us out of the Lida ghetto, brought us to his home and later to Vilna, where we stayed under the cover of being 'Christians' until the end of the war," wrote Jonatan Barkai, Faiga's son. He added that Witold also arranged papers for another friend of the Rezniks, Jadwiga Szejniuk Bergman, and helped other Jews as well.

Rev. Jan Sielewicz, the pastor of Worniany near Wilno, helped Jews find hiding places with his parishioners. He was assisted in this undertaking by the vicar Rev. Hipolit Chruściel. Rev. Sielewicz was nominated for recognition by Yad Vashem by Hirsz Abramowicz (later Tzvi Baranowski, an opera singer in France), who

escaped from the ghetto in Wilno with his mother in October 1941. (Tadeusz Krahel, “Kapłani wśród ‘Sprawiedliwych...’” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, September 2003; Tadeusz Krahel, “Ratowanie Żydów przez bł. ks. Michała Sopoćkę,” *W Służbie Miłosierdzia*, November 2008.) Hirsch Abramowicz recalled:

We wandered in the forests for a long time before we reached the village of Worniany. Here we learned that the Catholic priest Jan Sielewicz helped rescue Jews. The priest placed people like us in distant colonies (hamlets) in the vicinity of Worniany and Świr. They were poor farmers who fed us country bread and soup. It seemed to us then that there was nothing more delicious on earth. And we helped out with their work. And thus, thanks to the truly saintly man Jan Sielewicz, my mother and I survived.

Some of the Jews that Rev. Sielewicz placed with his parishioners hailed from Wilno. They had been sent, and sometimes transported personally, to the countryside by Rev. Michał Sopoćko, professor of theology at the Stefan Batory University in interwar Wilno and spiritual advisor of the recently canonized Sister Faustina (Faustyna Kowalska). Rev. Sopoćko’s rescue activities included providing Jews with baptismal certificates (some of the Jews underwent conversion voluntarily), finding hiding places for them, and sheltering Jews in his residence. A Jewish couple wrote of their experiences thus:

Rev. Sopoćko was deeply concerned about the fate of the Jews who were already suffering repression, and helped many of them. Some of these persons underwent baptism, which he prepared us for. ... At the beginning of September [1941], a ghetto was created in Wilno. Thanks to Rev. Sopoćko, who furnished us with fictitious documents and placed under the care of [Rev. Jan Sielewicz], the dean of Worniany, we were able to get by until the spring of 1942. Afterwards, we managed on our own ... Rev. Sopoćko was highly respected in Wilno, and helped many people at the risk of his own safety. Our salvation and survival in those years is thanks to the help of many people, but at the beginning of that chain stood Rev. Sopoćko.

Among those helped by Rev. Sopoćko were Dr. Aleksander Sztajnberg, who assumed the name Sawicki, and his wife Franciszka Wanda (née Berggrün); Dr. Erdman, who became Benedykt Szymański, his wife and daughter; and Dr. Juliusz Genzel and his wife. Rev. Sopoćko mentions Rev. Tadeusz Makarewicz, pastor of St. John the Baptist church, and Rev. Jan Kretowicz, pastor of St. Francis Seraphicus church, as priests who agreed to baptize Jews who had expressed a desire to convert. The Gestapo uncovered some tracks of Rev. Sopoćko’s activities and held him under arrest for several days. When he learned that he was again wanted by the Gestapo for helping Jews, Rev. Sopoćko fled to the countryside in March 1942, and hid in the Ursuline Sisters’ convent in Czarny Bór for two years, where he assumed a false identity, working as a gardener and carpenter. The following account attests to Rev. Sopoćko’s dedication to rescuing Jews.⁷³ (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, p.182; Yad Vashem archive, no. M.31/8361; Tadeusz Krahel, “Ratowanie Żydów przez bł. ks. Michała Sopoćkę,” *W Służbie Miłosierdzia*, November 2008.)

On the eve of the German occupation, Franciszka-Wanda Sawicka (née Berggruen) lived with her husband, a doctor, in Vilna [Wilno]. After the occupation, before the establishment of the ghetto, the Sawickis decided to go into hiding. Polish acquaintances of theirs referred them to a priest, [Rev. Michał Sopoćko], who agreed to help them. In September 1941, the priest found a separate shelter for each of them with friends of his. Franciszka-Wanda Sawicka was sent to Anna Dolinska [Dolińska], who gave her a warm welcome although she was a stranger and saw to all her needs, without expecting anything in return. After Dolinska, an activist in the Polish underground, obtained Aryan papers for Sawicka and her husband and supplied them with clothing and other necessities, the Sawickis left Vilna for [Worniany, where they were welcomed by Rev. Jan Sielewicz, and then taken by Rev. Hipolit Chruściel to the hamlet of Kuliszki near Worniany. They stayed there for several months before relocating to the hamlet of] Onzadowo [Onżadowo] near Oszmiana, where they lived as Polish refugees until the area was liberated in July 1944. While living in Onzadowo, the Sawickis occasionally went to Vilna to visit Dolinska, whom they considered their guardian angel. After the warm Dolinska was arrested by the NKVD for belonging to the AK [Armia Krajowa or Home Army] and exiled to Siberia for eight years. After her release, she moved to an area within the new Polish borders, where she renewed contact with the Sawickis, who had moved to

⁷³ Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, pp.52–53, 422–23.

Warsaw.

Barbara Turkeltaub (née Gurwicz, born in Wilno in 1934) and her younger sister Leah (born in 1936) were smuggled out of the Wilno ghetto and placed in the care of a Polish farmer in Wierszuliszki, a suburban village of Wilno. Since the farmer's family was going hungry and he feared that his sheltering of the young girls had become too dangerous, Barbara and Leah girls decided to leave his home and hid in nearby brick factory. They heard an approaching wagon and as it drew near, the girls could see that it was being driven by a priest. The priest, Father Jan, had the girls climb into the back of the wagon and covered them up with hay so that they would not be seen. He took them to a nearby convent. They moved to a second convent in the city proper, and with the exception of occasional searches by the Germans, they were safe. The sisters lived in the convent for two years after the war ended, until they were found by their mother, who also survived. (Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, pp.144–48.)

After this incident with the buses [where children were seized from the children's center in the ghetto attended by Barbara and Leah], Barbara's father sat down and explained as much as he could about the realities of war for her Jewish family. "My father put me on a little stool and lowered himself to the same level and said, 'Basha, there is a terrible war going on. In order for us to survive we need to separate. You will go with your sister to a farmer. Mother is going to stay in the ghetto and there's a special place where she's going to hide.' She was expecting a baby then. My father and two older sisters were going to the partisans. He told me, 'Never admit that you speak Yiddish and never say your last name. Say a bomb fell on your house and you don't know where everyone is and you're lost. And you are always to take care of your sister.'" As Barbara's father said all this, her mother was standing next to her, crying, and "I was clutching to her dress and she was holding my sister and she was praying."

So Moishe and Mina [Gurwicz] made arrangements with a farmer whom Barbara and Leah were taught to call "Uncle," but whose last name may have been Switzky [Sawicki?]. The family knew him because he made regular deliveries of milk to them before there was a ghetto. Switzky put them in his wagon, covered them up with hay, and slipped them past bribed ghetto guards. "We were lucky. Sometimes the Nazis would stick bayonets into wagons like this but they didn't do that this time." They went to his home in the nearby village of Wierszuliszki. The Gurwicz gave the farmer and his wife some money or jewelry to cover the costs of extra mouths to feed, and Barbara said the Switzky family probably did this more for the money than for any altruistic reason. [The risk assumed by the farmer and his family was hardly commensurate with any reward the girls' parents could offer for sheltering them.—Ed.] But, she said, Switzky "wasn't a bad person."

The Switzky family "had a whole bunch of children, like five or six kids," Barbara said, though none of them knew that she and her sister were Jews. ...

Mrs. Switzky was a nervous woman, Barbara said, who was "afraid for her own family." It was clear to Barbara that the woman was not happy with her husband's decision to hide Jewish children, and she did not hide her angst well. ...

Barbara and Leah stayed with the Switzky family for just four or five months, during which time they never saw their own parents. Only later did they learn that their mother, hiding in the sewers of Vilna as the Germans were destroying the ghetto, had given birth to their brother, Henry, who Mina had tried—but failed—to abort. [Henry also survived the war, hidden by a Polish family.—Ed.]

Then one evening at the farm Barbara overheard Mrs. Switzky tell her husband that the next day he must go to the German authorities and turn in these Jewish children to receive the award being offered—some sugar. [This was likely done to scare the girls into leaving on their own, as those who turned in Jews whom they had sheltered risked severe punishment.—Ed.]

"So I was afraid to wait until the morning," Barbara said. As her sister slept that night, Barbara sneaked into the pantry and cut off some bread from a large loaf. While in the pantry, she saw some jars of what she took to be honey on the shelf. So she slathered some on a piece of bread and went to wake up Leah, who always seemed to be hungry. ...

After Barbara got Leah dressed, they slipped out of the house and took off quickly down the road in the dark. "I didn't know where to go, just down the road," Barbara said.

The girls were cold and tired, and Leah was not happy to be running in the dark. So eventually they located the brick kiln where Father Jan found them and from which he took them to the Benedictine convent. When Father Jan drove up to the convent with the girls in his buggy, nuns quickly emerged and rushed them inside. They were fed, bathed, and given a warm bed. In a few days they were into a routine, rising early in the morning, attending Mass, then having breakfast, after which came quiet time. Nuns began to teach them basic reading and math, and the girls had some housekeeping chores to do, too. ...

But rarely did they have anyone to talk with except themselves. The nuns generally spoke little, except when leading the girls in their lessons. None of them, for instance, ever asked the girls if they were Jewish. Rather, they simply taught them as if they were Catholic, instructing them in traditional practices. Barbara and Leah neither saw nor heard any other children at this convent, so it was a lonely existence, but not an unhappy one—especially for Barbara, who enjoyed the peace, the security, the rhythm of life, the tender care of the nuns, and the chance to draw pictures, read, and write poetry. Barbara, in effect, created her own tightly ordered world and became attached to the convent's structured pattern of life. She was baptized, took Communion, and learned to be an obedient Catholic. She believed the theology she was learning "very, very much," she told us.

There were, of course, special rules for the children—who the nuns knew were Jewish. "We were told not to venture from the house by ourselves. I usually was a very good girl and listened."

Usually. But not always. One day Barbara wandered into the forest adjacent to the convent. As she did so, she began to hear what she described as popping sounds in the woods. Curious, she moved toward them. "I stayed behind a tree," she said. "Then I saw a group of people undressed by a huge ditch. I began to hear voices. I saw a group of women undressed. Some were holding babies in their arms. The Germans [actually, Lithuanians—Ed.] were shooting randomly and the women and babies were falling. I was so stunned I couldn't move. I was like hypnotized. Very soon afterward, somebody grabbed me and carried me from there. It was one of the older nuns."

Barbara later learned that she had inadvertently wandered into the Ponary killing fields and watched Germans [Lithuanians] murdering Jews. The memory never left her, even though she "was told not to mention that. Forget about it. Erase it from my mind."

The nuns decided Barbara and Leah could not stay there any more. So they fetched Father Jan again, and that same day he took them to the main convent in Vilna. Again they hid under hay in his buggy. When they got there, nuns quickly took the girls inside, fed them, bathed them, and gave them their list of rules, including an important prohibition against going beyond the small area to which they were assigned inside the building. This time, Barbara listened and obeyed. While at this convent, she occasionally heard the voices of other children but almost never saw them. It was, she decided later, a way of making sure children did not give away other hidden children if pressured by the German authorities.

At this convent, Barbara and Leah fell into the rhythm of cloistered life. Nuns continued to teach them school subjects as well as prayers and other religious practices. But the girls' contact with the outside world was so limited that news of the end of the war did not reach them until 1947, two years after the fighting stopped. That was when their mother, who had been searching for them the whole time, finally found them. She had gone door-to-door, asking people if they had seen her two girls, one blonde, one with dark hair. Finally, a woman told her that she may have seen at least the blonde girl singing in the choir at a worship service at the convent.

Mina went to Mass to see for herself. And there she saw two girls she was sure were her own. She asked to speak to the priest who celebrated Mass there, Father Jan, to tell him of her search and to ask to meet with the girls.

"He came to me," Barbara told us, "and said there is a woman who lost her children—he didn't tell me that she was Jewish or anything—and is looking for them. She thinks that maybe you might be one of her children. Right away I was on guard. Everything in my background I had put away, far, far, away. I never forgot my parents. I never forgot my grandmother. But I thought that being a Jew must be something really, really bad if people are killing them and doing all those awful things. And I was scared to think about it."

So Barbara did not want to see the woman who might be her own mother.. She had found comfort and security in a Catholic convent and was loathe to lose it. "But then Father Jan came again and again. I think what an angel he was. He told me the lady is crying and looking for her children, so 'would you please reassure her that you'll help her to look for them?' So that's how I said OK."

But the woman Barbara then met with did not match the image of her mother in her memory. That image was of a tall, strikingly beautiful woman with black shiny hair and shiny eyes. By contrast, this woman was "bent down," wore glasses, and had a babushka over her gray hair. "I did not recognize her. But I started to talk to her and I said, 'Don't cry. You will find your children.' And she said, 'My daughter, Basha. I'm your mother.' And I recognized the voice. But then I ran away. Isn't that something? I was so scared. I just ran to the door. And they let me run."

A few days later Father Jan came again and asked Barbara if she was ready to see her again. "I said yes. She was sitting there smiling. I remembered her smile. And she said, 'My daughter, my daughter.'"

Leah reunited with her mother first. Somehow she was more ready than Barbara to reconnect. "She probably forgot my mom. But by their second or third meeting she just went to her like you wouldn't believe. My mother hugged her and kissed her and Leah was sitting on her lap. I thought to myself, how could she do that and I could not? I had so many questions I wanted to ask her. I was angry with her. Why did she leave us? Why did we separate? There was so much emotion. Where was our father? There was anger about that. But she didn't want to tell us everything."

Out of this anger and this questioning, Barbara made an extraordinary demand of her mother. "When the time came for us to leave, my mother had to promise me that she would come to the church and she would convert and she would be coming to the Mass."

Her mother, in turn, indicated to Barbara that she would do that, but in fact that was just a way of gaining custody of her daughter. Her mother never did convert, and Barbara, after a short time, became an observant Jew again.

The following account describes the fate of a Jewish family from Wilno who took refuge in an area located between the towns of Gródek or Horodek and Radoszkowice near the prewar Polish-Soviet border. A number of Poles, among them Home Army members, and the local priest came to their assistance. ("The Righteous Among Nations: Poland. Tadeusz and Wladyslawa Korsak; Jan and Maria Michalowski," http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous/bycountry/poland/Michalowski_Korsak.html.)

In June 1941 the Germans entered Vilna [Wilno], and the Perewoski family was sent to live inside the ghetto. The father, Shmuel Perewoski, who had been assigned to forced labor in the HKP camp, feared for his family's safety, and decided to act. He contacted Tadeusz Korsak, a Pole with whom he had once worked, and managed to bring his family to him, with the help of a Polish nanny who had lived with them before the war. The first to be smuggled out was Shmuel's 6-year-old son Eliyahu [Eli Levin Parovsky], followed by his wife, Dora, and their baby girl, Tzelina. The three of them hid in a basement in the city. Tadeusz then hid Dora and the children in a wagon filled with hay and brought them to the family farm in the village of Balcer [Balcery], near Minsk (today Belarus). Shmuel came to Balcer later on. The Perewoskis hid in the Korsak's home for close to a year, during which time Eliyahu became the local priest's assistant [i.e., altar boy, probably to Rev. Edward Murończyk, the pastor of Dubrowy, who was killed by Soviet partisans in October 1942], and sang in the church choir. In early 1943, Shmuel, Dora and Eliyahu left the Korsaks and moved to the neighboring village, where they continued to receive assistance from the Korsak family, who helped them to obtain false papers and food, and to find hiding places. In mid 1943, Shmuel was brutally murdered by Communist partisans. Dora and Eliyahu fled and joined the Polish partisans, where Dora helped out with different jobs, and Eliyahu was a shepherd. Tzelina stayed at the Korsaks until Tadeusz [a member of the Home Army] and his two daughters were murdered [by Soviet partisans]. Tadeusz's wife Wladyslawa [Władysława] escaped with Tzelina, and they found refuge with relatives—Jan and Maria Michalowski [Michałowski] from the village of Jerozolimka [near Wilno]. Jan and Maria had 5 children of their own, but they took Tzelina in, and gave her a place to stay until the end of the war. The Michalowskis looked after Tzelina with love and devotion, and after the war gave her back to her mother, who came looking for her.

After his escape from Wilno, Oswald Rufeisen ventured to the town of Nowa Wilejka where he was sheltered for a brief period by the local pastor, Rev. Stanisław Miłkowski, who also provided refuge to a 15-year-old Jewish girl. (Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, p.54.) Afterwards, Rufeisen made his way eastward to Mir, where at first he passed as a German, employed as an interpreter for the German authorities. Eventually, he took shelter in a convent of the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ for 16 long months. To avoid detection by the Germans he occasionally dressed as a nun. After leaving Mir he joined the Soviet partisans. Euzenia Bartkowiak, the mother superior of the convent, was recognized by Yad Vashem. (Nechama Tec, *In the Lion's Den: The Life of Oswald Rufeisen* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], pp.72–73, 76, 98–99, 163–66, 172, 173–76.)

At the very beginning, disregarding their own safety, the cantor and the rabbi's son-in-law ran through the streets calling in suppressed, yet weeping voices, "Jews come out to your slaughter!" This was their way of warning about the imminent danger. They wanted to alert the people to the threat, hoping that somehow some will succeed in eluding the enemy. Some did. A few escaped by hiding with or without help from the Christian neighbors. Among those protected by Christian neighbors was the rabbi's wife.

Mir had a convent of the Order of the Sisters of the Resurrection where four Polish nuns lived. During the day of destruction a number of Jews found shelter there. The frantic soldiers overlooked the place, as they did all other non-Jewish quarters.

During the Russian occupation, because of the spaciousness of the convent and the Soviet persecution of Poles, the Catholic priest, the Dean Antoni Mackiewicz, and his sister had decided to move in with the nuns. On November 9, [1942] some Jewish families came to the door of the convent. Mackiewicz let them in. Inside they pleaded: "Please have mercy on us, hide us!" "Because of my position I am not allowed to lie. If the Germans will ask me if there are Jews in my house, I will not be able to deny it. But in the yard there is a stable, a pig sty, a barn. All these places are open. I am not

responsible for what is in the yard. Go out there. I don't want to know about it." The fugitives understood, they scattered and hid in all those places. They were spared. A few managed to survive the war.

For the rest of the onslaught Mackiewicz stood close to the window that faced the main road. Bewildered, helpless, unable to move, he watched. His eyes had a faraway strange look. As if transfixed, he seemed unaware of the silent tears that kept running down his cheeks. ...

On the balance, however, most contacts between the Jewish and Christian neighbors were good. This was particularly true for the exchange of goods. And so, local peasants supplied the Jews with farm products, while the Jews offered the peasants used clothes, furniture, and all kinds of other personal belongings. Both partners to these exchanges were poor. Both were eager to receive the goods the other had. These transactions continued. Even though they reduced starvation among the Jews, they could not eliminate hunger. ...

Since in Mir most Poles were removed from the official Nazi machinery, and because Oswald had more in common with the Poles than with the Belorussians, he decided to cultivate his relationships with Poles. ...

He also made a point of staying away from the Polish priest, Mackiewicz. ... He explains, "I did not trust the priest. I did not know him. Nor did I know that he had a positive attitude toward the Jews. This I discovered much later ..."

For the same reasons that he avoided the priest, he kept his contacts with the nuns to a bare minimum. ... Only much later the nuns served as intermediaries between Oswald and the Jews. This happened when Oswald supplied the Jews with blank document forms. Oswald had stolen these forms from his office. Such papers facilitated a move to the forbidden Christian world. He was told by his contacts that the nuns would deliver these items to the ghetto. ...

It is ironic that when the Russian occupation of Mir ended and the Nazis took over, the Polish priest, Mackiewicz, conducted a special mass thanking God for the termination of the Soviet occupation and the arrival of the Germans.

The night after Oswald saw the parked trucks, in the Mir region alone twenty-five Polish men and women, all defined by the Nazis as the intelligentsia, as leaders of their communities, were arrested. Balicki and the priest Mackiewicz were among them. In Mir only one Polish man was spared, the one who listened to Oswald's warning and ran away. In the vicinity of Nieśwież scores of other members of the Polish intelligentsia were rounded up.

Of the arrested all were taken to the prison in Stolpce, where they remained for about two months. From there they were transferred to the concentration camp in Koldyczewo. ... In fact, these Polish arrests fit well into the overall Nazi policies that aimed at the elimination of the Polish elite. ...

This policy was put in effect for the entire country. In the [north]eastern part of Poland the Nazis tried to give the impression that moves against the Poles were not only initiated and executed by Belorussians but also motivated by Belorussian nationalists.

Eventually all the Poles arrested that night were gassed in special trucks in the Koldyczewo concentration camp. ...

It was Sunday, August 16, 1942, five o'clock in the morning. Except for an occasional animal sound, the stillness in Mir was complete, a stillness soon interrupted by the pounding of wooden clogs against cobblestones and by a dangling of keys. The shoes and the keys belonged to Sister Nepomucena Kościuszek, who, still absorbed in her morning prayers, had come to open the convent's gate.

Suddenly through the half-opened space a man jumped into the courtyard. "Jesus Christ" escaped from the nun's lips, as her hand made the sign of the cross. She barely recaptured her composure when she recognized Oswald. She knew the authorities were looking for him. Oswald was guilty of two crimes: he was a Jew and he had betrayed the Germans. Each required a death sentence.

Confronted with this dangerous runaway, the nun quickly relocked the gate and then asked him to follow her into the house. Inside, Oswald met the Mother Superior, Euzebia Bartkowiak, and the only two other inhabitants of the convent, Andrea Głowacka and Laurencja Domysłowska. Of the four Laurencja Domysłowska, in her thirties, had as yet not taken her final vows.

Except for the Mother Superior, the rest of the women seemed frightened by the sudden appearance of this dirty, somewhat confused youth. They knew that his mere presence was endangering their lives. Speechless, they looked at their leader. The unspoken question each seemed to be raising was: "What are we going to do with him?"

"... After all, the [German] gendarmerie was right next to the convent! The threat was obvious. ... I had come to the convent with a request that they help me contact the Balicki family. ... I thought that the Balicki sisters would know about other places for me to stay at ... When I explained this to the Mother Superior she said 'no'. For the time being she forbade any outside communications, stressing that these young girls may not be able to keep a secret and thus others could learn about my whereabouts. She insisted, 'No one should know that you are here. We must pray to God to tell us what to do with you.' Then she explained that because it was a difficult and complicated situation only God can settle it. Instead of deciding by themselves they must wait for a sign from God."

But Euzebia Bartkowiak's reliance on God in no way interfered with her activities. She was enterprising, full of energy and determination. She concluded, "Until we know how to resolve this problem, we cannot send you away. You must wash,

eat, and rest. After that we shall see.”...

Every Sunday during Mass the priest reads a special message from the Gospel. On that particular day he read about the good Samaritan. This is a story about a Jew who was robbed and wounded and left on the side of the road by his attackers. A priest passed next to the suffering man but did not bother to help him. Neither did a Levite. Only a traveling Samaritan took an interest in the helpless Jew. The Samaritan first attended to the man's wounds and then moved him to a nearby inn where he generously paid the innkeeper for keeping this stranger. Before the Samaritan left he assured the innkeeper that he will be coming back to check the condition of the patient. The story finishes with Jesus saying, “Go and do as he has done.”

Listening to this sermon and particularly the last sentence, the two women felt that God had spoken to them. Euzebia Bartkowiak was especially convinced that God wanted them to save Oswald. Of the four nuns, two were less than enthusiastic about keeping him. They objected. But the Mother Superior would not be dissuaded. When it came to moral issues she followed her own conscience. Firmly, she overruled their opposition. ...

Conversion also led to other more concrete changes. “The two nuns, who initially opposed my stay in the convent, accepted me completely. Their approval coincided with my baptism. ... Soon not only did these nuns tolerate me but they were happy to have me there.”...

Grateful, Oswald was not surprised by the nuns' decision to shelter him. For him to shelter another human being was not extraordinary. Used to rescuing people, he had expected the nuns to do the same. Still, when he speaks about his four companions, he is full of admiration. He has a great deal of respect for their courage and is convinced that they were not concerned about the risk they were taking in sheltering him. Invariably, when referring to them he says that “they were wonderful women, they looked upon my stay there as a duty. There were no fears in that house, except during certain moments. They were definitely not scared, if they were they could not have allowed me to take my meals with them. ... They were like soldiers, for whom saving me was a duty ... they also had open tolerant attitudes toward Jews.”

Actually Oswald's constant presence in the convent broke many of the house rules. When it was all over, in 1946, the Mother Superior went to the head of their order to discuss these transgressions. She wanted to know whether it was right for them to have disregarded so many established regulations. The head of the order, an old woman, said, “If we had created the Mir convent only to save this one man, we would have something to thank God for. Be assured that human life is much more important than all the rules.”...

Because the nuns were respected both by the civilians and the authorities, visits to their place were quite common. ... The presence of outsiders, however, was not always as uneventful. Among the frequent convent callers was a peasant woman, a Catholic and a Nazi-collaborator. Everyone knew that part of her income came from spying on civilians and denouncing them to the authorities. Still, they encouraged her visits, hoping that in the end they might lead her away from her sinful path.

One day, unaware that the woman was in the convent, Oswald, carrying a batch of wood, entered the living room to start a fire. When this guest noticed him, startled she stood up. She had recognized him—most local people would. It mattered little that Oswald disappeared quickly. The damage was done. In a split second, impulsively, she ran out of the house. In no time she returned, threw herself on her knees in front of the Mother Superior, and swore she would tell no one about this dangerous encounter. Oswald feels that because of the possible peril, “right away the nuns should have asked me to leave. They did not. The Mother Superior chose to believe this untrustworthy person. She proved to be right. Although a Nazi collaborator, the woman told no one that she had seen me.”

... In Mir the authorities were concerned with the safety of their official buildings. To them one obvious solution was to surround these structures with barbed wire. If done, this would transform the heart of the town into a police area. But before this plan could be put into effect the Germans had to decide what to do with the convent located in the middle of their official buildings. This decision, in turn, called for an inspection of the place.

The formal visit to the convent occurred on a Sunday, when three of the nuns, among them the Mother Superior, were away in church in Iszkoldź [Iszkoldz]. Only one nun stayed home to protect Oswald. For him, indeed, the event was memorable. “Two policemen knocked. The nun opened the door but forgot to warn me. The men began to enter into the different rooms. Soon I could hear their heavy military boots quite close to me. ... My room had the usual wash basin. In front of it was a screen that was supposed to hide anyone who was washing.

At this wash basin was a shawl, a big, black shawl. The nuns gave it to me to keep warm. When I heard the heavy boots and the loud voices, practically in my room, I quickly jumped behind the screen and threw the shawl over it. This suggested that one of the nuns might be behind it. The men came in. They stopped not far from the screen. Amused, they commented that a nun must be behind it. They chuckled. Then I heard them leave the room. When they were out of the house, the nun appeared, pale and shaking all over. All I could do was pray.”

After this official visit the Nazis ordered the convent to move to Stara Miranka, a few miles away from Mir. The transfer had to take place by March 1943.

The new house consisted of four rooms and a barn attached to the main building. Because Oswald was well known in the area, he could not show his face. The actual move, therefore, had to take place in a number of steps. "As the nuns emptied the different rooms they locked me into one of them. On the last day, one of the nuns left for the new place very early in the morning, before anyone was up. That same evening, I, dressed as a nun, walked with the other three nuns to our new home."

The new convent was not only smaller but also more exposed, without a garden, without a fence. At this time the Germans were becoming more and more nervous. Night searches for partisans were common. It would have been too dangerous for Oswald to sleep in such an exposed place. The barn became Oswald's sleeping quarters. This barn, although attached to the new convent, was used by the Germans as a storage place for food confiscated from the peasants. To avert partisan attacks, at night it was guarded by policemen. Each evening another group of policemen would come and watch the barn till dawn. Because of this watch, no Germans would dream of searching inside the barn.

In principle, those buildings belonged to the parish-church of Mir, but were being used by the authorities. In a small hall opposite the entrance a ladder served as the way to the attic of the barn. Every evening the Mother Superior, Oswald dressed as a nun, and a cat would climb up this ladder behind the standing guard. As they climbed the nun spoke to the cat, pretending that she was bringing it there to keep away the mice. Since the attic contained all kinds of food, the presence of a cat protected the food from mice. And so the guard never considered interfering with this nightly pastime. Each morning after the policeman had left, Oswald still dressed as a nun, would sneak down and into the house.

... But peace was becoming progressively more elusive. In fact, the Germans were becoming more cruel and more violent. It was as if the loss of battles created a special need for victories against vulnerable civilians. The smallest crimes, often imaginary ones, were met with severe punishment.

Thus, for example, in a nearby town [Nowogródek], twelve nuns, suspected of feeding partisans, were executed. Raids into private homes became more frequent. As the terror grew, more natives joined the partisans. Escapes into forests, in turn, led to more violent Nazi retaliations. As usual, the losers were the innocent people who had little to do with such moves.

With this increasingly threatening situation, Oswald became concerned about the nuns' safety. He was convinced that he could avert disaster by leaving the convent. But he had no place to go. ...

And so, on December 3, 1943, in the evening, dressed as a nun, Oswald left the convent in the company of the Mother Superior. In a nearby forest he took off his robe. As he handed it to the nun, she cried, saying, "Come back in case of difficulties. Be sure to come back." Too upset to speak, Oswald nodded, knowing full well that this time he wouldn't be returning.

Still crying softly the nun blessed him and left.

Unexpected assistance came from an unknown priest and the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Izabelin near Warsaw, after Esther Bas-Melcer was apprehended by the Germans. Occasionally priests were seized by the Germans to question persons suspected of being Jewish about their knowledge of the Catholic faith. However, priests were not needed for this task as basic testing of knowledge of prayers and the like could be carried out by anyone (e.g., Germans who knew Polish or used interpreters, policemen, etc.), far more effectively than by priests, who were not known to cooperate in exposing Jews.⁷⁴ Esther Bas-Melcer's story is related in her memoirs, *In the*

⁷⁴ There are numerous recorded cases of interrogations of Jews passing as Catholics by German officials, and not one of them mention the involvement of Polish priests. See, for example, the account of Elzbieta [Elzbieta] Szandorowska from Warsaw: "In May 1943, the Germans arrested seventeen people in our boarding house, including my mother and the rest of our family. They took us to the Gestapo headquarters on Szucha Avenue. Throughout the entire night, I taught Christian prayers to one of the Jewish girls who [had] been arrested. The next day the Germans were in a very good mood because they had found diamonds sewn into the trousers of one of the Jewish men. So they allowed my family to go free the next day. They freed a couple of Jewish people, too, because they had extremely convincing documents and they had passed the so-called religion examination, which consisted of reciting Catholic prayers." See Richard C. Lukas, ed., *Out of the Inferno: Poles Remember the Holocaust* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989), p.161. Lidia Kott was interrogated by two Gestapo officers on Szucha Street: "They told her to say her prayers, asked her to tell them the shape of the host, and tried to get her to say that it was square." See Jan Kott, *Still Alive: An Autobiographical Essay* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p.77. Braunia Szul, then a 14-year-old girl, and her mother were also brought to the Gestapo headquarters on Szucha Street and interrogated by Germans: "When we arrived there, they started to ask us about religion, if I know the religion prayers, so I knew the [Catholic] prayers by heart. We were prepared for that, you know." See the interview with Braunia Sztul, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, May 19, 1995. The testimony of Wanda Ziemska, who was interrogated by the Germans in Warsaw and made to recite prayers, but released after Poles vouched for her, is found in Jakub Guttenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, vol. 2 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005), p.348. For another account from Warsaw mentioning interrogation by the German authorities about Christian prayers and customs (and release after a Pole vouched for the

two Jewish women), see Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), pp.192–93. Lala Fishman (née Klara Weintraub) was one of a number of women arrested in street sweeps in Kraków who were interrogated by the Germans and made to recite Catholic prayers. See Lala Fishman and Steven Weingartner, *Lala's Story: A Memoir of the Holocaust* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p.188. For additional examples of interrogations conducted by Germans, sometimes using Polish interpreters, see: Yehuda Nir, *The Lost Childhood: A Memoir* (San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), p.67; Halina Zylberman, *Swimming Under Water* (Caulfield South, Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2001), p.56; Bartoszewski and Lewinóna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.276; Małgorzata Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość: Polscy Żydzi ocaleni na "aryjskich papierach". Analiza doświadczeń biograficznego* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2004), p.236; Halina Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2007), p.45. The next series of accounts pertain to questioning by the regular and criminal police. Jadwiga Krall and her six-year-old daughter, Hanna, were accosted in the spring of 1943 by a blackmailer in the Aryan part of Warsaw. Because they had no money to pay him, he turned them in to the police, who tested their claim that they were Catholics by asking questions about Catholic prayers. "Suddenly the voice of a woman could be heard in the police station demanding to know why the police were accusing her sister of being Jewish. The woman, who eventually succeeded in getting Krall and her daughter out of the police's hands, was Maria Ostrowska, who had previously provided Krall with the birth certificate of her sister, who lived outside Warsaw." See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, pp.569–70. Alina Margolis describes her interrogation by the police after being apprehended with her friend Zosia, who was recognized as a Jew. While Margolis was able to recite the prayers asked of her, thanks to having observed her Polish childhood nanny, her friend Zosia could not correctly describe the size of a Communion host. However, both were eventually released through a bribe arranged by a Polish acquaintance. See Alina Margolis-Edelman, *Ala z elementarza* (London: Aneks, 1994), pp.109–111; Alina Margolis-Edelman, *Tego, co mówili, nie powtórzę...* (Wrocław: Siedmioróg, 1999), pp.112–13; available also in French translation: *Je ne répéterai pas, je ne veux pas le répéter* (Paris: Autrement Littératures, 1997). For other examples, see Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), p.152 (Kraków); Elsa Thon, *I Wish It Were Fiction: Memories, 1939–1945* (Hamilton, Ontario: Mekler & Deahl, 1997), p.63; Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, pp.170, 236; Christine Winecki, *The Girl in the Check Coat: Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland and a New Life in Australia* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), pp.70–71. It appears that examinations of religious knowledge carried out by Polish policemen tended to be perfunctory and rather superficial.

Historian Gunnar Paulsson cites no evidence in support of his claim that "some [Catholic priests] could be found who were prepared to rule on a suspect's Aryaness, knowing the consequences of a negative ruling." See Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p.106. In fact, the one memoir that refers to a priest who allegedly "trapped" his Jewish victims, Alina Margolis and her friend Zosia, is based on a hearsay account that is directly contradicted by the memoir of one of the victims herself. Jacob Celemenski spins a rather elaborate tale of two Jewish girls who were caught by a secret agent and taken to a police station, where the police commandant "called a priest, who trapped them with his first question." See Jacob Celemenski, *Elegy For My People: Memoirs of an Underground Courier of the Jewish Labor Bund in Nazi-Occupied Poland, 1939–45* (Melbourne: The Jacob Celemenski Memorial Trust, 2000), pp.180–81. As noted earlier, Alina Margolis-Edelman's memoir is quite clear that the interrogation was conducted by a policeman, and does not mention any priest. In one case, Jewish interrogators were used at the police station where a Jewish woman from Stanisławów, posing as a Pole, was taken together with her benefactor when they left the train station in Warsaw: "One of them wanted to finish, but the other was determined to destroy me. They examined each of us in minute religious matters, and went over all our documents. They spoke only Yiddish during all of this, and even sang some Yiddish songs. Then they started arguing: the first one wanted to let us go and the other to turn us over to the Germans." See the account of F.I. in Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, p.305. In another case, a Jewish boy who was sheltered by the Salesian Fathers in Przemyśl recalled the arrival of Germans who came looking for Jewish children, accompanied by a Jew dressed as a priest. Fortunately, the Jewish children passed the religious test they were administered. See Ewa Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach: Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce a latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Clio, 2001), p.204.

Generally, Jews who passed as Poles, even from assimilated milieux, mastered only a few basic prayers and their knowledge of Catholic rituals was often spotty and superficial. For example, Jewish survivors admit not knowing that priests rubbed ashes on foreheads on Ash Wednesday, that unlike Easter Christmas fell on a fixed date (December 25th), and that on Good Friday Polish Catholics visited specially erected symbolic tombs of Jesus in churches and not cemeteries. Nor did they know how to conduct themselves at mass, for example, taking the communion host with one's hand as opposed in the mouth. See Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, p.147; Yehuda Nir, *The Lost Childhood: A Memoir* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1989), p.217; Janina Brandwajn-Ziemian, *Młodość w cieniu śmierci* (Łódź: Oficyna Bibliofilów, 1995), pp.87–88; Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, p.172; Taitz, *Holocaust Survivors*, vol. 2, p.396. Some Jews came to realize that their guise as Christian Poles was not as foolproof as they had believed, but this had not caused them to be betrayed. One Jew who called on farmhouses in the Urzędów area, pretending to be a Christian, recalled: "I would cross myself, bless Jesus Christ, and ask for something to eat. I had made up a story in case questions were asked. Most farmers were not talkative. Viewed suspiciously, sometimes I would be given soup or bread and asked to leave quickly: sometimes I was just told to go. Later it dawned on me that I was crossing myself incorrectly, touching my chin rather than the chest." See David Makow, *Dangerous Luck: Memories of a Hunted Life* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 2000), p.28. When a local police commander sent a suspected Jewish teenager who was passing as Christian to the pastor of Krzesk near Łosice, the priest did not betray her despite the fact that she was unable to answer basic questions about the Christian faith. See Stella Zylbersztajn, *A gdyby to było Wasze dziecko?* (Łosice: Łosickie Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Equus, 2005), p.52.

I was summoned to the chancellery [in Izabelin]. ... Afterwards, [the German officer] read the letters. I adhered to my original lies. He asked me to wait while he went outside.

A short time passed by. A priest and two nuns then entered. I was certain at that point that I was to be questioned. The priest, who was about thirty-five years of age, of medium height and who had mild, kind eyes, took my hand and asked me whether I was a Roman Catholic, while winking to me that I should say yes. I answered calmly, "Yes."

"In that case, come with us," he told me. "You will rest and recover at our place."

Could it be true? Was it possible? I thought to myself. A wagon could not be found, so two Poles were called. They crossed their hands and I was seated on them. This way, there [sic] were able to carry me. The priest, both nuns and children walked behind me. And so, in this way, I was led into the church in the procession.

They had prepared a sofa for me in the older nun's room. My eyes were transfixed by the ideal cleanliness and warmth of the room.

I would write much more about these people, but I did not know whether I would succeed. One thing, however, that I can say is that I never saw anywhere such extraordinary genuine, good and friendly people.

I shall refer to it as paradise, because I really thought that I was truly in paradise. Although a complete stranger, I felt good and free amongst them. I knew that these people would not disappoint me. Every one of them looked to me like an angel. ...

The oldest nun, who was about sixty-eight years old, was a true embodiment of righteousness and goodness. She immediately gave me a bowl of cream of wheat soup. When I ate, she prepared for me a clean bed, her own clean and fresh underwear, a pan with warm water and a towel [sic].

"Do not cry, my child," she said to me. "You will wash up, have a good sleep in a clean bed and you will surely recover in a short time."

My gratitude was boundless. I immediately took out my last fifty dollars and wanted to give it to the nun for the church or for another cause that she would find necessary.

"No, my child," she said. "You are young and sick. This money will surely come in handy for you at some time in the future."

Her kindness moved me to tears. I kissed her hand tenderly. She wanted to help me wash myself, but I declined. I was ashamed to show her my extremely lean body. ... I had no strength to wash my head. The nun did this the next morning. ...

There I lay, washed and clean in a spotless bed. I thought about all that had happened to me and what was now taking place. Every few minutes, another nun would come in to ask whether I was all right and whether I needed anything. ...

At seven o'clock the next morning, the priest came in and asked me my name.

"I have to inform the Polish Philanthropic Association about you in order to obtain medicine and better nutrition for you, because we, unfortunately lack it here," he explained. I naturally gave him my Aryan name.

He walked over eleven kilometers to obtain the necessary items for me. The directress of the institution came with him and brought along injections, milk and other products.

As I have already described, this priest embodied a type of complete gentleness and goodness. His mild look, warm and hearty words affected me like warm sunshine.

Several times a day, he would come into the room, move over a chair to my bed, sit down and make an effort to engage me into conversation on various abstract themes, in order that I should forget my sorrows. Under the influence of these saintly people, the beastly faces of the brutal Germans began to fade slowly from before my eyes. It seemed to me that I was being re-born.

... [After the entry of the Russian troops in mid January 1945], [a]n old woman from a nearby room came in, fell toward me in tears, and revealed that she was Jewish believing that I, too, was Jewish. Before that time, she would also often come in to where I was, conduct long conversations and inquire about the Jews of Warsaw. I therefore had a basis to believe that she was Jewish, but because I was not completely certain, I used to respond evasively.

Some time later, I learned that almost all of the women who were there were Jewish. The only one from among these who often came in to console me was the above-mentioned woman, who was named Wanda Rogatska [Rogacka] from Warsaw. All of the others kept away from my bed, in order not to become suspect. ...

Now we had to leave this place [i.e., after the liberation], first because we could not be a burden on these good people and second because we had to regain our identity. ...

Regrettably, I had to remain there another six whole weeks. I simply could not walk around. My sister finally located a room in Otwozk [Otwock].

The kindhearted priest rented a carriage for us. The nun wrapped me in a blanket with true motherly concern and seated me in the carriage. With tears of gratitude and heartfelt blessings from the priest and the nun, we left that blessed house and all of its wonderful inhabitants.

Many testimonies gathered by Yad Vashem describe how priests, whose identities have not been established, extended a helping hand to Jews and to Poles who dared to rescue Jews. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: Poland, Part 1, pp.75, 120, 132–33, 196, 237, 328–29, 355, 375, 386–87, 405, 452, 452–53, 463, 483, 485, 489, 526, 531; Part 2, pp.546–47, 596, 635, 656–57, 664, 727–28, 741, 757, 785, 799, 890, 894, 917, 928–29, 938.)

[1] *Helena Barcikowska lived with her two sons in the village of Wisniowiec [Wiśniowiec] in the Tarnopol district [actually, near Krzemieniec in Volhynia]. Following the Nazi invasion of the area in 1941, she found employment as an agricultural worker in the fields of a German-administered estate, where she became acquainted with two Jewish brothers from Warsaw, Adam and Michal [Michał] Gajło [Gajlo]. In 1942, when the Jews of the village were incarcerated in a ghetto, Helena decided to take the brothers into her home. Only Adam was able to take advantage of the offer, however, as Michal was bedridden. As a devout Catholic, Helena regarded the saving of human life as both a duty and a privilege. The danger of the undertaking was not lost on her, since the German and Ukrainian police were constantly searching for Jewish fugitives. The house was raided twice, and it was only owing to Helena's astuteness that her activities remained undiscovered. Adam Gajło remained in hiding until October 1943. Helena requested no payment for sheltering him and, despite her dire financial situation, divided her meager earnings as a seamstress between her Jewish charge and her sons Tadeusz, aged 14, and Józef [Józef], aged 13. The latter were actively involved in caring for Adam. They built a hideout for him beneath the house, brought him food, and kept the hiding place clean. At the end of 1943, Helena obtained a forged birth certificate for Adam [from a local Catholic priest⁷⁵] and, fearing the intrigues of her Ukrainian neighbors, fled westward with her children before the approaching Russian front. Adam escaped together with them, but afterwards their paths separated. Under his new name, Krzysztof Bolesław [Bolesław] Sawicki—which he also retained after the war—he moved to Łancut [Łańcut], where he remained until the liberation.*

[2] *After the German occupation of Lwow [Lwów] in the summer of 1941, 18-year-old Hana Landau escaped the anti-Jewish pogroms [carried out by Ukrainians] that erupted in the city, during which her parents and brothers were killed. She went to the local church in the nearby village of Winniki, obtained Aryan papers made out in the name of her friend Czesława [Czesława] Bandalowska and returned under an assumed identity to Lwow. As she was known to be Jewish, however, she was arrested and interned in the Janowska concentration camp, but was later released after convincing the Germans that she was Christian. Armed with her Aryan papers, Hana subsequently moved to Cracow, where she obtained work.*

[3] *Edward Chadzynski [Chądzyński] worked for the Warsaw city administration in the public records department during the war. This position allowed him to provide Jews with false papers. He was also active in the Polish Resistance movements where one of his tasks was to organize false documents for underground activities. Edward also helped people who were in need of hiding places and for this he used his connections at work. ... [Procuring false documents required the cooperation of many people. First one had to obtain a birth and baptismal certificate which was necessary to then fabricate an identity document and obtain a kennkarte. In this regard Chądzyński collaborated with the parish churches of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the New Market Square and St. Anthony on Senatorska Street. He also benefited from help of employees of the public records department of the city administration to obtain birth and marriage certificates.⁷⁶]*

[4] *Lucja [Lucja] Meister, followed by her brother, Bertold, escaped from the Przemyśl [Przemyśl] ghetto, in the Rzeszów [Rzeszów] district, with the help of forged documents which their friend, 19-year-old Zofia Komperda, obtained for them. Komperda arranged for Lucja to move in with her aunt, who lived in a village near the town of Przeworsk. However, when neighbors began suspecting that Lucja was Jewish, Komperda arranged for her to be transferred to a nearby village, where Lucja worked in a local school [as a teacher and lived in the parish rectory—she had converted earlier⁷⁷] until the area was liberated in 1944. Although she survived the war, Lucja dies shortly thereafter [of typhus]. Komperda also arranged for Bertold Meister, Lucja's brother, to stay with her parents. Her father, who was a picture restorer, taught Meitner the secrets of his trade, and employed him as an apprentice. Komperda also trained Meister as a land surveyor, and sent him to the nearby village of Wola Zgłobińska [Zgłobieńska], where he worked in his new profession until the area was liberated in 1944. After the war, Meister remained in Poland.*

⁷⁵ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.33.

⁷⁶ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.75.

⁷⁷ Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, pp.380–82.

[5] In 1943, during one of the *Aktionen* in the Bedzin [Będzin] ghetto in Upper Silesia, 13-year-old Alina Potok escaped from the transport and reached Warsaw. She made straight for the apartment of her parents' acquaintances whose address she had. However, after a short stay, Alina was told to leave. During her stay at the acquaintances' home, Alina got to know Leonard Gliniski [Gliński], a member of the AK [Home Army]. When he heard that the acquaintance was planning to send Alina away or even hand her over to the authorities, Gliniski begged him to keep Alina for a few more days, during which time he managed to obtain Aryan papers for her, including school certificates, an identity card, and a birth certificate [from St. Casimir's Church in Lwów⁷⁸]. Since her age on these documents was 16, she was able under her assumed identity to register for work in Germany. Thanks to his ties with the underground, Gliniski arranged for her to go to Vienna, where she worked with a doctor's family with whom she stayed until the area was liberated. Throughout this time, Alina corresponded with Gliniski.

[6] Paweł [Paweł] and Władysława [Władysława] Kalisiewicz lived with their five children in the village of Jabłon [Jabłoń] Zarzecka, in the county of Wysokie Mazowieckie, Białystok [Białystok] district. In November 1942, five Jewish women—Perl Weisenberg, her daughters Yaffa and Nechama, and her two sisters, who had fled from the Wysokie Mazowieckie ghetto, arrived in the village. The Kalisiewiczes were the only ones who agreed to shelter the five refugees. [This implies at least that others in the village were aware of their presence.—Ed.] For the 22 months until the liberation, the Kalisiewiczzes, at great personal risk, hid the five refugees in a small storehouse. Despite their straitened circumstances, Władysława came each day to the hiding place to bring the refugees food. In their subsequent testimony, the survivors described their saviors' warm and humane attitude toward them throughout their stay, despite the terrible tragedies they were experiencing at the time: Their son Waclaw [Wacław] was murdered by the Germans during a raid in the village while another son died of an illness. In her anguish, Władysława turned to the local priest, asking him if the tragedies were a punishment for hiding Jews in her home. The priest reassured her that, on the contrary, God would reward her and her family for saving Jews. The Kalisiewiczzes' adult sons, Józef [Józef] and Waclaw, also took an active part in the rescue operation. During one of the raids, the Germans ordered their nine-year-old son, Mieczysław [Mieczysław], at gunpoint to reveal the Jews' hiding place, but the little boy refused to be intimidated. Later, one of the survivors wrote: "Despite their great suffering, they did not abandon us, and we never heard a sharp word from them. They shared what little food they had with us, and watched out for our safety..." After the war, the survivors immigrated to Israel.

[7] Józef [Józef] and Maria Kmiecinski [Kmiecinski] lived in Vilna [Wilno], where their daughter, Sabina, studied at the local high school. One day a Jewish student joined her class—a Jewish boy called Ludwik Kupferblum (later Miedzinski [Miedziński]). He had come to Vilna from Warsaw in 1939 with his parents, Josef and Felicia, and his brother, Viktor, after the Germans invaded the city. ... Together with the other young Jews, Ludwik and Viktor worked outside the ghetto, where they lived with their parents. Sabina would meet Ludwik and bring him food and she and her parents formulated a plan for getting his parents out. They obtained papers in the name of Miedzinski, and on the appointed evening at a specific time on their way to work Viktor and Ludwik led their parents outside and took them to the Kmiecinskis. That night, the whole family was taken by cart to Maria's mother's estate in the district of Swiecziany [Święciany]. The family hid there until strangers turned up in the vicinity, at which point it was considered too dangerous and they were taken to friends of the Kmiecinskis, Wanda and Waclaw [Wacław] Kanczanin, who had an estate called Malinowka [Malinówka] near Kiemieliszki. Josef Kupferblum had cancer and Maria Kmiecinska's sister, Jadwiga Bydelska, provided him with drugs but his condition worsened and he died. The problem of his burial was solved when the local priest in the parish of Kiemelin agreed to bury him in the Catholic cemetery at Kiemieliszki. The Kmiecinskis decided that it was too dangerous for Viktor, Ludwik, and Felicia to stay at Malinowka and took them to Maria's sister, Helena Frackiewicz [Frąckiewicz], in Vilna. Helena arranged for Viktor to work as a janitor at the Dominican [Sisters'] monastery near Vilna. Ludwik joined the Polish army and managed to meet his brother in Łódź [Łódź].

[8] In January 1943, six-year-old Dana Wajnman's elder brother smuggled her out of the Przeborz [Przedbórz] ghetto, in the Kielce district, and took her with him to Warsaw. Upon their arrival, Dana's brother told her to enter a church and tell the priest that her parents had died in the war and that she had nowhere to go. The priest accompanied little Dana to the offices of the RGO [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza—a social welfare agency] where an RGO official, Stanisław [Stanisław] Kornacki, questioned her. After she fearfully admitted that she was Jewish and told him her story, Kornacki, stirred to compassion, arranged for Dana to stay in an orphanage near Warsaw under an assumed identity, where he used to visit

⁷⁸ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.151.

her and bring her candy and clothing. Dana also used to stay with Kornacki on occasion. Dana remained in the orphanage until January 1945, when the area was liberated. After the war, when he discovered that Dana's parents had perished, Kornacki adopted her and gave her his name. After his death in 1963, Dana Wajnman emigrated to the United States.

[9] In October 1942, during the first deportation from the Cracow ghetto, 12-year-old Anna Allerhand fled after her mother was taken to a death camp. ... Anna had no choice but to return to Cracow where she turned to Salomea Kowalczyk, a seamstress who before the war had had business ties with her parents, who owned a fabric store. Salomea, her husband, Stanislaw [Stanisław], and their sons, Czeslaw [Czesław], Jerzy, and Bronislaw [Bronisław], agreed to hide Anna in their home and did all they could to make her feel welcome. When the neighbors became suspicious, the Kowalczyks transferred Anna to a vegetable plot they owned outside the city, where she masqueraded as gardener and custodian. Meanwhile, the Kowalczyks continued looking for a safer place for Anna and finally arranged for her to stay with Helena Przebindowska, Salomea's sister-in-law, who knew Anna's parents. Przebindowska, a poor widow who lived with her three children in a one-room apartment, welcomed Anna, and she and her two daughters, Urszula and Mirosława [Mirosława], who were let into the secret, treated Anna like one of the family. Przebindowska enlisted the help of the local priest to obtain Aryan papers for Anna and enrolled her in the local school. Meanwhile, a Polish friend of Anna's parents paid Przebindowska for Anna's upkeep from assets Anna's mother had entrusted to her. ... After the war, Anna's father, an officer in the Polish army, returned from captivity, reclaimed his daughter, and took her with him to Israel.

[10] At first the relations during the occupation between Henry [Henryk] Krueger, a resident of Warsaw, and his friends interned in the local ghetto were completely businesslike. But the humanitarian values imbued in Krueger soon induced him to help the needy and the persecuted, at great risk to his own life and without receiving any payment. He supplied food to his acquaintances in the ghetto, such as Halina Wald and the Frydman family, but in the summer of 1942 when the big Aktion began in Warsaw in which the ghetto's Jews were taken to Treblinka, he felt compelled to do more to save their lives. He managed to get into the ghetto, which was more closely guarded at the time, bringing Aryan papers in his pockets. He gave these to 20-year-old Mina Frydman and accompanied her to an apartment he had prepared to shelter her on the Aryan side of the city. While she was hiding, Krueger continued to supply Mina with everything she needed, and when she was threatened by blackmailers he moved her to another apartment [and provided her with new identity documents based on a certificate obtained from Holy Cross Church in Warsaw⁷⁹]. She remained there until the late summer of 1944 and after the Warsaw Uprising was taken, with her borrowed identity, to forced labor in Germany, where she was liberated by the Allied armies.

[11] In July 1942, a seven-month-old Jewish baby was left on the doorstep of the Leszczyński [Leszczyński] home, in the village of Rozki [Rożki] in the county of Krasnystaw, Lublin district. The Leszczyńskis took the baby in and Sabina, one of the daughters, took responsibility for looking after it. Undeterred by the neighbors' assertion that the entire village would be in danger if the police discovered the baby, Sabina looked after it devotedly, showered it with motherly love, and despite her family's poverty saw to all its needs. The Jewish baby, who was christened Zygmunt Zolkiewski [Żółkiewski] in the local church, remained under Sabina's care until July 1945 [sic, 1944], when the area was liberated. Shortly after the war, Mendel and Rivka Wajc, the boy's parents, who had fled to the forests and joined the partisans, turned up at the Leszczyńskis' home. For reasons that were never clarified, the parents did not claim their child. ... The Jewish child remained with Sabina and was later transferred to a Jewish children's home near Łódź [Łódź].

[12] At the start of the German occupation of Poland, Laib Hersz [Leon] Grynberg, his wife, Ewa, and their daughter, Hanka [Chana, later Halina], fled from Warsaw and settled in Białystok [Białystok], in Eastern Poland, which was annexed to the Soviet Union. The Germans subsequently occupied Eastern Poland in June 1941. In February 1943, Grynberg managed to smuggle his daughter out of the local ghetto and, with the help of Polish acquaintances [Michał and Jadwiga Skalski, who took Hanka in for several weeks and taught her Catholic prayers and rituals so that she could pass for a Polish orphan], transferred her to the nearby town of Suraz. Klemens and Zofia Leszczyński [Leszczyński] and their son, Józef [Józef], agreed to take in ten-year-old Hanka without any preconditions or payment. They represented Hanka to neighbors as a Polish orphan from Warsaw, but in due course it was rumoured that the Leszczyńskis were sheltering a Jewish girl. [When the Leszczyńskis learned that Hanka was Jewish, at first they were terrified, but after discussing the matter with their priest, they decided to continue looking after her. Hanka was secretly baptized, and then

⁷⁹ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.273.

made her First Holy Communion publicly to maintain her cover.⁸⁰] They saw to all her needs and educated her as if she were their own daughter. Hanka remained in this loving atmosphere until August 1944, when the area was liberated by the Red Army. Hanka's father survived and after the liberation turned up at the Leszczynskis' home, where his daughter was delivered to him safe and sound. Hanka and her father stayed in Poland. In risking their lives to save Hanka, the Leszczynskis were guided by compassion and humanitarian principles only.

[13] One night during the occupation, nine-year-old Helena Tygier knocked on the door of Rozalia Lojszczyk [Łojszczyk], who lived with her three children in the village of Bukowa Stara, some 35 kilometers from Warsaw. Exhausted and grimy, Helena related how she had left her parents in the Warsaw ghetto and, at her mothers [sic] bidding, had escaped to seek shelter with Lojszczyk's mother, an old acquaintance of hers. Since Lojszczyk's mother had already passed away, Lojszczyk took Helena into her home, where she looked after her devotedly. Helena made occasional forays into the ghetto to bring her parents food. After a tip-off to the authorities, German soldiers turned up at Lojszczyk's home in January 1944 searching for the Jewish refugee. When she saw them entering the farmyard, Lojszczyk thrust a pail of milk into Helena's hand and pushed her out of the door. The Germans took no notice of her, thinking she was a local dairymaid, and when they failed to find the girl they were looking for, they left. Since it was far too dangerous for Helena to continue staying with Lojszczyk, Lojszczyk arranged for her to stay with her brother, who lived in the neighboring village and agreed to shelter her. Lojszczyk also obtained a baptism certificate from the local priest, which enabled her to find work in the flour mill. Helena stayed with Lojszczyk's brother until January 1945, when the area was liberated.

[14] Immediately after the war began, Izabela Malinowska, who lived in Vilna [Wilno], rushed to the aid of the Jewish refugees who began thronging to her for help. Taking advantage of her close acquaintance with numerous officials in municipal institutions, she helped the Jewish refugees by giving them advice and guidance. Malinowska worked in a coffee house that served as a rendezvous point for Jewish refugees and it was there that she met Efraim Jakiri. The two became friends and eventually fell in love. Jakiri moved into Malinowska's house, located in a suburb of the city. When the Germans occupied Vilna [in June 1941], Jakiri tried to flee from the city with the retreating Red Army but was unsuccessful. He returned to Vilna and was confined in the ghetto set up there. All the while, Malinowska helped by supplying him with food parcels when he arrived daily at the city's military base where he worked. Thanks to her acquaintance with the local priest, Malinowska managed to procure Aryan papers for Jakiri and took him back into her home after he fled from his place of employment. His presence in her home aroused the ire of the neighbors and Malinowska was forced to find Jakiri a safer place to hide. She was helped by a friend, a member of the Polish underground, who moved Jakiri to relatives of his who lived in the village of Kobylniki, near Lake Narocz. There he was represented as a student in need of country air because of the tuberculosis from which he suffered. In 1943, Jakiri joined the partisans. He was wounded in battle and after the liberation married Malinowska and they moved to an area within the new Polish borders.

[15] In the summer of 1941, Olga Jospa and her parents were deported from their home town of Husiatyn, in the Tarnopol district. After much suffering and hardship, the three Jewish fugitives arrived in the ghetto of Kopyczynce [Kopieczynice], from which they fled just before its liquidation in early 1943. While they were still in the ghetto, Aniela Malkiewicz [Malkiewicz] approached the Jospa family, for whom she had done housework from the year 1928, and without asking for any payment expressed her willingness to help them in any way she could. When they left the ghetto, the Jospa family came to Malkiewicz, who at first hid them in the attic of the local church. She subsequently moved them to a number of other hiding places in the surrounding villages. Despite the danger posed to her life, Malkiewicz continued to care for the three Jewish refugees until the liberation of the area in the summer of 1944.

[16] Dr. Maria Mantel was the wife of a Polish officer of Jewish ancestry who was murdered at Katyn in the [1940 Soviet] massacre of Polish prisoners of war. Mantel, who lived in Warsaw and ran a private medical clinic in her home, invited her mother-in-law, Karola Mantel, 70, who until then had been hiding in various places in and around the city, to come live with her. Despite the danger to her life, Dr. Mantel took care of her mother-in-law, nursed her, and provided for all her needs. Because of the many patients that visited her clinic in the house, Dr. Mantel feared that the elderly woman's identity would be revealed. After a few months, Dr. Mantel moved her mother-in-law to an institution run by priests in the city of Minsk-Mazowiecki [Mińsk Mazowiecki], where she remained until the Red Army liberated the area in August 1944.

⁸⁰ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.306; Halina Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation), pp.62–64.

[17] After the Jews of Warsaw were ordered to move into the ghetto, Abram and Felicia Gwiazda decided to seek refuge in one of the villages in the area of Otwock, near Warsaw. The situation worsened, and when Felicia Gwiazda was about to give birth, Katarzyna Monko [Mońko], the local midwife, was called in to help her. She determined that the conditions of the hideout could pose a danger to the lives of both the mother and child. Although she knew that Gwiazda was Jewish, she offered to hide her in her home, where she lived with her son and daughter-in-law, Mieczysław [Mieczysław] and Aniela. Gwiazda gave birth to a little girl in the home of the Monko family, and after it became clear that it was impossible for them to return to the hiding place, Gwiazda decided in desperation to abandon her baby in the train station. Monko expressed her firm opposition to this idea, and with the support of the local priest decided to keep the little girl and care for her until after the war. The little Jewish girl remained in the home of the Monko family, who treated her with devotion. After Monko died, her son and daughter-in-law continued to care for and raise the child. Eventually, a German soldier took the child with him to an army camp, where she was given over to a Polish woman, with the intention of bringing her to Germany. The Polish woman decided to flee from the camp and adopt the little girl as her own. However, Mieczysław and Aniela Monko kept track of the child, and after the war, when her biological parents arrived at the Monko home to reclaim their daughter, the Monkos gave them the address of the Polish woman. She refused to give them their daughter back, but thanks to the testimony in court of Mieczysław Monko and his wife, the child was finally returned to her parents. The family eventually immigrated to Israel ...

[18] Rosalia Werdinger met Bolesław [Bolesław] Muchowski before the war at his place of work in the city of Drohobycz, in the Lwów [Lwów] district, and in time their friendship turned into love. After the attacks against the Jews began following the German occupation of the area, Bolesław took Werdinger to his brother, Zygmunt Muchowski, who lived in the village of Dziewule in Siedlce county, while he himself rented an apartment in the nearby town of Luków [Luków]. Zygmunt took Rosalia under his wing and hid her in his home in the village, and after he obtained Aryan papers for her in the name of a deceased relative [based on a baptismal certificate he obtained from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Warsaw⁸¹], he took her to Luków, where his brother Bolesław was waiting for her. In Luków, Bolesław introduced Rosalia as his wife. Together with Soviet partisans active in the underground in the area, Zygmunt Muchowski continued to extend his assistance to Jews in need ... After the war, Bolesław married Rosalia and they remained in Poland.

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

[20] In September 1942, Lea Wicner's [Leah or Lucia Weitzner] mother [Gusta] shoved the 12-year-old out of the railroad car that was transporting the Jews of Hnizdyczów [Hnizdyczów]-Kochawina [near Żydaczów] (Lwów [Lwów] district) to the Belzec [Bełżec] extermination camp. Wicner returned to her village, where she joined up with an uncle [Mundek Feldman] who had [avoided] the transport [and was hidden by the Wohański family⁸²]. With his assistance, she obtained Aryan papers [from a Polish priest⁸³] with which she was able to reach Stary Sambor, where she went to the home of Feliks and Stefania Plauszewski, who were acquainted with her family. The Plauszewskis took Wicner in like a member of the family, taking care of her and not disclosing her Jewish origin to anyone, including their children. In early 1943 [1944?], the Polish residents of Stary Sambor were expelled to the west. The Plauszewskis, together with Wicner, reached Tarnobrzeg (on the Vistula River), but since Poles from Wicner's village had also been expelled to this area, it was feared that her identity would be revealed. Thus, the Plauszewskis decided to move Wicner to the home of Stefania Gos [Goś], Feliks's sister, in Sobieska Wola (Lublin district). Gos and her husband, Edward, like the Plauszewskis, treated Wicner as affectionately and devotedly as a daughter until the area was liberated in July 1944. The two Polish families

⁸¹ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.363.

⁸² Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, p.879.

⁸³ Judy Labensohn, "A Real Survivor," *Jerusalem Post*, May 1, 2000, Internet: <<http://info.jpost.com/2000/Supplements/Holocaust/Holocaust.6023.html>>: "With the help of a Polish priest who ran the local orphanage, Feldman arranged for Leah Weitzner to become Helena Lachovich [Lachowicz]." According to this article, Leah Wietzner was born in Lwów and was the only child of a judge in the Polish government who died when she was five. She grew up at her grandfather's estate in Kochawina, a village outside Lwów.

risked their lives to rescue Wicner purely for humanitarian reasons, without remuneration. After the war, Lea Wicner moved to Israel and stayed in touch with her rescuers' children.

[21] In 1941, before Irena Weksztein's parents were deported from Czystochowa [Częstochowa] to a forced labor camp, they found a way to make contact with Kamilla Pelc, who, motivated by her love of humanity and without asking for or receiving any remuneration, agreed to take their two-year-old daughter under her wing. Pelc, a war widow, lived with her son, Karol, and risked her life to smuggle young Irena into her apartment and obtain Aryan papers for her [from a priest who agreed to forge a birth certificate for Irena⁸⁴]. She represented Irena Weksztein to curious neighbors as her niece and cared for her as if she were her own. Over time, Irena grew very attached to Pelc and her son, looking upon them as her mother and brother. Despite the many dangers they encountered, Irena remained in their home until the liberation in January 1945. After the war, Irena's parents, who survived the war, came to take her with them. Because the young girl had become so attached to her adopted family, she refused to accept her real parents. Her refusal was so intense that they had to leave the girl with Pelc for a few more months. Irena eventually emigrated with her parents to France and kept in touch with Pelc for many years.

[22] In March 1943, after the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto, Mr. and Mrs. Kardisz continued to work in the Optima factory on the Aryan side of the city, hiding their two children, Rena and Romek, in the factory as well. There, they met Rozalia Posławska [Posławska], the wife of Bolesław Posławski [Bolesław Posławski], a minor factory official. The Kardiszes felt that they could trust Posławska and told her about their two children hiding in the factory. The story touched Posławska, who had three children of her own, and she offered to hide the children in her home unconditionally. She told them she had connections with a Polish underground organization that helped Jews and if necessary could ask the organization for financial help to care for the children. Mr. and Mrs. Kardisz were eventually deported to a concentration camp and their two children remained with the Posławski family. One day, a Polish neighbor happened to discover that the Posławskis were hiding two Jewish children in their home and attempted to blackmail them. Posławska refused to pay what he asked and he informed on them to the authorities. Posławska was arrested with young Romek, but his sister, Rena, managed to escape and hide in a church. Posławska was thrown in prison and tortured and only thanks to the confusion caused by the approaching front was she able to escape from prison and hide. Romek was murdered, but his sister, Rena, was returned to the Posławski family by the priest who discovered her presence in the church. Of the parents, who had been deported to Bergen-Belsen, only the mother, Ester Kardisz, remained alive. ... Kardisz came to them sick and exhausted and they cared for her as if she were a member of the family and helped her and her daughter Rena to get back on their feet. Kardisz and her daughter eventually immigrated to Israel ...

[23] Stefan Raczynski [Raczyński], who lived with his family in the village of Wegelina in the Vilna [Wilno] district, was superficially acquainted with Jews in the nearby town of Niemczyn. In September 1941, after the massacre perpetrated by the Germans and Lithuanians against the local Jews, Jewish fugitives began turning up at Raczynski's home asking for help. Stefan and his family helped the Jewish refugees to the best of their ability and provided them with food and a temporary hiding place. Stefan's mother even looked after a baby whom a Jewish woman had abandoned on her doorstep. Thanks to her rescue work, her home became known as "the home of Abraham the Patriarch." In 1942, Raczynski became acquainted with Shoshana Dezent, a young Jewish woman from Vilna who was hiding under an assumed identity in the surrounding villages and working in peasants' homes as a casual laborer. Dezent, who had lived in a town all her life, found it hard to adapt to village life. Fearing for her safety, Raczynski decided to protect her and whenever she was in difficulties arranged for her to stay with acquaintances of his in the nearby villages. In the spring of 1944, armed Polish nationalists, suspecting Dezent of being Jewish, attacked her and beat her almost to death. Raczynski immediately summoned the local priest, who testified that Dezent was not Jewish, thereby saving her life. Following this incident, Raczynski took Dezent home and looked after her until the area was liberated. After the war, Raczynski ... married Dezent. In 1960, the Raczynskis immigrated to Israel with their two children.

[24] In 1943, Mariam Feier placed her four-year-old daughter, Warda, in a Polish children's home in Warsaw. A priest who worked in the home, realizing that Warda was Jewish, feared for her safety, since German policemen frequently came to inspect the home looking for Jewish children. The priest turned to his friend, Teofilia Rauch, who lived with her daughter [in] Zalesie, not far from Warsaw, and asked her to take Warda in. Rauch agreed and, for almost two years, looked after Warda and saw to all her needs as if she were her own daughter. After the war, Mariam Feier returned from

⁸⁴ "Karol Pelc: Surviving the Holocaust," *Michigan Tech News*, January 26, 2001 (vol. 33, no. 19), Internet: <<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/breaking/2001/pelc.html>>; reprinted from *The U.P. Catholic*, January 5, 2001.

Germany, where she had been sent as a forced laborer, and began looking for her daughter through the press. When Rauch found out that Warda's mother was looking for her, she was extremely ambivalent about contacting her, but in the end, for religious reasons, decided to return Warda to her mother without asking for any remuneration.

[25] During the occupation, Jan and Władysława [Władysława] Smolko [Smółko] were AK [Home Army] activists who lived in the town of Tykocin in the Białystok [Białystok] district. In his official capacity as organist and registrar at the local church, Smolko had access to the birth and death registries [which allowed them to provide documents to Jews⁸⁵]. In January 1943, before the first Aktion in the Białystok ghetto, Michael Turek and his brother, Menachem, were smuggled out of the ghetto by a Polish acquaintance who hid them temporarily in his home. The Smolkos, after being approached by the acquaintance, took the Turek brothers in, provided them with Aryan papers, and supported them financially for about a year and a half, until the liberation. [The Smolkos also helped four members of the Goldzin family survive.]

[26] Before the occupation, Ela Pleszewska, an attorney, and Henryk Sosnowski, a judge in Cracow, were colleagues. Already in September 1939, when the Germans occupied the city, Sosnowski foresaw the danger threatening the Jews and, guided by humanitarian principles, hid Pleszewska in his apartment. Since Pleszewska was known in Cracow, where she had many acquaintances and former clients, Sosnowski, fearing informers, asked his friend the priest for help. The priest, without even seeing Pleszewska, drew up an official document stating that Sosnowski and Pleszewska were husband and wife. Sosnowski and Pleszewska left Cracow, but fearing discovery despite possession of the document kept constantly on the move. Unemployed and with no fixed source of income, Sosnowski nevertheless managed to smuggle food into the Cracow ghetto for his "wife's" family and helped some of them escape to the Aryan side of the city. Destitute, and persecuted both by the authorities and extortionists, the Sosnowskis were liberated in January 1945, after which they returned to Cracow and resumed their careers. Pleszewska died in Poland in 1965.

[27] Janina Straszewska and her daughter, Teresa, lived in Cracow. They met Ludwika Liebeskind in late 1941, when the inhabitants of the ghetto were sent to work outside the ghetto. In the summer of 1942, Liebeskind asked Straszewska to place Gizela Szwarc, her five-year-old niece, in hiding in her apartment. Straszewska agreed, sought no remuneration, and offered to shelter Liebeskind too. Straszewska provided the Jewish girl with a certificate of baptism and Liebeskind with a forged birth certificate. [They obtained the documents from a priest they knew in an outlying village.⁸⁶] After a while, Liebeskind found a way to move her mother and sister from the Plasow [Płaszów] camp and, with Straszewska's assistance, found them asylum in a rented apartment in town. Because her facial features left no doubt about her Jewishness, Liebeskind was arrested one day while riding the streetcar. Although she escaped and returned to the Straszewskas' home, she was afraid to go outside from then on. Teresa, active in a Resistance movement, provided Liebeskind with a forged Kennkarte (identity card). Liebeskind and her niece, Szwarc, stayed in Straszewska's home until the liberation in January 1945.

[28] During the war, Józef [Józef] and Antonina Szewc, along with their seven children and Józef's parents, lived in the village of Niedzieliska in the Zamosc [Zamość] district, where Józef acted as the village elder. In late 1940, following the closure of the Warsaw ghetto, Fraida Rozental (later Cukier), who was then 16, found her way to Józef's home. She possessed papers in the name of Irena Kiel. Józef and his family sheltered her in their home. In May 1942, Józef obtained a birth certificate for her that was confirmed by the local priest [the pastor of Wielącza] in the name of Halina Byk. These papers enabled Frieda to work in Germany for the remainder of the war. Józef's wife, Antonina, as well as his parents, Marcin and Zofia, were also helpful. "Marcin Szewc even mailed a couple of letters to me in Germany," wrote Fraida Cukier in her testimony to Yad Vashem. After the war, she returned to Poland and remained there.

[29] Before the war and until 1942, Teofila and Stefan Sz wajkajzer, along with their nine children, lived in the village of Zymodry, near Kurzeniec, in the Vilna [Wilno] district. One day in 1941, the priest of Stara Wilejka asked Teofila to shelter a young Jewish girl named Czesława [Czesława] Czertok (later Czerenia) from Vilna. Czesława, aged 17, had remained alone in occupied Vilna. All of her family had been murdered in Ponary. Czesława had escaped from Vilna and after numerous experiences had found herself in Stara Wilejka and was completely at a loss as to where she could turn for

⁸⁵ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.497. The Jewish courier Maryla Różycka, who was based in Białystok, confirmed the assistance provided by Monsignor Adam Abramowicz, pastor of Our Lady Queen of Poland (NMP Królowej Polski) Parish, later renamed after St. Roch. Rev. Abramowicz helped shelter Jews and provided them with false birth certificates. See Tadeusz Krahel, "Ksiądz prałat Adam Abramowicz," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 2, February 2003.

⁸⁶ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.516.

help. Thus she turned to the local priest, who kept her for a couple of weeks until he found shelter for her at the home of a large and devoutly Catholic family—the Szwałkajzers of Zymodry. Three of the children, Wanda, Zbigniew, and Ewa, knew about Czesława's true identity. Together with their parents, they cared for her needs and safety. Zymodry, the head of the family obtained a document from the local municipality of Kurzeniec "proving" that Czesława was their relative. ... In the fall of 1942, when the Szwałkajzers moved to Kurzeniec, Czesława was detained because of an informer. In an attempt to release her, Zbigniew went to the police. Before he arrived, Czesława was lucky to flee and reach the home of Zbigniew's sister, Wanda. Wanda was a teacher and rented a room with a peasant family. Through Wanda, Czesława contacted the partisans and joined their ranks, fighting until the liberation of the area in 1944.

[30] Danuta Wolikowska (née Malinowska) was raised in Luck [Łuck] (in Volhynia), where she graduated from the Tadeusz Kosciuszki [Kościuszko] state gymnasium, where she befriended a Jewish girl named Ida Dekelbaum (later Landsberg). In early 1941, Danuta's father was deported to Siberia. One June 21, 1941, Danuta went to Lwow [Lwów] to meet Ida, who was studying there. That very day, the German-Soviet war broke out and Lwow was bombarded. The girls decided to return to their family homes. Since all communication was cut off, they started out by foot towards Volhynia. They walked for five days but did not reach their hometown. In this situation they came to the conclusion that Ida had to conceal her origins, so she tore up her papers and threw them away. Danuta and Ida then managed to get to Włodzimierz Wołyński [Włodzimierz Wołyński], where Danuta's mother was living. ... Ida went into the ghetto. Danuta, however, began to work in the regional office where she managed to get papers for Ida, which allowed her to leave the ghetto and look for a way to earn some money outside the ghetto walls. In 1942, rumors spread about the liquidation of the ghettos. Danuta decided to hide Ida in her own rented apartment. There, she fed her friend and took care of all her needs. When the liquidation of the ghetto began, she decided to take Ida out of town altogether. One day she drove a carriage near the house dressed as a local girl. She dressed Ida in the same manner and together they drove out of town. They reached the village where Danuta's mother worked as a teacher and Danuta introduced Ida as her relative and arranged a place for her to stay, leaving her under the care of the trusted school janitor but without telling him of her real origin. Danuta visited Ida often, bringing her food and clothing; at the same time, she continued to tell the locals that Ida was her relative. She also arranged to obtain proper documents for Ida through the local priest. Towards the end of 1943, Danuta reached the conclusion that due to the anti-Polish sentiments of the local Ukrainian population, Ida should leave the village. She gave her the address of friends in the Kielce area and sent her on her way with a group of Polish refugees. Ida got to Kielce, where she safely awaited liberation while working as a teacher in a nearby village. Throughout this entire period, Danuta's messengers maintained contact with Ida.

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

[32] Regina Zajackowska [Zajczkowska] lived with her son, Ryszard, and her daughters, Izabela Stasiuk and her family and Maria Janiak and her family, in Włodzimierz Wołyński [Włodzimierz Wołyński]. One day, Irena Gelman and her year-old daughter, Anna, appeared at their house. Irena had fled the Lwow [Lwów] ghetto (her husband had perished even before they entered the ghetto) and after a long journey arrived in Włodzimierz Wołyński. She represented herself to the local priest as a Polish woman whose entire family had been killed. She said she was looking for work. The priest directed her to the Stasiuk family to work as a maid and cook. Some time afterwards, the Stasiuk family decided to move to Lublin out of fear of Ukrainian nationalists and invited Irena to come along with them. Izabela's mother, Regina Zajackowska, came to visit her daughter and advised Irena not to go to Lublin. At the same time, she offered help if Irena should have to flee Lublin in the future. Irena went with the family to Lublin but was forced to return to Włodzimierz Wołyński. She then

went to Regina, who warmly welcome her and her daughter (who was ill) into her home. ... After a few days, when Irena's daughter recovered, Irena decided to leave. She thanked Regina for her help and said that she did not wish to put her at risk anymore as, she explained, she was a Jewish escapee from the ghetto. Zajackowska smiled and told her that from the moment she first saw her and her child she knew they were not Polish, but that this did not change a thing. Regina agreed to keep Irena and her daughter with her ... Irena stayed with the Zajackowskis until the end of the war ...

[33] Olga Zawadzka, originally from Lwow [Lwów], moved to the village of Cuszow [Cuszów], Kielce district, after her marriage. Between the years 1925 and 1930, she had been a student in Jan Kazimierz University in Lwow, where she had befriended a Jewish woman named Frida Kohn, who was a mathematics student. After Olga left Lwow, the two friends lost contact. When the Germans took over Lwow, a mutual friend turned to Olga and asked her if she would hide Fela in her home. Olga, bearing in mind the fact that Fela was a Jew, told her warmly that Fela would be most welcome. Fela arrived in Cuszow and Olga, with the help of friends and a priest, obtained a false birth certificate and Kennkarte for her made out in the name of Maria Zajackowska [Zajackowska]. Fela asked Olga to help a friend of hers, Klara Nachtgaist, who was spending entire days in churches, too frightened to leave. Olga welcomed her into her home as well. Klara already had Aryan papers made out in the name of Julia Nahorayska. In the summer of 1942, Olga went to Lwow again, where she agreed to bring back Nina Drucker (later Noe Levine), the seven-year-old daughter of the director of the Lwow ghetto hospital, Dr. Herman Drucker, to Cuszow. Olga took Nina, who had a birth certificate in the name of Janina Witeszczak, into her home. Whenever the need arose, the child was either put up in the Sisters of St. Urszula [Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union] boarding school in Cracow or the Sisters of the Holy Ghost [Canon Sisters of the Holy Spirit de Saxia] boarding school in Busko [Busko-Zdrój]. Olga represented the fugitive child as a daughter of relatives who had died during the war.

[34] Henryk Zielonka was a tailor and ran an underwear factory in Czestochowa [Częstochowa]. When he married Getruda he was already a widower and had two sons from his previous marriage. In the summer of 1943, Henryk's son brought home a five-year-old Jewish girl named Chana (later Chana Batista). Chana was born on the outskirts of Czestochowa, in Rakow [Raków]. On June 16, 1943, Chana's mother had taken her to Czestochowa and gave her a scrap of paper with an address written on it. Chana was told that at the said address she would find a woman who would help her. Since then she never saw her mother again. A passerby directed Chana, who was not able to read at the time, to the address, where she waited a few hours for the woman whom her mother had told her about. The woman wrote her a new note and took the girl to a church. She told her to wait for the priest and quickly disappeared herself. After mass, Chana turned to the priest and showed him the note. The priest said that he could not help her. He called in a boy and a girl and asked them to take Chana to an old age home run by nuns. In front of the home there was a big courtyard; on the bench sat a few people. They started asking Chana questions to see if she knew how to pray. Suddenly she noticed the boy coming down the stairs; it was Henryk Zielonka's son. "Aren't you ashamed to tire this girl out with questions?" he asked. He took Chana by the arm and escorted her to his parents' house. After a time, Henryk managed to get documents for Chana "proving" that she was his niece. ... "Shortly afterwards they told me to call them 'Mother' and 'Father' ... I was a difficult child, I almost didn't speak, I didn't smile, and in addition I didn't want to eat. My poor mother did what she could to make sure that I would eat something. ..." After the war, Chana started school, finished her studies, and began working. When her adoptive parents died, she ... discovered that her mother was murdered by the Germans.

Nuns throughout Poland took up the call to shelter Jews, especially children, in their convents, orphanages, and boarding schools. Many of these benefactors remain anonymous, as the following testimonies gathered by Yad Vashem illustrate. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, pp.127, 144, 148, 214, 215, 332, 345–56, 358, 370, 404–405, 489, 502, 507, 511–12; Part 2, pp.545–46, 713, 777–78, 808, 863, 886, 923, 946.)

[1] In 1942, Krystyna Lew escaped from the Warsaw ghetto together with her eight-year-old daughter, Beata; her son, Marek; and her sister, Helena Pocimak. Armed with Aryan papers, which they had obtained from a Polish acquaintance, the fugitives appealed for help to Helena Byszewska, her sisters Jadwiga Gostkiewicz and Maria Szulinska [Szulińska], and Wiktoria Kolbinska [Kolbińska]. Before the war, these four women had maintained a business relationship with the Lew family, which in the course of time had evolved into genuine friendship. When they learned of the distress of their Jewish friends, the women immediately undertook to help them. Helena took Marek into her apartment, and subsequently found refuge for Krystyna and her daughter as well as a hideout elsewhere for Helena Pocimak. The women set up a joint fund, from which 150 zlotys [zloty] were allocated monthly to Krystyna and Helena Byszewska. In due course, the janitor's daughter began to suspect that Beata was Jewish, and fearing denunciation Helena Byszewska decided to transfer her to a

convent. Helena's daughter, Anna, taught Beata the rudiments of the Catholic faith, and the child was sent to a convent, where she remained until the end of the war. ... Jadwiga, Maria, and Wiktoria were of constant assistance to Helena and Anna, and in times of danger hid the fugitives in their homes.

[2] One day in the autumn of 1942, two men approached Janina Choromanska [Choromańska] in Warsaw, representing themselves as Poles who were interested in renting a room. Although they had Aryan papers, Choromanska realized that they were Jewish refugees and, stirred by their plight, invited them to stay with her. Shamaï Zylberman and Jakub Gurfein took up her offer and stayed with her for several months, during which time Choromanska looked after them and helped them with their preparations for crossing the border into Hungary. Before they left, the fugitives passed on her address to Meir Gliksman and Tuvya Firer, whom Choromanska also sheltered in her home. Gliksman later also crossed the border into Hungary. When Firer informed Choromanska that his niece, who was hiding in a convent near Cracow, was in danger, Choromanska, in a heroic operation, traveled to the convent and brought her back with her. Uncle and niece stayed in her apartment in Warsaw for several months. After the war, Zylberman, Gurfein, and Gliksman immigrated to Israel. Tuvya and his niece perished in unknown circumstances.

[3] Early on in the occupation, Romualda and Feliks Ciesielski, who lived in Bydgoszcz with their nine-year-old son, were deported to Cracow, where they were assigned a shop and apartment that had been confiscated from their Jewish owners. Although they had no say in the matter, the Ciesielskis felt sorry for the Jews and decided they would do all they could to help them. In addition to distributing food and clothing among needy Jews, the Ciesielskis let their shop be used as a temporary shelter for Jews until they found a more permanent hiding place. Among the Jews helped by the Ciesielskis were Dr. Edmund Fiszler and his wife, Leonora, who stayed with them for several weeks. The four members of the Horowicz family also found temporary shelter with the Ciesielskis. At Romualda's suggestion, the Horowicz's daughter, Zofia, was hidden in a convent. In 1942, the Gestapo, alerted by informers, arrested the Ciesielskis. Romualda was interrogated, tortured, and sent to Auschwitz, where she continued helping Jewish prisoners. Her husband was interned in the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he perished.

[4] In early 1943, Lea Russak and her relative, Aron Moszkowicz, left their hiding place in the Carpathian Mountains and moved to Otwock near Warsaw. Equipped with forged papers, the two turned up on the Fiejkas' doorstep, asking to rent a room in their house. Helena and Boleslaw [Bolesław] Fiejka, realizing they were Jewish, agreed to hide them in their home against payment, which was willingly provided. The Fiejkas prepared a well-camouflaged shelter for the Jewish refugees under the floor of Fiejka's carpentry shop. In time, the Grynszpans and their ten-year-old daughter joined them. Despite the danger, Helena Fiejka looked after the five Jewish refugees, cooked for them, washed their clothes, and removed their bodily wastes, even after they were no longer able to pay. One day, however, Boleslaw Fiejka ordered the refugees out. After days and nights of wandering through villages and fields without finding shelter, Russak and Moszkowicz, in desperation, returned to the Fiejkas. This time, Helena managed to persuade her husband, Boleslaw, to let the Jewish refugees stay. The three Grynszpans also returned to the Fiejkas' home and stayed there until they were liberated. While at the Fiejkas, Russak fell ill and required medical attention. She was persuaded by Sister Teresa, a nun, to leave her hiding place and move in with relatives of Sister Teresa who lived in the town of Piastow [Piastów], near Warsaw. Russak stayed in Piastow until the area was liberated in January 1945 and after the war emigrated to Israel, while the Grynszpans moved to Canada. After the liberation, Moszkowicz joined the Red Army and fell fighting for Poland.

[5] In February 1942, with the establishment of the Tarnow [Tarnów] ghetto in the Cracow district, the Blumenkranzes decided to find a foster mother for their four-year-old daughter, Lea, outside the ghetto. Janina Walega, a single woman who lived on the outskirts of the city, agreed to shelter little Lea in her home. However, only a few days later, neighbors began suspecting that Lea was Jewish and blackmailers and extortionists began threatening her. Hiding her little charge in a suitcase, Walega traveled with her in a compartment full of Germans to the town of Przemyśl [Przemyśl], where she enrolled Lea, under a false identity, in a children's institution run by Catholic nuns. Walega paid for her upkeep at the institution until the area was liberated.

[6] After her mother's death in 1942, 11-year-old Felicja Seifert was smuggled out of the ghetto to the Aryan side of Cracow. Felicja's father, who lived under an assumed identity outside the Cracow ghetto, arranged this daring operation. Felicja was sent to a farm in the village of Wawrzenczyce [Wawrzeńczyce] in the county of Miechów [Miechów], near Cracow, where, together with another Jewish couple, she stayed for about a year. One day, the Germans raided the farm and arrested the farm owners and the Jewish couple, Felicja managed to escape and ran to the private tutor the farm owners had hired for her, who sent her to Aleksandra Mianowska in Cracow, a Żegota [Żegota] activist. Mianowska

arranged for Stefan Kaminski [Kamiński], an underground activist and member of Żegota, to take Felicja to an institution run by nuns near Warsaw for children whose parents were working in Germany. Kaminski undertook this mission with alacrity, despite the tremendous risk. When Felicja took ill and had to go into the hospital, Kaminski stayed by her side, watched over her, and kept her spirits up. After she recovered, Felicja went to the children's institution under an assumed identity and stayed there until the area was liberated. After the war, she immigrated to Israel.

[7] During the occupation, Franciszek and Maria Kielan lived in Warsaw with their daughters, Krystyna and Zofia. One day in 1942, Krystyna got to know Janina Prot, a new girl in her class. In due course, as the two became friends, Janina told Krystyna that she was Jewish and that she had left her parents, who were hiding in a nearby town, and had come to Warsaw on her own, believing that she had a greater chance of surviving there. Stirred by her friend's plight, Krystyna and her sister, Zofia, decided to ask their parents to shelter Janina. Despite the danger, the parents agreed and took Janina into their home without expecting anything in return. Later, the Kielans arranged for Janina to stay with acquaintances in a village, where she helped with the housework, but she was soon sent back to the Kielans after the village authorities became suspicious of her true identity. One day in 1942, Prot was joined by Romana Laks, who also turned up on the Kielans' doorstep after her hiding on the Aryan side of the city became too dangerous. For several months, the Kielans and their two daughters sheltered both Janina and Romana until Romana found a place in a convent near Warsaw, where she remained until the area was liberated by the Red Army. After suffering terrible hardships during the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1942, Prot stayed with the Kielans until the area was liberated. After the war, the two survivors emigrated to the United States ...

[8] Giga Kochanowska, a spinster who lived in Warsaw, was indebted to her Jewish friends who, before the war, had helped her through periods of economic hardship. During the occupation, when several of these friends were interned in the local ghetto, Kochanowska repaid their kindness by risking her life to save them. In early 1942, Kochanowska helped her friend Estera Marber escape from the ghetto and put her up in her small apartment, where she looked after her devotedly, without expecting anything in return. She also entered the ghetto, at great personal risk, to bring food to her friends Moshe and Estera Borten and their baby daughter, Julia, who was born in the ghetto. In December 1942, when the Bortens asked Kochanowska to help them escape, she devised a daring plan which entailed crawling through a sewer to the Aryan side of the city. As soon as they arrived, Kochanowska provided them with Aryan papers and rented accommodations for them. When, some two months later, the landlord refused to extend the lease, Kochanowska, with considerable ingenuity, found the Bortens two separate apartments on the eastern side of the city and arranged for the baby to be sent to an institution outside Warsaw run by nuns. In late summer 1944, after the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising, Kochanowska and Marber were driven out of Warsaw and, after suffering much privation, were liberated in January 1945. The Bortens were liberated in September 1944 and after the war immigrated to Israel. Marber later emigrated to France.

[9] After returning to Warsaw from the front in 1939, Antoni-Stefan Koper, knowing that he would not find work in his chosen profession (journalism), took an office job with the municipal tax authorities, which allowed him to enter the ghetto. On his visits to the ghetto, Koper brought with him documents forged in an underground printing press with the help of a friend and distributed them among Jews, enabling them to escape to the Aryan side of the city. In the summer of 1942, after the large-scale Aktion in the ghetto, Koper offered to shelter his friend, Fanny Margulies, whose entire family had been deported to Treblinka, in his apartment in central Warsaw. After helping her escape, Koper brought Margulies to his apartment where, to her amazement, she discovered that Koper was already sheltering Bronisława [Bronisława] and Henryk Finkelstein and Dr. Maksymilian Ciesielski, also fugitives from the ghetto. Between 1942 and 1944, a number of Jews passed through Koper's apartment for various periods, including children who were later placed in Catholic orphanages. Despite the danger, threats, and attempted extortion, Koper continued with his humanitarian activities. With the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, all the Jewish refugees fled with the rest of Warsaw's population and survived until the liberation.

[10] Anna Reich was nine when her parents and close family were murdered during the Aktion which took place in 1942 in the town of Biała [Biała] in the Cracow district. On the night preceding the massacre, Anna's mother escaped with her daughter and after arranging for Anna to stay with a Polish friend returned to the ghetto, where she perished. A few days later, the Polish friend sent Anna to stay with her aunt, in Cracow. Since Anna had little chance of surviving in Cracow, the aunt asked Jadwiga Kruczkowska, a friend who lived with her son, Adam, in nearby Wieliczka, to take Anna in. Jadwiga, whose husband, the famous Polish author Leon Kruczkowski, was interned at the time in a prisoner-of-war camp, immediately agreed to shelter Anna in her home. After obtaining Aryan papers for Anna, Kruczkowska enrolled her

at the local school, where she was put in the same class as her son. The fact that Anna looked Jewish made the rescue venture doubly dangerous. The above notwithstanding, Kruczkowska looked after Anna, whom she passed off as her niece, for a year, until 1943, when the aunt arranged for Anna to be admitted to a convent in a Cracow suburb. Anna stayed in the convent until January 1945, when the area was liberated.

[11] Dr. Maria Mantel was the wife of a Polish officer of Jewish ancestry who was murdered at Katyn in the [1940 Soviet] massacre of Polish prisoners of war. Mantel, who lived in Warsaw and ran a private medical clinic in her home ... In 1943, Mantel also hid Erwin Aleksandrowicz, an old acquaintance, in her apartment. He, like Mantel's mother-in-law, had also been forced to wander from one hiding place to another. Mantel also found a hiding place for Irena Aleksandrowicz, Erwin's daughter, until he found a more permanent place for her in an institution run by nuns.

[12] In the 1930s, Stanislaw [Stanisław] Mazur, who had been born and bred on a farm, met Jews for the first time as a student at the University of Warsaw. ... Stanislaw Mazur and his wife, Krystyna, helped Jews imprisoned in the Warsaw ghetto. The Mazurs' address was known to Jews fleeing from the ghetto, and, disregarding the risk to their lives, the Mazurs took them into their home, provided them with false papers, and helped them find other places to hide, mostly outside of Warsaw. Of the 30 Jewish fugitives helped by the Mazurs, only 20 survived the war ... [Stanisław Mazur took several children out of the ghetto, among them the six-year-old daughter of a lawyer named Goldman and another girl of a similar age. Both girls were taken in by nuns.⁸⁷]

[13] From the beginning of the activities of Żegota [Żegota] in Cracow, Dr. Aleksandra Mianowska placed her services at the disposal of the organization. In this role, which she considered a human obligation and the fulfillment of her Hippocratic oath, she treated sick Jews hiding on the Aryan side of the city and its environs. In certain cases, Dr. Mianowska had ill Jews admitted into the hospital under assumed identities. Dr. Mianowska's apartment served as a mail drop to enable the transfer of information between Żegota contacts and the Jews they helped. In 1943, Dr. Mianowska hid Ella Manor in her home. Even after she found her a more permanent hiding place in a convent, Dr. Mianowska continued to take care of all of Manor's needs, maintaining contact with her until the liberation by the Red army in January 1945.

[14] Kornel Michejda, a professor in the Stefan Bathory [Batory] University in Vilna [Wilno], was known before the war for his liberal views and as a friend of the Jews. When the Germans occupied Vilna in June 1941, Professor Michejda gave asylum to his friends Professor Michal [Michał] Reicher and Professor Ignacy Abramowicz, moving them to a hiding place on his summer estate in the nearby village of Gulbiny. In order to keep the presence of the two Jewish fugitives secret, Professor Michejda handed the estate over to nuns who had nowhere to live after the Soviet authorities, which had ruled Vilna until the German occupation, drove them out of the convent that had been their home. Paid by Michejda to do so, the nuns were required to care for and safeguard the two Jewish fugitives and provide for their every need. Reicher and Abramowicz remained in their hiding place under the protection of Professor Michejda until their liberation in September 1944. After the war, they remained in Poland, earning reputations as outstanding men of science.

[15] One day in 1942, Maria Niemiec showed up in her tiny apartment in Przemyśl [Przemyśl] with six-year-old Teresa. She then told her four children that Teresa was now their sister. Teresa was the only child of Shimon and Dziunia Licht, who knew Niemiec as the daughter of a woman who had worked in their household before the war. After they gave her their daughter, the Lichts used false papers to reach Warsaw. Teresa was received warmly by the Niemiec family, who, despite their impoverished circumstances and overcrowded home, cared for her with warmth and kindness, telling neighbors that she was a relative. A friend of Niemiec, who lived nearby, was at the same time hiding a seven-year-old cousin of Teresa's. The little boy carelessly revealed he was Jewish and the Germans took him away. Following the boy's arrest, the Germans discovered his parents' hiding place in Przemyśl and murdered them all. Fearing that Teresa's identity would also be discovered, Maria Niemiec took her to Warsaw and, using connections her parents had, placed her in a convent, where she remained until the liberation. Niemiec remained in Warsaw throughout the entire period and without asking for or receiving anything in return served as a go-between for Teresa and her parents. Only after the war ended did Niemiec return home to her husband and children.

[16] Before the occupation, Michal [Michał] and Jadwiga Skalski, who lived with their little daughter in an isolated house in Białystok [Białystok], were on good terms with their Jewish neighbors. Even after the closure of the ghetto, Skalski and his wife kept up contact with their Jewish acquaintances, whom they met at their places of work outside the ghetto, and

⁸⁷ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.33.

helped them to the best of their ability. Skalski used his job as a clerk at the municipality in charge of distributing ration cards to help his Jewish friends. In early 1943, when a number of Jews turned to the Skalskis asking for shelter, the Skalskis prepared a well-hidden shelter for them under their house. Among those who hid in the shelter in the course of 1943 were Leon Grunberg and his daughter, Halina (who later moved to the nearby village), Aleksander Brenner and his daughter, Ida, Aniela Kapinska, Jakub Weisfeld, Felicja Bagon, and Jakub and Fruma Rozen. The Skalskis helped support their charges, even selling their belongings to buy them food. They also helped other Jews who were hiding in the vicinity. The Skalskis, who were fearful of discovery, insisted on complete secrecy ... When Bagon gave birth in hiding, Skalski, fearing that the baby's presence would endanger the refugees, took the baby to a nearby convent [an orphanage in Białystok run by nuns⁸⁸], claiming it was a foundling. The baby and the refugees under the Skalskis' care survived until the area was liberated. ... After the war, some of the survivors immigrated to Israel and Brazil while others stayed on in Poland.

[17] Kazimiera Szarowaro and her daughter Zofia, Kwiatkowska, lived in Warsaw during the war. Kazimiera managed an overnight guesthouse next to the Municipal Women's House. The guesthouse (as well as the Women's House) stood near the ghetto on Leszno Street. During the German occupation, Szarowaro as well as her daughter lent considerable help to people who were hiding because of persecution. Since the Municipal Women's House and the overnight guesthouse were near the ghetto Kwiatkowska and her mother often helped people who were escaping from the ghetto and gave them illegal shelter in their apartment. Many times these people stayed for a long time under their complete care.

According to Zofia Wiewiórowska, an employee at the lodging house, Halina Szarowaro was the manager. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.131–32.)

At this time the Lodging House was run by the Municipal Women's House, at 96, Leszno St., and both these institutions were managed and financed by the Department of Social Welfare at 74, Złota St.

In the summer of 1942, when the Germans started to liquidate the 'small ghetto' ... Women of Semitic type with insanity and fear of death in their eyes began to reach the porter's lodge of our House more and more frequently, asking for a place to sleep and for asylum. They had false papers, Kennkarten (identity cards) issued by the City of Warsaw authorities. We placed the women in the common ward, but usually they left this asylum. After seeing the horrible conditions among the crowd of drunkards, beggars and insane women, they went to seek refuge somewhere else. ...

The Jewish escapees were passed on to us by a nun, Bernarda, with whom we kept in touch until the end. It was she who placed the younger ones in various boarding houses, private homes or institutions. The Municipal Women's House also crowded with Jewesses—girls in the boarding house and dormitories, governesses, guardians of the girls found refuge and occupation there. We never spoke, of course, about their origin, accepted their false papers in good faith ...

We arranged for the hidden women to get in touch with their families; the underground organization supplied them with medicine, food and clothing.

[18] Waclaw [Waclaw] and Irena Szyszkowski lived in Warsaw during the war. They had three young children. Waclaw was a lawyer but hardly ever practiced law because he was active in the AK [Home Army]. In the summer of 1942, a prewar friend, Jozef [Józef] Zysman (also a lawyer, who was murdered a year later), approached Waclaw and asked for help in saving his son Piotr (born 1939). Soon afterwards, Jozef's sister-in-law fled the ghetto through the sewage system along with her daughter and Piotr. She met up with Irena in a prearranged spot and handed over Piotr. Because the Szyszkowskis had three children of their own, they were not able to keep Piotr for very long. Eventually they put him up in a monastery [an institution run by nuns near Warsaw⁸⁹] and later moved him to different hiding places. (After the war, Piotr's mother, Teodora Zysman, found him in a monastery.) ... Teodora stated in her testimony that the Szyszkowskis saved two other girls, the daughters of a Warsaw lawyer named Roman Frydman Mirski [who were placed with the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Pludy].

[19] Marta and Feliks Widy-Wirski lived with their two children in Warsaw. At the end of 1941, Marta met a friend on the street who had told her that Janina Powolska, a friend from the days of her pharmaceutical studies in Poznań [Poznań], was in the ghetto with her husband, Henryk, and their son, Andrzej. Marta subsequently bribed an officer of the Blue Police with a large amount of money and he in turn brought Janina and the child back to her home. Janina and her son settled in with Marta and Feliks, Janina pretending to be their maid. ... In 1943, Janina's son was placed under the care of

⁸⁸ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.487.

⁸⁹ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.555.

nuns outside Warsaw, since the landlady warned Marta that the other occupants of the building suspected her and her husband of hiding Jews. "For safety's sake, we all moved to Sulejówek [Sulejówek] and later, for similar reasons, to Podkowa Lesna [Leśna]," wrote Marta in her testimony. Shortly before the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, a man appeared at the Widy-Wirskis' home telling them that Henryk Poswolski was lying wounded in the cowshed. Marta and Feliks brought the wounded Henryk (who was wounded while escaping from Treblinka) to Podkowa, where they were able to get him medical attention. After the liberation, the Poswolski family emigrated to Brazil.

[20] In the summer of 1942, Mr. Seifter managed to get his 11-year-old daughter, Felicia, out of the Cracow ghetto and arranged for her to stay with Zygmunt and Elżbieta [Elżbieta] Wojnarowicz, who owned a farm in the village of Wawrzenczyce [Wawrzeńczyce] in the county of Miechów [Miechów], Cracow district. The Wojnarowiczes gave Felicia a warm welcome and looked after her devotedly without expecting anything in return. About a year later, she was transferred, as Elżbieta Smolen [Elżbieta Smoleń], to a convent for her own safety. The Wojnarowiczes also sheltered Marian Rozmaryn, an engineer, and his wife, Regina, whom they also looked after devotedly. In June 1943, members of the Gestapo burst onto the farm, shot Rozmaryn and his wife dead, and arrested Zygmunt Wojnarowicz, who was sent to Auschwitz and later to the Dora camp, from which he never returned. After the war, Felicia Seifter (later Ela Manor) immigrated to Israel.

[21] Franciszek and Tekla Zalwowski lived with their sons, Józef [Józef], Michał [Michał], Władysław [Władysław], and Stanisław [Stanisław], in the village of Krytowce, near Zbaraz [Zbaraż], in the Tarnopol district (Eastern Galicia). They were a poor family, barely earning enough money to maintain their household. In June 1943, Ester Krystal and her daughters, Maria and Zosia, escapees from the Zbaraz ghetto, hid in a potato field belonging to the Zalwowskis. When the Zalwowskis found them there, they fed them with whatever they had available and the sons built a bunker for the fugitives to hide in. The Zalwowskis brought their wards food every day and when the need arose they also brought them medicine—all without receiving any payment. At the end of June 1943, Michał [Michał] Zamojre, a prewar friend of the Zalwowskis, came to their house after escaping from a camp in Tarnopol with his friend Izio Kornberg. They were both accepted into the Zalwowskis' home and were hidden in the barn loft where Mendel Altscher, his wife, Regina, and their young daughter Halinka were already hiding. [Because Halinka was a 6-month-old child whose crying might have betrayed them, she was placed in a convent by the Zalwowskis as a foundling. She was returned to her parents after the liberation.⁹⁰] During the war, the Zalwowskis also hid two other girls in their loft—Luisa and Rosa Sonensztajn. In time, Izio Hindes, Ira Edelman, and Nachum Kornberg joined Ester and her daughters in the bunker. All in all, the Zalwowskis sheltered 13 Jews.

[22] Kazimiera Zulawska [Żulawska], a doctor of philosophy and the widow of the well-known Polish poet and author Jerzy Zulawski, lived prior to the war and during the German occupation with her son Wawrzyniec, in Warsaw. In their home on Marszałkowska [Marszałkowska] Street, they regularly hid eight to ten Jews, mainly cultural figures. Among those who found shelter in their apartment were Roza [Róża] Wittlin, Stefania Dabrowska [Dąbrowska], and Leonia Jablonkowska [Jabłonkowska]. The outbreak of the war found Roza Wittlin in Lwów [Lwów]. In 1943, she left Lwów and traveled to Warsaw, where she did not know anyone. Furthermore, she could not speak any Polish since she had been brought up in Germany. After a few weeks of hiding in basements and abandoned stores, she met Kazimiera, who invited her to her apartment. Kazimiera did not know Roza but had heard about her difficult situation through mutual friends. Roza moved to Kazimiera's apartment in November 1943 and stayed there for three months without paying for her accommodation or upkeep. ... Stefania Dabrowska also arrived in Warsaw after leaving Lwów. In Warsaw, she met a schoolmate who directed her to Kazimiera. Kazimiera and her son, Wawrzyniec, helped not only Stefania but also her parents and her sister Margaret (Rita) Mayer, [who was placed in convents⁹¹].

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth sheltered Jews in several of their convents: Warsaw, Komańcza near Sanok, Częstochowa, and Olsztyn. Four accounts attesting to their activities are found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: Poland, Part 1, at pages 213 and 248, and Part 2, at pages 639 and 837.

[1] In the summer of 1942, Zofia Landowska obtained a forged pass enabling her to enter the Warsaw ghetto and smuggle six-year-old Chana Grabina out to the Aryan side of the city. For some weeks, Zofia hid the little girl in the apartment she

⁹⁰ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.631.

⁹¹ Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.645.

shared with her husband, Jozef [Józef]. The Landowskis, who were underground activists, obtained Aryan papers for Chana and looked after her. When Chana's presence was discovered by neighbors, the Landowskis quickly transferred her to a home for abandoned children run by Nazarene nuns (Siostry Nazaretanki) in Komancza [Komańcza] in the county of Sanok (Rzeszów [Rzeszów] district. Since the home was not too safe either [because of Ukrainian partisan attacks], Landowski, at the nuns' advice, took Chana to stay with his sister, Agnieszka Gorecka [Górecka], who lived with her husband, Piotr, and their daughter, Jadwiga, in the town of Chojnice in Pomerania. The Goreckis gave Chana a warm reception and passed her off as a relative. ... Chana Grabina (alias Anna Mackowicz) stayed with the Goreckis until 1951 and went on to become a doctor of Polish philology in Poland.

[2] Alina Wolman knew Teresa Dobrska, later Prekerowa, a young woman who lived with her parents in Warsaw. The two girls became very close friends and Dobrska helped Wolman's family as best she could. After the Wolman family was imprisoned in the Warsaw ghetto, Dobrska would smuggle food into the ghetto for them. At a fairly early stage, Dobrska convinced Alina to escape to the Aryan side of the city and arranged a job and a place to live for her. At the beginning of the large-scale deportation from the ghetto, Dobrska and other friends smuggled Alina's brother and parents out of the ghetto and until the war ended kept in touch with Alina and came to her assistance when she needed help. In September 1941, Dobrska found a little abandoned Jewish child crying on her doorstep. She took the child in and cared for her in her parents' home, and after dressing her and teaching her how to act like a Polish child brought her to a convent [of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth at 137 Czerniakowska Street in Warsaw, where the girl survived the occupation⁹²]. During the war, Dobrska married Mieczysław [Mieczysław] Preker and moved to the Skolimów [Skolimów] estate near Warsaw, where she hid a Jewish man named Jan Zieliński [Zieliński] from January until August 1944. Everything Prekerowa did to save Jews was motivated purely by altruism, for which she neither asked for nor received anything in return.

[3] In 1942, Dr. Tadeusz Ferens, with his wife's consent, helped his friend Ruth (Justa) Asz and her baby daughter escape from the Czestochowa [Częstochowa] ghetto. Dr. Ferens exploited his position as a doctor in the municipal hospital to place Asz's daughter in an orphanage [run by the Sisters of the Family of Nazareth], where the baby was baptized and christened Elżbieta [Elżbieta] (later Elizabeth). In order to save the mother, Dr. Ferens admitted her to the hospital where he worked. In due course he obtained forged documents for her and found her work in Austria. Asz later moved from Austria to Switzerland and her daughter, who was adopted by a Polish couple, was returned to her after the war.

[4] In the autumn of 1942, Ruth (Justa) and Shimon Asz tried to escape from the Czestochowa [Częstochowa] ghetto with their two-year-old daughter, Elżbieta [Elżbieta] (Elizabeth). After Shimon was shot and killed, his wife and daughter made their way to Dr. Tadeusz Ferens, a Polish doctor. Ferens provided the mother with Aryan papers, which enabled her to volunteer for work in Austria, and arranged for little Elizabeth to stay in a Catholic orphanage run by nuns in Czestochowa. Shortly thereafter, Marian and Wiktoria Urbanczyk [Urbanczyk] adopted Elizabeth, without knowing she was Jewish. Her true identity came to light, however, when after being washed, her blonde hair suddenly turned black. Although shocked by the discovery, the Urbanczyks, overcome by compassion, decided to keep Elizabeth and passed her off as a Polish orphan who had been driven out of the Zamosc [Zamość] area in the Lublin district. Even after they had to pay hush money to suspicious neighbors who threatened to report them to the Gestapo, the Urbanczyks did not change their minds. Elizabeth stayed on with the Urbanczyks after the war, since Elizabeth's mother, who survived, was unable to trace her daughter. In 1947, Dr. Ferens succeeded in tracing her and, with a heavy heart, Marian and Wiktoria handed Elizabeth over to her mother, who emigrated with her to Venezuela.

The aforementioned Elżbieta Asz (Aliza Asch) was the granddaughter of Nachum Asch, the chief rabbi of Częstochowa. Her story—Elizabeth Zielinski de Mundlak, “Black Roots in the Hair of a Blond Cherub”—is recorded in Tarjan, *Children Who Survived the Final Solution*, at pages 205–6.

My maiden name that I have used for as long as I can remember is Elżbieta Zielinska [Elżbieta Zielińska]. But when I was born my name was Aliza Ash [Asch]. All my life I thought that my mother's was Justa, but at the time of her birth she was named Ruth. What has not changed since the day I was born? Only the date and place of my birth: Czestochowa [Częstochowa], the town where my ancestors had lived. But this is a lot to start with! Recently, it allowed me to find documents about my true identity. The procedure was long.—How can you prove that a certain can you prove that a certain sixty-year old woman exists, if there is no birth certificate in her name, Elżbieta Zielinska? The nuns, who sheltered

⁹² Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, p.431.

me after I was taken in a garbage sack from the Ghetto in Czestochowa, gave me my first name. That was before almost the entire Jewish population of that ghetto was taken to Treblinka, the infamous death camp.

Tadeusz Ferens was a gentile doctor who arranged my escape from certain death. My mother was also able [to] escape. With her newly acquired identity as Jozefa Zielinska [Józefa Zielińska], she was able to reach Austria, where she was a slave labourer, a cleaning woman at the Hotel Post in Bludenz, in Vorarlberg province. All the rest of my immediate family, including my father, Shimon Asz, perished in the Holocaust.

The doctor brought me to the orphanage of the Sisters of Nazareth in Czestochowa, as a child whom he found at the train station. There were many, many displaced and orphaned gentile children as a result of the steady bombing of certain parts of Poland. It was easy for the good doctor to convince the nuns that I was one of those children. No one wanted to hear the truth! Poland was the only country during the war, where the penalty for helping Jews was nothing less than death.

It was my good fortune that a Polish family came to the orphanage to adopt a little girl. They already had a 10-year old son, but his mother, Victoria [Wiktoria], could not have any more children. She had lost her first child as an infant, but her heart was full of love that she wanted to give to a little orphan girl. I was lucky: my new parents were very loving. My big brother used to carry me up the stairs on his shoulders after I had been running around the yard with my little friends. We were a weird couple. He was tall, strong and blond, and I was a tiny little girl with dark curls ...

Dark hair...I had curly blond hair when my adopted parents took me from the orphanage. With my blue eyes I must have looked like a cherub. They fell in love with that little beauty. However, a big surprise was awaiting them after a few days.

One day, my new mother was washing my hair when she discovered some "dirt" on my skull that would not go away. She was surprised, but ignored it for the moment. A couple of days later the answer became obvious. Black hair began to grow fast on my little head. It was a big shock when my parents understood that they were sheltering a Jewish child. They became terribly scared. Their only child, their precious son was as much in danger as themselves in case the Germans would find out about me.

Victoria and Marian [Urbańczyk] summoned their son, Andrew [Andrzej], for a family meeting. Jointly they decided that no matter what, they would not return me to the orphanage. The years ahead were not easy for the family. ...

We lived through many instances of high drama during those long years of German occupation in Czestochowa.

The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary sheltered a number of Jewish children in their convents in Zamość and in nearby Łabunie, which was later evacuated to Radecznica, as well as some adults.⁹³ Two of the children taken in were Judith Kachel and Tamara Lawame (then going by the name of Wanda Czarniecka). The following account is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 480.

Blas, a Jewish woman, managed to escape from the Zamosc [Zamość] ghetto in the Lublin district, carrying her two-year-old daughter in her arms. She came to the home of a Polish acquaintance, Maria Pawelec, who agreed to take the Jewish child. After someone informed the authorities, German policemen visited Pawelec's home and, fearing the child's identity might be discovered, she placed her in a basket, tied a small bag with a cross on it around her neck, and added a note bearing the name Wanda and stating that she had been baptized. Pawelec left the basket at the gate of the local convent, where there was also a home for orphans and foundlings. The nuns took in the baby. The nun, Zofia-Bogumila [Bogumila] Makowska, who knew the child was Jewish, never revealed her true identity to anyone, and looked after her until the end of the war. When the staff of the Coordination Committee learned the whereabouts of the child, they moved her to a Jewish institution and she later immigrated to Israel.

Sister Zofia (Bogumiła Makowska), who was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile in 1993, provided the following testimony. (Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, p.161.)

During the war there was a swarm of children at our home. Anyone—policemen, neighbors—who met a child on the street or on the road brought the child to us. We had a house on Zdanowski [Zdanowska] St. in Zamosc [Zamość]. There came a time when even our hallways were overflowing with children. We had a rather large chapel in the old building we used, so finally we converted it to sleeping quarters for the children. We made the chapel so small that we had to hear Mass in the hallway. All this was not enough, and finally we occupied a school on Lukasinski [Łukasińskiego] St. Not being enough to house all the children even there, we began to give them, if possible, to Polish families.

⁹³ These rescue activities are described in Adam Kopciowski, *Zagłada Żydów w Zamościu* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005), pp.193–94.

I worked at this school on Lukasinski St. Those were very hard times. I was in charge of the infants and the infirmary. There were three groups of children. I worked day and night. No one was paid. The women who peeled the potatoes got a bowl of soup. We did not get any subsidies for the children.

We collected contributions. Our entire treasure was the children.

Our mother superior was an Irish woman, Katherine Crowley. She trembled in fear for the children. We accepted everyone. We never thought about whether a child was German or Jewish or anything else. Our only consideration was that it was a child and we took in children.

The Felician Sisters sheltered around 40 Jewish children in their convent and orphanage in Lwów. Among them were Rebecca Litowicz from Sandomierz and Felka Meisel from Lwów, who were placed there through the Lwów branch of the Council of Aid for Jews (Żegota). The dramatic story of their rescue, in the words of their benefactors, is related in Ellen Land-Weber, *To Save a Life: Stories of Holocaust Rescue* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), at pages 197–52.

[Barbara Szymańska Makuch:] Our apartment in Tarnobrzeg was very small—only one room and a kitchen. Since this was my first teaching job, the pay was quite low, and from that my mother [Janina Szymańska] and I had to squeeze the rent money. But we managed. It was enough.

It was late in the afternoon, one day in 1942, when a woman named Rachel Litowicz and her child [Rebecca] came to our door, saying she came because somebody had told her I was a good person. I had never seen her before. She had nowhere else to go—she was desperate. She wanted me to take her child. I knew that in Sandomierz that day the Germans were “cleaning” the town. A very bad raid had been going on all day. I had seen them shoot Jews right in the streets.

We all felt very scared. By law, the penalty was death if you offered so much as one glass of water to a Jewish person. The Germans killed us exactly the same as they killed the Jews. My mother and I knew that, but how could we refuse this woman’s plea? We didn’t even talk it over, we just invited her inside.

We talked with her for a few hours, and then she left the child with us and returned to her husband in Sandomierz, where he was working in a camp the Germans had set up for people who could still do useful work. I didn’t set eyes on Rachel again until after the war. I learned that she went to Auschwitz, but I knew she was very strong. Twice she escaped from the gas chambers.

So seven-year-old Rebecca stayed with us: we called her Marysia. I slept in the kitchen, and my mother slept with her in the other room. In the beginning everything was okay because she was blond, with a pale complexion and freckles, and slightly curly hair, which I would straighten by making her little braids. We told people she was my niece. At home her family spoke Yiddish, although fortunately Marysia had linguistic talent and could speak Polish quite well. But like all children in this situation, she was shy and frightened. Her mother had said to her, “I’m leaving you now. After today, Basha [Basia, a diminutive for Barbara] will be your mother.” How can a little child understand this? She grew close to my mother because my mother was staying at home while I was away every day at work. Right from the beginning my mother became her “aunt.” ...

The news that we were helping a Jew traveled fast among the many people needing help. ... It wasn’t long before the neighbors started to talk. Marysia came to us at the end of July 1942, and Olga [Dr. Olga Lilien from Lwów] and Stefan [a Jewish boy] soon after. At first everything was okay. But when Stefan or Olga needed something, they would come to our house, and people began to notice.

Marysia was my “niece,” but I thought to myself, how will I explain what kind of a niece she is when the Germans start searching for Jews in hiding? What would I do? They would ask, who is she? Why is she staying with you? Where are her other relatives? Where is she from? In fact, after she had been with us for a few months the neighbors were already asking each other these questions. I became frightened about what might happen to us if we remained in Tarnobrzeg.

My mother and I decided it would be best for me to take Marysia to a bigger city where nobody would know us. I would give up my job and we would go to Lvov [Lwów] to live with my sister Halina. My mother, who was not so adventurous, would go back to Sandomierz to live with my youngest sister and my aunt. So, late in September Marysia and I left. ...

Our journey was extremely dangerous. The train was in poor condition, short of coal, and it was always stopping, making long delays for supplies or because of damaged bridges. Lvov is not so far from Tarnobrzeg; normally the train took only eight hours, but this time it was two days. All through the trip I was very, very frightened, even though I thought I was probably not the only one with a Jewish child. I prayed. What else could I do? In the night Germans marched through the train with their dogs, looking at the children and the other people. Once, while we waited for another train to pass, I saw them take people—families with children—off the train, taking them behind a building, and then I heard shots. It was very frightening. At any moment it could happen to me, or Marysia—at any moment. ...

We arrived in Lvov and made our way to my sister’s apartment only to discover that this too was a dangerous place.

Unknown to me, Halina [Szymańska] and my future brother-in-law, Slawek [Slawek, i.e., Slawomir Ogrodziński], belonged to an underground resistance group. It was a committee that organized the Lvov branch of Zegota, a Warsaw group that was bringing money to Polish Jews in hiding. I soon joined them, so from that point on I was helping not just one or two, but a great many others.

This was not a good place for Marysia, so a few days later we found a safer place for her nearby in the Felician convent, where there were already thirty-five Jewish children in hiding. The Germans allowed convents to look after orphans—not Jews, but orphans. The nuns took in every orphan that needed help, which happened, of course, to be mostly Jewish children, and so Marysia survived the war in their care. When the war ended she found her mother, who survived Auschwitz. Her father died in Bergen-Belsen.

I became a Zegota courier, traveling often to Warsaw to bring back money from the Polish government-in-exile in London. The Warsaw group had an underground press for printing counterfeit documents and false identity papers for Jews, and I brought these back to Lvov, too. Another job we had was contact with Janowicka [Janowska], the big work camp for Jews in Lvov. On one visit we would deliver false papers to certain people, and then on the next, help them prepare to escape from the camp. If we learned that someone needed special medicine, we delivered it right to that person, not to the Germans. Sometimes we delivered money either to someone in the camp or perhaps to someone in hiding. Many people were hiding and they had to have money to give the person buying food for them. I did all these things. ...

Every few days I went to visit Marysia, but one day I did not arrive. I had been making frequent trips to Warsaw for Zegota, because I knew the city so well. This time on the return trip, approximately half way back to Lvov, Germans came into the compartment and made a search, looking at baggage, papers, everything. They found all the Zegota papers in my bag on the overhead rack. There was no way to hide them. Not knowing whose bag it was, they arrested all twelve people in the compartment, and took us to the Lublin jail. [Barbara Szymańska was eventually sent to the concentration camp in Ravensbrück. She survived two years of imprisonment and torture without betraying anyone.]

(See also the account of the rescue of Malka, the ten-year-old daughter of Sara Glass (later Pasht), a fugitive from the Sandomierz ghetto in October 1942, who was also taken by Barbara Szymańska Makuch to the Felician Sisters' convent in Lwów. Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: Poland, Part 2, at pages 802–803.)

[Halina Szymańska Ogrodzińska:] During the months I was working [as a technician] in Dr. [Henryk] Meisel's laboratory I was going very often to their home to give Polish literature lessons to their daughter, Felka. Each time, Dr. Meisel's mother, the old lady, would make scrambled eggs or an omelet, always urging me to "eat, eat, eat," which I did because I was still a teenager and always hungry. At this time Dr. Meisel was beginning to realize that the situation for the Jews had become quite intolerable, and he had to do something about his large family. He saw it would be impossible to save everyone. With the help of some friends he arranged to send Mrs. Meisel's sister, Nina, to Warsaw, and she survived. Felka went to the orphanage run by the nuns of the Felician convent. Then Dr. Meisel had a long discussion with the old lady. They decided that because she was so old, the best solution would be for her to take poison. Being a doctor he could give her something good that would cause no pain. They never spoke about this with the rest of the family, and one day she was dead—like that. I was still very young, but Dr. Meisel liked to talk to me, and he badly needed to speak with someone. He told me he had a very heavy heart, but I already knew that.

One day the authorities asked Dr. Ayre to eliminate all the Jews working for him, no exceptions. Ayre explained to them that the work of these people was important for the German army, but it was of no use; Dr. Meisel and his wife had to go to Auschwitz. The Germans had some sort of laboratory arrangement in the concentration camp, a little bit similar to the Weigl Institute, with worse eating and living conditions certainly, but the Meisels could still work on their research there. In general, I think that family came through the war rather well. Today Felka is a doctor and her Polish husband is a doctor too. ...

Basha was in Tarnobrzeg with Mama where she didn't have the opportunity to work for the underground. She was very happy there. In Lvov, in this Poland of terrorists, it was an altogether different world; the atmosphere was very unpleasant. When the situation in Lvov became very difficult we told Olga [Dr. Olga Lilien] to go to Basha and Mama in Tarnobrzeg. Not long after, Basha came to Lvov with the little girl, Marysia.

When she arrived, Basha had never heard of Zegota, but we needed people, and Slawek immediately took her in. She wasn't especially political; she joined us for private reasons, for family reasons. Certainly I was more political than she was.

Slawek arranged for Marysia to go to the orphanage run by the Felician convent, where she would be safer, the same place where Dr. Meisel's daughter Felka was staying.

I visited Marysia in the convent several times. I couldn't tell her anything about her mother or father. She would ask me

for news of Basha. She was a sad girl, never smiling, but she liked it very much when I came to visit. I don't have an especially clear memory of her now because I visited so many friends in the same situation at that time. There were a great many small things that needed to be done for these people and sometimes it was very difficult. Those in the convent were in a good situation and didn't need our help, so we only saw her occasionally, but we knew her life was safe.

[Rachel Litowicz:] When I returned [after the liberation], the Szymanskas told me that [my daughter] Rebecca [now Marysia] was in a convent in Lvov. This was not so easy because Lvov was now part of Russia, but fortunately I found out that they had moved the convent back to Poland. When I went to get her she was wearing a cross, but she understood, poor girl. Rebecca said she used to get down from her bed to pray she would be with mama and father, that we would be alive. The priests and nuns were not so bad since they knowingly took in Jewish children. They were kind to me—well, most of them—and they treated my daughter very well. She studied, and was very good in school, very intelligent. They loved her.

The Szymański family's fear of being found out or betrayed in Tarnobrzeg fortunately proved to be groundless. The case of Doctor Olga Lilien, a Holocaust survivor from Lwów with a very marked Jewish appearance who lived with a Polish family in Tarnobrzeg, tested the solidarity of the Polish villagers. A German came looking for a fugitive and summoned the villagers to a meeting to question them about his whereabouts. Dr. Lilien recalled the incident:

Everyone was telling the German they didn't know where the man was, when suddenly he looked at me and said, "Oh, but this is a Jewess." The head of the village said, "Oh, no, she cooks at the school. She is a very good cook." Nobody said, "Oh, well, she is Jewish. Take her." He let me go.

The population of the village was about two thousand. They all knew there was something "wrong" with me. Any one of them could have sold me to the Germans for two hundred deutsche marks, but out of two thousand people nobody did it. Everybody in the village protected me. I had very good relations with them.

Indeed, Dr. Lilien remained in Tarnobrzeg after the war where she continued to work as a pediatrician caring for the children of the villagers who had sheltered her. She died there in August 1996, at the age of 92.

The Felician Sisters sheltered Jews in other localities too. The following testimonials concern Wawer, a suburb of Warsaw, the nearby settlement of Glinki, and Kraków. Sister Zygmunt (Johanna Reiter), the mother superior of the convent in Wawer, was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. (Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, pp.174, 350; Part 2, pp.666, 784.)

[1] When their Warsaw apartment was confiscated during the occupation, Stefania Dlutowska [Dłutowska] and her daughter, Maria-Krystyna, were forced to move to the nearby village of Radosc [Radość]. From early 1943, six Jews—Jerzy Leinkram and his young daughter, Ruth; his grandmother, Blums Goldman; his nephew, Michal [Michał] Flohr; his uncle, Julian Leinkram; and his cousin, Marta Lencka—all found shelter in the cellar of the Dlutowskis' new home, where Stefania and her daughter took good care of them. When the Dlutowskis were no longer able to support such a large number of people, Dlutowska transferred Ruth under an assumed name to a children's institution run by the Felicjanki [Felician] nuns in the village of Glinki, near Warsaw, and Flohr to a relative of Dlutowska's who agreed to take him in. ... Dlutowska and her daughter received no payment for their acts of courage ...

[2] During the occupation, Lidka Taubenfeld (born 1932) moved with her family from the town of Radom to Przemyśl [Przemyśl], where her father passed away. Although Taubenfeld and her cousin, Lena Gross, had been provided with Aryan papers by their parents after Lena's parents perished, Lidka's mother realized the importance of finding them a safe shelter. In a chance encounter with Maria Klepacka, the latter agreed to hide the two girls in her apartment and teach them the basic tenets of Catholicism to prepare them for admission to a convent orphanage, where they would be safe. Klepacka took the two girls into her one-room apartment in Cracow, where they were soon joined by other refugees. Klepacka often put up Jews on a temporary basis until they found more permanent accommodation on the Aryan side of the city. Half a year later, Taubenfeld and Gross were transferred to a convent belonging to the Felicjanki [Felician] Sisters under assumed identities. In late 1942, after Taubenfeld's mother perished, a relative undertook to pay the convent fees. After he too perished, the children were returned by the nuns to Klepacka, who continued to look after them like her own daughters. In due course, after Zegota [Żegota], at Klepacka's request, agreed to pay the convent fees, Taubenfeld and Gross were sent back to the convent, where they stayed until January 1945, when the area was liberated.

[3] In 1943, Mirla Kajler managed to escape from the Warsaw ghetto with her four-year-old daughter, Felicia. When Kajler realized that she had no chance of surviving with her daughter, she went to a Catholic convent in Wawer, an eastern suburb of Warsaw, and approached the mother superior, Sister Zygmunta, the former Johanna Reiter, begging her to admit her daughter to the home for abandoned children run by the sisters of the convent. When Sister Zygmunta found out that the girl was Jewish, she looked after her devotedly, protected her, and watched out for her safety during the periodic interrogations conducted by the Germans in an attempt to discover Jewish children hiding there. ... After the war, Felicia was returned to her mother and the two moved to France ...

[4] Before the war, Fraidla Skladkowska owned a leather-processing factory in Warsaw. After the occupation of Warsaw, Zenon Szenfeld helped the Skladkowskis by offering to hide their assets and valuables for them. When the Skladkowskis were interned in the ghetto, Zenon and his wife, Marianna, smuggled in food parcels to them. In July 1942, they helped the Skladkowskis and their daughter, Aliza, as well as Skladkowska's brother, Jakub Pinczewski, escape to the Aryan side of the city, where they provided them with forged papers and financial aid. After putting them up for a short while, the Szenfelds arranged for the refugees to stay with Maria Szmidi, Marianna's mother. After the authorities were alerted by an informer, however, the Skladkowskis moved in with Czeslaw [Czeslaw] and Maria Car, where they hid until May 1943, while the Szenfelds continued to look out for their safety. Again the danger of discovery forced them to move, this time to the home of Janina Szymanska [Szymańska]. Thanks to the Aryan papers in her possession, Fraidla found work in a factory, while her daughter, who fell ill, was transferred to the nearby Wawer convent. In due course, her husband and brother moved in with Anna Szwarkowska and Irena Rudkowska, her sister, in Anin, near Warsaw, where they remained until September 1944, when the area was liberated. After the war, the survivors emigrated to the United States.

Halina Robinson was born in 1928 as Lina Zandberg. At the beginning of the war her family was deported from Kalisz to Warsaw. She escaped from the Warsaw ghetto in September 1942, by jumping over the ghetto wall. With the help of Leokadia Komarnicka, a Polish Christian, she was able to smuggle her aunt and grandmother out of the ghetto through the sewers. (Leokadia Komarnicka was later executed by the Germans when she was caught helping another Jew.) For the next two years, young Halina was in hiding, in thirteen different locations and with four sets of false documents. She believes that more than 100 courageous non-Jews were involved in arranging her transport, accommodation, and false documents. Among them were Józefa and Zygmunt Truchanowicz and Maria Jiruska, who had worked as a headmistress before the war. Then going as Halina Górska, she was among eleven Jewish children sheltered by the Felician Sisters in their convent in the Warsaw suburb of Wawer. The Jewish children were placed under the care of Sister Kalasanta. She describes this episode in her memoir *A Cork on the Waves: Reflections of a Turbulent Life* (Sydney: Sydney Jewish Museum, 2005; Sydney: Park Street Press, 2006). A summary account regarding Wanda Jiruska and her daughters, Stefania Weronika and Maria Antonina, in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 4: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 325, suggests that the children's homes run by the Catholic Church to which Wanda Jiruska referred Jewish children as orphans were not aware of their charges' Jewish origin. That was certainly not the case with regard to the Felician Sisters in Wawer.

Baruch Milch, who escaped from ghetto in the town Tluste, in the southeastern province of Tarnopol, along with his brother-in-law, found shelter among Poles in the village of Czerwonogród, and encountered helpful nuns and priests along the way. (Gilbert, *The Righteous*, pp.51–52.)

A second family, by the name of Zielinski [Zieliński], who had not known Milch or his brother-in-law before the war, took them in, and kept them in hiding for nine months. In spite of the danger to their own lives, the Zielinskis gave the two grieving men both 'moral support and love', in addition to taking care of all their daily needs. Later, they found a hiding place for the two men in a convent near Tluste, run by three Sisters of Mercy [Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul] and their Mother Superior. Baruch Milch later recalled: 'These heroic women ran the religious services of the parish, conducted the choir, played the organ and managed the kindergarten. Later in the summer they opened a secret shelter for foundlings. Among these tiny outcasts were about six or eight Jewish children left by desperate parents roaming the fields and forests, or just found abandoned at the monastery's threshold.' On one occasion the three nuns found in their backyard a four-year-old boy, speaking only Yiddish. 'They gathered him into their midst. As long as the murderers were unaware of what was going on behind the walls the self-sacrificing women shared their scanty provisions, fed their charges, cared for them and took them to the church.'

After escaping from the ghetto in Drohobycz, Karolina Heuman and her younger brother Henryk (born in 1936) were placed by their father in the convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Nyrków near Czerwonogród. She recalled those turbulent years in her account published in Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, at pages 187–89:

I remember how we were driven by night in a horse-drawn wagon to the cloister and how Father bade us farewell. Pointing to the sky, he said, "We shall meet there." He then paid for our stay⁹⁴ with money he kept hidden in a bottle, and he left. From that moment I never saw him again.

In the cloister, I used the name Marta Regusz. I worked in the fields. Whenever Germans showed up in the cloister, I would die of fright (after all, my brother was circumcised!). After placing us in the cloister, Father went into hiding in Horodenka, where he was shot at the beginning of 1943. ... I don't know where Mother perished. ... My brother perished during a raid on the cloister by the followers of Bandera [Ukrainian nationalist partisans who attacked Poles]. He was then nine years old. Here is how, at the time, I described the events of this horrible day:

"It was the second of February 1945, at eleven o'clock. ... There were three of us young girls and my beloved brother ... I woke up with a start during the night and heard terrible shooting around the cloister. ... I got up and walked up to the window. ... All of us girls were already dressed when Sister Władysława walked in and said we were surrounded by Bandera's followers. We were terrified.

"Right away, we went over to the bedrooms of the Sisters, and there, by the window, we stood for three hours, watching the terrible tortures of people who were fleeing in panic from the flames. The inhuman barbarians ran around furiously with flares in their hands and set fires to one hut after another, and whenever they saw someone, if they could, they grabbed him alive, and if not, then they would shoot him on the spot. They captured one family in our village and all that was later found of the children were fragments of burned-up bones, and the father's skin had been ripped off from his stomach all the way to his head. We, the girls, stood all the time by the window, waiting for what would happen next. We felt that our own lives, too, were hanging by a thread. ...

"Soon, our suppositions came to pass. At three o'clock in the morning, we heard terrible knocking on the front gate, which seemed to foretell our approaching end. Sister Władysława called us into the chapel and began to pray and prepare us for death. We knelt in front of the altar for perhaps ten minutes. ...

"I had no regrets about dying, because until then I had not experienced contentment on earth. ... In the last moment, when the glass of the windows in the lower corridor started falling onto the floor with a loud crash, Sister Superior hid us under the altar."

During the Ukrainian attack on Czerwonogród some 60 Poles lost their lives, including the pastor Rev. Szczepan Jurasz and two nuns. The Jewish girls hidden by the nuns survived. Baruch Milch details the assistance he received from the Catholic clergy in that same area in his memoir *Can Heaven Be Void?* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), at pages 164, 227, 254–56.

Slowly, we started to sneak our way into the village we had been seeking, Czerwonograd [Czerwonogród], a village that was inhabited largely by Poles. Former patients of mine from the old days lived in every other house. The Polish village priest [Rev. Szczepan Jurasz] had been very helpful to Jews in the past, and there was a convent where the nuns were hiding some Jewish children. ...

Alone, Lusia [Geller], escaping a Ukrainian gang of murderers] went on to the local priest, who lived on the other side of the town [of Thuste]. At midnight, she knocked on the window. The priest's sister, a good-natured spinster, overcame her fear, opened the window and called the priest, who allowed Lusia to climb in.

After Lusia told them what had happened, the priest and his sister fed her and tucked her in a warm bed, where she fell deeply asleep. The next morning, she asked the priest's sister to visit the labor camp and speak with the German commandant, Patti. She met with Mr. Konigsberg, the camp foreman, and pleaded with him to save Manya [Nirnberg, Lusia's adopted sister]. Konigsberg's assistant was roped in, and the assistant, being on good terms with the Ukrainian police, managed to extricate the girl from the police and transfer her to the camp. Manya, barefoot, chalk-white, dressed in nothing but a nightgown and a thin blouse, related how the Ukrainian police had laughed at her when she said she wanted to die. They stood her up against a wall in the courtyard and several policemen lined up opposite her with pistols

⁹⁴ It was not unusual for people who could afford to do so to make payments or gifts to religious institutions to offset the cost of caring for their children. During the war convents and orphanages were overcrowded with charges and in dire financial straits. It is unlikely that in this case the amount paid over by the father was sufficient to maintain his children for the entire period of their stay at the convent.

and fired, deliberately missing. A German came over and told them to leave her alone. "One doesn't shoot at those who want to die but only at those who want to live," he explained.

The priest's sister informed Lusia that Manya was alive and well. Lusia burst into tears and begged to be sent, along with Manya, to the Lisowce camp, where she would find her mother and sisters. There was typhus in the camp at the time, and Mrs. Geller, fearing that the two girls would succumb to the disease, bribed the camp manager, a Pole named Korczak, to quarter Lusia and Manya with a Polish family. She treated Manya like her fourth daughter. He complied willingly ... The Polish family was honest, devoutly Catholic, and hoped that the girls would convert after the war. Korczak watched over the girls and met their needs. ...

[On March 26, 1944:] To be on the safe side, we [Baruch Milch and other Jews hidden by the Zieliński family] stopped on the way to Thuste for a few days with the Polish priest who knew where we had been hiding. While there, we visited the convent and found a few Jewish children whom the nuns had concealed. ...

Surreptitiously, I [Baruch Milch] began planning to leave Zaleszczyki in the company of some Polish families. With help from the local Polish priest, I obtained papers in the name of Dr. Jan Zielinski, the real name of the Zielinskis' son who disappeared in the Soviet Union during the war. My "adopted son," Zalman Sperber, got papers in the name of Jozio Zielinski. ...

Even though the Soviets and the new Polish government had agreed in writing that Jews and Poles with Polish citizenship could return to Poland, I could not get permission to leave the USSR because of my profession and rank. Therefore, I scheduled the exodus of the expanded Zielinski family for a week in which I was to attend a symposium in Czortków, whence the transports to Poland set out. Some Poles in the transport knew what I had in mind, because I had done much for them and we got along very well. Even the Polish railwaymen knew.

It was a widely known fact among the Polish population that thousands of Jews were passing as Poles. In Warsaw alone there were more than 20,000 Jews living on the Aryn side. Discretion was the order of the day, especially in Catholic institutions. Probing questions were not asked; the less one knew the better. The following account attests to the quiet assistance extended to the family of Adam Starkopf by a number of Poles, including nuns and priests. (Adam Starkopf, *There Is Always Time To Die* [New York: Holocaust Library, 1981], pp.201–211.)

In January 1944, however, I was forced to part from both my wife [Pela] and child [Jasia] because Pela had to go to the hospital. Her abdominal pains had returned and it was clear to me that she needed more competent care than she could receive at the clinic in Lochow [Łochów]. One of the men in the lumberyard told me about Professor Czyzewicz [Czyzewicz], who was chief of surgery at the Szpital Dzieciatka [Dzieciątka] Jezus—the Hospital of the Holy Infant Jesus—in Warsaw. I had heard of this doctor even before the war, and I knew that he was an outstanding surgeon. I did not know his human qualities, but I feared that if Pela continued to go without proper treatment, we might one day find ourselves faced with a life and death emergency. And so I decided to take the chance and have Pela examined by Prof. Czyzewicz in Warsaw.

After examining Pela, the professor said that she should be operated on without further delay. ...

From the professor's words I realized that we could no longer put off the operation. But I also knew that the Hospital of the Holy Infant Jesus was not a charity clinic. Patients at this hospital were expected to pay for their beds and for their treatment. How was I to raise the money? I threw myself at Prof. Czyzewicz's mercy. I explained to him that I was at present without funds worth mentioning because I was a former officer of the Polish army in hiding from the Germans. The professor looked at me, and then at Pela. He seemed to understand. "Don't worry," he said. "I'll operate on your wife myself, and I'll collect the money from you whenever you'll have it." I think he suspected immediately that we were Jewish. Later, I learned that he had given a room in his apartment to Professor Beck, a well-known Jewish specialist who had been the hospital's chief of surgery before the Germans came. Thanks to Professor Czyzewicz, Professor Beck survived the war.

A date was set for Pela's operation. Meanwhile, I was told to take her home. She was going to be admitted to the hospital only two days before the operation.

I took Pela back with me to Sadowne. Our security problem had been solved. Pela and I now had a legitimate reason for leaving Sadowne and staying away for some time. But what were we to do about Jasia?

We decided to do now what we had so firmly refused to consider doing after Jasia's discharge from the children's hospital: We were going to put Jasia into the convalescent home in Swider [Świder, a Warsaw suburb] which Dr. Stankiewicz, the pediatrician, had recommended to us at the time. I told the nuns who managed the sanatorium that I was a former officer of the Polish army, that I was a devout Catholic working for the Polish underground and that I had no money to pay for Jasia's care. But now my wife would have to go to the hospital for a serious operation and I was desperately in need of a place where our little girl, who was not quite three years old, could be cared for until her mother

was well again. If I could not find such a place for Jasia, I would not be able to continue my resistance activities, I said.

The nuns were wonderful. I do not know whether they suspected that Pela and I were Jewish, but they immediately agreed to accept Jasia free of charge. Once again Pela and I had to go through the ordeal of putting our little girl into the care of strangers. We left her in the ward crying bitterly but we knew there was nothing we could have done and we tried to persuade ourselves that Jasia would be in good hands. ...

Pela entered the hospital in the middle of January 1944. She was placed into a women's ward with five or six other patients. In order to bolster Pela's credibility as a good Catholic, our friend Edward Galewski gave her a little breviary to keep with her in the hospital, along with a religious tract entitled *The Life of Saint Theresa*. Pela placed both books on full view atop her little bedside table. Before the operation a priest came to her bedside to hear her confession. This was something for which Pela had not been prepared. She did not know the responses used in this sacrament of the Church and she was afraid that her ignorance would betray that she was not the devout Catholic she had made herself out to be. So, when the priest asked her whether she was ready to confess her sins she told him that she was in too much pain to be able to perform the act with the full concentration it required. The priest gave her a sad but understanding smile, made the sign of the cross over her and left. I only hoped that when Pela came out of her anaesthesia after the operation she would not say anything that would betray her as a Jewess.

The operation took almost four hours. ...

Almost as soon as Pela was awake again the priest made a return appearance. He inquired whether she was now ready to make her confession. Once again Pela protested; she said she was still too weak and tried to concentrate on repentance. Very well, the priest said, he would take her deadly sins upon his conscience, but he would suggest that she at least attempt to confess her lesser sins. When Pela still refused, he shook his head, smiled and walked away. Pela thought he suspected that she was Jewish, because he stopped pressing her about making her confession but gave her a friendly smile whenever he passed through her ward on his daily rounds. ...

Because her operation had been a difficult one, Pela had to remain in the hospital for seven weeks. ... Every Sunday I visited Jasia at the sanatorium in Swider. I was happy to see that she, at least, was getting good food, that she had good color and had not only grown but also gained some weight. ...

Pela and I worried whether we had been right to leave Jasia in the sanatorium. The Soviets had begun to bomb Warsaw and its railroad communications. What if we could no longer go to Warsaw to visit our daughter? What if the sanatorium itself got hit? Perhaps Jasia was now in no less danger at the sanatorium than she would be in Sadowne? So, just before Easter, we went to Warsaw to pick her up and bring her home again.

After the liberation, Jasia continued to suffer poor health and needed to regain her strength. The Starkopfs again turned to nuns for assistance. (Ibid., p.229.)

But what were we to do? The payment I was receiving for my work with the "Jewish Committee" consisted of nothing more than room and board at the shelter. But the doctor had an idea. She suggested that we place Jasia into a children's convalescent home which was housed in a convent near Lublin. She explained to us that, unlike the sanatorium in Swider, this institution accepted every child free of charge. "Of course, the generosity of the sisters creates a problem," the doctor added with a sigh. "Usually, every bed is taken. But I'll try and see whether they can make room for one more little girl."

We were lucky; Jasia was accepted by the sisters and remained there for the next four months.

Sandra (Roma) Brand, originally from Niemirów near Lwów, passed as a Polish Catholic in Warsaw. Under the assumed identity of Cecylia Szarek, she had a love affair with Rolf Peschel, a German officer at the Criminal Police Headquarters in Warsaw who helped Jews and the Polish underground. Shortly before the August 1944 uprising, the Germans discovered Rolf's double life and murdered him and made it look like a crime committed by the Polish underground. During the uprising, Brand befriended Rev. Teodor Bensch, a Polish priest who taught canon law at an underground university in Warsaw. Her conversations with Rev. Bensch, who suspected her of being Jewish, proved to be a great comfort to her. (That relationship is described in Sandra Brand's memoir *I Dared To Live* [New York: Shengold, 1978], pp.144–55.) Unknown to her at the time, Rev. Bensch was hiding several Jews, among them a woman and her teenage niece, in a chapel of an old-age home run by the Franciscans in suburban Konstancin. His kindness towards her continued after the liberation, and she has spoken of him many times as a volunteer speaker about the Holocaust in American high schools and colleges. After the war Rev. Bensch returned to his teaching position at the Catholic University of Lublin, but was soon elevated to the rank of bishop of Warmia. (Sandra Brand, *Good People, Bad People* [Rockville, Maryland: Schreiber, 2003], pp.69–73, 78.)

Father Teodor Bensch who became my friend while I was attending the prayer sessions for the Polish Freedom Fighters during the uprising in Warsaw, passed everyday at the same time by the gardener's house, which now was my so-called home. Although sick, I waited eagerly near the fence of the garden to hear some news.

He came to my rescue. He heard me coughing and said, "You are sick my child and you seem hungry too. You need help. Why don't you move into the Home for Retired Actors in Skolimov [Skolimów]. The home receives food coupons. It isn't much, but enough to feed the inmates, and enough to feed one more person. I will speak to the Reverend Mother. I think the best place for you will be right here. ...

I moved into the old age home. ...

There was, in contrast to all other inmates, a young woman occupying the room next to mine. She shared it with a twelve-year-old girl. They also, like myself, preferred to take their meals in their room.

She had access to underground news sheets and she knew that all of those deported died in gas chambers. She spoke authoritatively, leaving no room for arguments. But I did not want to believe her because I wanted to find my child alive.

In my room I pressed my forehead against the cool glass of the window. I did not hear the knock at the door. Father Bensch came in.

I senses at once that he had something important to say. I pulled another chair to the window and motioned my guest to sit down.

"I have been recalled to Lublin Catholic University to resume teaching Canon Law." ...

"What are your plans?" Father Bensch asked. "You can stay here as long as you like but you're too young a woman to remain in an old age home indefinitely." ...

"What do you think of resuming your education?" Father Bensch asked.

"Am I not too old for that?"

"No one is ever too old to learn. Come to Lublin and register at Lublin University. If I remember correctly you wanted to become a journalist."

...

I talk about my unforgettable friend Father Teodor Bensch who hid several Jews in his chapel and saved them from deportation to death camps.

Not all rescue efforts in convents and institutions run by nuns ended so fortunately. Helena Szereszewska describes her experiences in a nursing home in Warsaw, St. Roch's Shelter for invalids and the incurably sick, operated by the Felician Sisters. The institution was moved to a former Jewish students' hostel on the corner of Leszno and Żelazna Streets after the Germans liquidated the ghetto and requisitioned the Sisters' own building for a hospital. Luckily, the author eventually had to leave the institution during the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944, soon after her daughter and grandson, who did not fit the resident profile, came to join her, and thus avoided the tragedy that befell its residents. (Helena Szereszewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945* [London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 1997], pp.292–377.)

I lived at Lwowska Street until the beginning of June 1943, until the day I received my identity card.

Mrs Grabowska had a confessor in the church [Church of the Holy Saviour] on Zbawiciela Square. She went there once a week and sought his advice in everything.

'There are two women living with me, a mother and daughter. They're Jewish. I want to get the mother taken in somewhere.'

'Nuns are the best,' advised the priest. 'The Ursulines or the Felicians. The Felicians have got a place on Leszno Street now.'

'Shall I tell the Reverend Mother the truth?'

'Don't say anything. I'll take the lie on my own conscience. Give the woman these books to contemplate from me.' ... The Reverend Mother was sitting at a desk.

'I've come on behalf of my tenant, Maria Majewska [Szereszewska's daughter's assumed name],' said Mrs Grabowska. *'Her mother has a bad heart because of her terrible wartime experiences. She'd like the sisters to look after her.'*

'Tell her to come with her mother,' said the nun. 'We've always got room.' ...

I went there with Marysia [her daughter].

'You're not Jewish or a convert, are you?' asked the Reverend Mother in her office.

'God forbid! I'm a good Catholic.' ...

'In principle we only accept people over the age of sixty-five,' said the nun looking at me inquiringly. 'You're too young

for us. But sometimes we make exceptions.'

I was accepted and paid her the amount required, 500 zlotys.

Gradually, Helena Szereszewska realized how many Jews actually lived in the institution, and that there was an immense silent conspiracy among the nuns and the elderly chaplain about that topic. The residents were expected to attend chapel and Szereszewska recalled the priests that she encountered during her stay.

In the middle sat an old woman in a black coat and a worn black felt hat on her head. She had a Jewish nose and looked like a town Jewess. She sat huddled up and slept all through the mass. She immediately attracted my attention. ...

Then an old priest in a golden chasuble celebrated the mass. There were two small altar boys, eight years old perhaps. ...

I watched the altar boys and thought about [my grandson] Maciuś. He had served at mass too [at St. Anne's church in Warsaw] thanks to Father [Zygmunt] Kozubski, [a theologian]. The priest knew Maciuś was Jewish and wanted to protect him. So he gave him a white surplice and a bell. The young curate also knew about Maciuś but he found it worrying and one day he said, 'He's a Jewish child so what's he doing serving at Holy Mass.'

'What about it?' All children are the same before God,' replied Father Kozubski. ...

Every Sunday I listened to the priest's sermon. He often referred to the events which had so recently and so tragically taken place. He talked about the annihilation of the Jews. 'Everything that has happened to the Jews is atonement for the terrible sins they committed. It was God's punishment. The Germans are only the instruments of God's punishment.' ...

I walked to the church of St Charles Boromese [Borromeo] on Chłodna Street. I sat down on a pew and thought about my daughters ... I got up and approached the altar and knelt down. ... So I knelt in front of the altar with the huge cross all alone in the church, sensing the priest's questioning look on my back. He must have known who I was. ...

I knew the story of a relation of ours, an old woman who was hiding in the country with the family of a Polish friend of her son's. She became very ill so they called the priest. She was on the verge of dying. When she caught her breath she called out, 'Shema, Israel.' He gave her the holy oils. She died. He closed her eyes. 'I think,' he said as he was leaving, deeply moved, 'that Catholic wasn't completely Catholic.'

Helena Szereszewska maintained the pretence that she was a Catholic throughout her stay.

Being visited by people whose appearance was faultless could strengthen my position. It was very important. So [my daughter] Marysia asked Mrs Grabowska to visit me one day. ... So a few days later Marysia asked the very aristocratic-looking Mr. Sztark with the walrus moustache to visit me. ... He went to see the Reverend Mother in her office, kissed her hand, introduced himself and asked her to take special care of me as I was the wife of a colleague of his.

Szereszewska also encountered a Jewish woman who assumed the role of an anti-Semite during her stay at the institution.

Anna Bialkowska moved into our room ... In the second year of the war she was taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp and cleaned the latrines there. The cold and terrible damp affected her legs. Thanks to her distant relatives she got out after a while and spent a year in the Red Cross hospital unable to use her legs. ...

She was a Calvinist. In principle, the institution only took in Roman Catholics, but they made an exception for her. ... She supported the National Democrats and had ultra right-wing views. I realized that the very first evening when she mentioned politics while talking to Zofia Łoziewicz. That evening Zofia was playing the part of an anti-Semite who was nevertheless a supporter of Józef Piłsudski. ...

A few days after Anna Bialkowska moved into our room a bombshell burst. Zofia Łoziewicz was summoned to the office. 'Mrs Łoziewicz,' said the Reverend Mother, 'you concealed the fact that you're Jewish. Your papers are in order and no-one knew, but your secret has come out and now we can't keep you here any longer.' ...

'Mrs Majewska,' said Mrs Kowalska ... 'Someone rang from town and informed on her. They can't keep her any longer. But they're taking her to Otwock, to another place they've got. Sister Franciszka is going with her'

'Mrs Majewska,' said Mrs Mech, the one who dozed during mass, '... Do you know who set her up like this? Her husband. She had a Polish husband who wanted to get his own back on her. Did you guess that Zofia is my daughter?' ...

That day, immediately after mass, as [Maria Zawadzka] was going round the rooms where the bedridden women lived, she came across someone who had just come to the institution. The woman looked at Maria Zawadzka and shouted, 'I know her! She's Jewish! She comes from a Jewish house! I did their washing and I know her!'

Maria Zawadzka turned as white as a sheet, ran out of the room, looked for the Reverend Mother, Sister Bogumila, and threw herself at her feet. Crying, choking and nearly unconscious, she told her what had happened. The Sister Bogumila

rushed into the room like a fury, her habit flapping and her cross and rosary beads jingling. 'Listen you, you hell-raiser.' Perhaps she wanted to call her a bitch, but could she of all people say that? 'You monster. If you open your mouth once more and say one more word about Mrs Zawadzka you'll die and perish and you'll be damned and swallowed up by hell. And you won't receive absolution in this world or in the next either. You're nearly dead already, you viper.' That's how she spoke to her in her fury, completely ignoring the other invalids lying next to her and half dead with fright.

Later the nuns tried to cover up the whole business. 'It's completely untrue,' they told everyone. 'That old Mrs Pikulska has gone mad. She doesn't know what she's saying. She was very ill when she came here and she'll go to Jesus soon.' ...

One day when our old priest was celebrating mass a woman I'd never seen before entered the chapel. ... I could tell that she was terribly confused. She didn't know whether to kneel or sit. She could see that nearly all the women were wearing a hat while she was bareheaded. She didn't have a missal. ...

Her name was Mrs. Makowska and she'd just arrived that day. ... I could immediately tell that she was Jewish. It wasn't because of her face ... but her manner and behaviour. ...

There was one thing I often thought about. I knew I wasn't the only Jew in the place. How did Mrs Makowska, old Mrs Kosińska, Mrs Mech and Mrs Kowalska get into the institution? Mrs Makowska could have got in the same way as I did. We both had neutral faces and our identity cards were in order. ... But Mrs Kosińska's and Mrs Mech's Jewish faces were absolutely obvious and so how could Reverend Mother possibly ask them that ritual question about whether they were Jews or converts? ...

By now I was sure that the nuns knew they had Jews in hiding in the institution. [Others included Mr and Mrs Binder and Mrs Kozubowska. Mr Binder's accent gave him away, as did his looks, so he hardly spoke.] I became fully aware of it when a tall, thin woman with a typically Jewish face entered the chapel for morning mass one day. She sat down on a pew and was so terrified that she didn't make the sign of the cross when she came in or during mass. ... I was sure that the nuns had accepted the woman knowing very well who she was.

But what about Zofia Łoziewicz? Why had she been expelled? Because someone had rung from outside. No-one outside should ever know that the nuns were hiding Jews.

When the uprising broke out in August 1, 1944, the residents of the institution took shelter in nearby cellars.

At midnight one of the nuns came and brought some soup in a watering can. ... Suddenly a strong blast of air from a nearby explosion hit the window. A column of dust and lime poured over the cellar. Maciuś jumped off the table and shook the dust and pieces of lime off. The priest stretched out his hand. 'Did it frighten you, Maciuś?' he asked. He drew him close. 'Are you scared?' ... The priest took the child's head in his hands and brought it towards himself, smiling kindly. The boy leaned against the priest's knees ... I looked at the two of them and wondered whether the priest knew or didn't. Didn't he suspect anything? He lived in the institution, so could he really not know about the Jewish women in hiding there, and the Jewish men too? ...

The priest repeated the child's name tenderly. He put one hand lightly on his head in a gesture of benediction. His hand hung for a moment in the air and then descended as lightly as a caress. He didn't ask if he was obedient and loved Jesus, like priests often do. The two of them hugged each other and listened to the shots and the noises of exploding buildings, and at every louder explosion they shuddered simultaneously.

Just then we heard a loud stamping of feet somewhere deep underground and suddenly a unit of insurgents appeared out of the darkness of the tunnel. ... There were a few dozen of them. Some had rifles, some had revolvers and some had Molotov cocktails. They also carried machine-guns and grenades tied to their belts. They were very young. There was one Jew among them. ...

At eight o'clock we attended mass in the cellar on the other side of the courtyard. The altar, pews and confessional had been moved there. About a dozen soldiers went to confession before the battle. The shelter was down there. The chapel was in the shelter and next to it, in the wide, dark space which used to be a store-room, about a hundred sick people lying in bed. The midget came out of the open door of this huge shelter and knelt on the concrete floor by the altar. She was followed by the girl with the paralysed hand and the girl with the ecstatic face. They both knelt by the altar. Then the monstrous woman dragged herself in and crouched down beside them. Finally one of the nuns came in holding the girl with chorea. The girl was nodding her head and walking strangely. Every muscle on her face twitched when, rolling her eyes and waving her hands, she sat down at last and made the sign of the cross with a disobedient hand.

The soldiers on the pews watched this human debris. They saw the terror on their faces and the way their bodies shook at every shot, they saw their terrified eyes looking through the small window at the sky with its billows of dark smoke. It was a pathetic sight, this fear of death on the part of creatures so very disabled by fate. They didn't leave the shelter for a single second and hid under the thickest walls when they heard the buzzing of a plane. ...

There was a group of about fifty people. They were surrounded by gendarmes and ordered to march through the gate to

Leszno Street, which was on fire. That was the first selection. A moment later the whistle could be heard again. Now they summoned the nuns, the priest, the organist, the lay servants and everyone not connected with the institution who had found themselves in the place on the first day of the Rising. ...

The courtyard paved with small, yellow bricks. In the middle a walled circle and in the circle grey earth where grass or even flowers should have grown. Now it contained graves, six crosses on six mounds. Five old women from our institution, and the sixth grave belonged to the insurgent. In the courtyard 16 nuns, the priest, the organist and the lay servants, all in a row. ...

I started saying goodbye to the priest and the nuns. I thanked them warmly for looking after me and everything good they had done for me while I was in the institution. Maciuś stood lost next to the priest and nuns. He turned pale and shivered when the priest placed both his hands on his head and blessed him for the journey into the unknown. ...

'Schnell! Schnell!' shouted one of the Germans ... I wanted to prolong the moment. Marysia took the child by the hand and they both went quickly towards the gate. One of the Germans hit me on the back with a whip and pushed me in their direction with his fist. ... Then we went out onto Leszno Street and it was one sea of flames. It was 14 August 1944 at eleven in the morning.

At the beginning of May 1945, when we returned from the camp and were staying in Kraków, I met a nun on the street wearing the habit of the Felician Sisters. I went up to her and asked, 'Sister, what happened to the Felician Sisters in Warsaw? They had an institution on Leszno Street. I lived there for a while.'

'The nuns and the priest were allowed to go to Kraków. The lay servants were taken to Germany.'

'What about the rest? The 180 old and sick people.'

'They shot them all and set fire to the house. The house burnt down with all of them in it.' ...

'When did it happen, Sister?'

'It happened on 14 August, at twelve o'clock, at noon exactly.'

The Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union ran schools and boarding schools and engaged in clandestine teaching during the German occupation. They are known to have sheltered many Jews, both children and adults, in their convents throughout Poland including Warsaw, Kraków, Lwów, Kołomyja, Tarnów, and Lublin. The following account is by Sister Maria Stella Trzeciecka, who was involved in the rescue activities. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.352–59.)

Faced by the whole magnitude of peril that threatened for various 'crimes' during World War II, many nuns assumed personal responsibility for various deeds and kept their superiors and mates wholly uninformed. Mothers Superior behaved in a like manner. That fact today, after the lapse of many years, is a serious limitation on our ability to recreate the true scale of the aid which we gave, to the extent our capabilities allowed, to our Jewish brethren.

Accordingly, what follows is just a handful of reminiscences based on authentic reports of Sisters who were, for one reason or another, involved in those matters. This was not an organized action (our principal tasks were clandestine instruction and running of canteens, especially for the working intelligentsia). But daily situations created a need for assisting people, and that we did.

In Warsaw we ran a boarding house for 60 female students on behalf of the Central Relief Council (RGO). The house was at 5, Przejazd St. There were several Jewish girls among our charges and not one of them perished despite the Warsaw Uprising and the summary deportation of the entire boarding house, together with the Sisters, to the camp at Bietigheim and later to Heilbronn. They all had 'Aryan' identity documents. The outbuildings of our compound at Przejazd St. formed part of the Warsaw Ghetto, so both the Sisters and their young charges lived through the infernal experience of the Ghetto Uprising and the ensuing massacre of the Jews. They were eye-witnesses of the most tragic scenes imaginable. Among others, they saw how Jews, intent on saving their children, hurled them from ghetto windows down to their acquaintances or relatives who were standing outside. Many a time, the children were smashed against the pavement.

We stored our modest supplies of food in the basement of the boarding house. Many a time the provisions would vanish and Sisters would hear a patter of feet in the basement. Soon they discovered that there was an aperture in the cellar wall through which Jews pushed forward to the basement. Thenceforth, Sisters left food in front of that passage and the food disappeared. In connection with that hole and the venturing of Jews beyond the ghetto precincts, the Sisters lived through a harsh experience when an armed Nazi ordered Sister Izabela S. to lead him into the basement. She was to be shot if Jews were found there. Luckily, they were not, nor was the aperture discovered. The Sister survived but she was immediately moved to another house. Nor was that the end of the affair. One day, a Jew pierced through the ghetto wall right into our dormitory. He begged us to fetch him somebody with whom he had an agreement about the escape. It was a dramatic moment—he standing in the breach and guards nearby. The house on Przejazd St. was encircled by guards who kept watching that Jews did not run away from the ghetto. The Jews escaping through the hole dug in our basement were

helped courageously by Sister Teodozja Hoffman who directed them in disguise to a home for the aged in the same outbuilding. There was another incident. A certain young Jewess insisted by all means to get into the ghetto in order to join her family there. Sister Lia P., though she realized the extent of the danger, led her through the chain of guards and saw that the Jewess found her way, by covert tracks of course, to her family.

Also in Warsaw, at 7, Oczki St., we ran a canteen in which we cooked an average of 2,000 meals every day on behalf of the Central Relief Council (RGO). Lots of people milled about the street until 4 p.m. After that hour, when everything calmed down, Jewish children turned up as if they had sprung from the earth. They penetrated to that district all the way from the ghetto. In the main, they were small boys and were excellently organized. One of them would stand guard at the point where Oczki St. runs into Starynkiewicz Square and another at the intersection of Oczki St. and Chalubiński St. In case of danger the little tot would whistle and the children vanished like air. Usually, there were several sometimes over a dozen children, each carrying a can. The food was always there for the Sisters would already have made an allowance for the arrival of the children. Quietly and efficiently, the cans were filled. This became part of the daily routine at Oczki St. throughout the existence of the ghetto. Not once was there a bad break and, although the ghetto was at a distance of from 7 to 8 minutes brisk walk from the canteen, the children always managed to keep the appointment.

After the demolition of the house on Łowicka St., we lived in a villa of Mrs Potocka at 107a Puławska St., also in Warsaw. In the years 1942–1943, Sisters Konstantyna and Imelda took a charming Jewish girl into safekeeping. Her assumed name was Marta Krzywicka. The Sisters rented a room with Mrs Horwat for her. Shortly afterward, a policeman took an interest in her and she had to change her domicile. Marta remained in hiding in Warsaw until her father sent her a passport from Uruguay. She went with the whole transport full of misgivings: will the Germans keep an agreement? Alas, the entire transport was exterminated in Frankfurt.

At about the same time, a certain Jewish female physician was hiding at Puławska St. under Mrs Potocka's and our care. She was from Stanisławów. She later died of cancer. We also took into safekeeping the mother-in-law of Professor [Szymon] Askenazy and placed her at Królikarnia as a purported cancer patient. This we could do thanks to the assistance of Mrs Potocka and Father Wojtczak. She died a natural peaceful death there, and was baptized before passing away. We likewise helped professor Askenazy's daughter Janina, whom a traitor later gave up to the Gestapo. She was tortured and murdered at the Gestapo headquarters in Warsaw at Szucha Avenue.

Our Cracow convent on Starowiślna Street and the subordinated convent in Siercza also assisted the Jews, though the task was difficult in view of German presence in the Siercza house. For example, we hid Janeczka, one of the third-form pupils from the primary school away for a few months. We gave financial assistance to rescue our seventh-form pupil, Hala Friedman, from the hands of the Gestapo. Unfortunately, that worthy girl did not survive despite frantic efforts of her faithful nanny. The money, as it later turned out, was pocketed by blackmailers and we never again heard of Hala. Also, we concealed in our house a woman whose first name was Felicja (we do not know her surname). A very painful experience was the kidnapping by the Gestapo of two little girls—Ludka and Hanka Boroniec, whom we were hiding away among Polish and several other Jewish girls in Siercza. ... Also in Siercza, a Mr Hilman was our cart driver for a long time.

On behalf of the RGO [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, a social welfare agency] we ran a home for resettlers in Cracow on Krupnicza St. For a while the director of that home was the Mother Superior of our Lvov [Lwów] convent, a fine human being with a perspicacious mind and the best of hearts. There were Jewish children among the resettlers. Among others, Sister Celestyna T. escorted a Jewish child from Kołomyja in the east there. There were also Eryka M., Genia K., and others.

After the abolition of that home, thirty children, one-half of them Jewish, were moved to Rękawki St. One day, another four-years-old tenant was added. He was brought by a tram conductor who told us the boy had been left on his tram all day, nibbling at a piece of bread. We called the boy 'Antoś'. He later went to Kochanów where the RGO moved the children's home from Rękawki St. with the others. Our Ursuline Sisters tidied up an abandoned house there, preparing it for the same complement of children. Apart from the Sisters, the little Jews had other invisible caretakers; their next of kin of those families which escaped from the hands of the enemy. From time to time, one or another would turn up for a momentary visit to see their beloved children and then would disappear in a mysterious fashion. One night, for example, a Sister saw a father sitting at the bed of a sick child. All of those children survived.

Jagusia, a 15-years-old, fled to our house in Tarnów while Jews from the local ghetto were being driven to the railway station. She stayed with us in hiding for a fortnight, and then we put her somewhere else. The girl survived.

Many resettlers passed through our Lublin convent during the war. There was a considerable number of Jews among them who hid away for shorter or longer periods. Among them was 18-years-old Marysia from Chełmno, who spent a month there. Mr Stanisław D. worked and lived with us for a couple of years, and thanks to that he survived. We also gave material assistance to our former pupils of Jewish origin. Our Sister Wiktoria Bogacz helped the Lublin community in an especially selfless manner. People used to call her 'Mother of the Poor'. Thanks to the unqualified endorsement to the

action, given by the then Mother Superior of the convent, the splendidly righteous Mother Tekla Busz, Sister Wiktoria doled out up to a thousand bowls of soup every day. Nobody ever asked: who are you with a Semitic face? The nature of Sister Wiktoria Bogacz was best defined by her name (Bogacz stands for 'rich' in Polish). This simple-hearted but magnanimous Sister never seemed to run short of bread, soup, or even 'delicacies' like a piece of sausage or lard, which she gave away to Poles, Jews, and inmates from the Majdanek camp alike.

Mother Teresa Dettlaff [Dettlof?], the Mother Superior of our Kołomyja convent, aided Jews on a large scale, and the Sisters from her convent participated resolutely in her action. Most especially on grim days of terror—round-ups or executions—our Kołomyja house became an asylum for those that had managed to run away with their lives. With terrible despair, they would look through basement windows and see their relations and acquaintances being led away for execution. Sister Hiacenta S. [Suchla] served most frequently as our courier, escorting Jews to their hideouts. Situations were sometimes fraught with drama but, luckily, our aid was most effective. It required, however, plenty of vigilance, acumen, courage and sacrifice. Among her many charges, Sister Hiacenta escorted Mrs Rozalia Wrońska (an assumed name), [the daughter of a local pharmacist], to our convent in Zakopane, and then on to Raciechowice to her family who had selflessly been giving a helping hand in that action. She brought Mr Ebstein [Eckstein?], a dentist to that same place. He later went into hiding in Nowy Sącz [with the family of Sister Celestyna Tatarczyk] where he spent a long time and managed to survive. At the beginning of 1943, Sister Hiacenta escorted 4-years-old Ewa Zawadzka (an assumed name) to her native regions of the country. The trip with the child was a dangerous ordeal for she panicked at the sight of troops and policemen and could easily betray both of them. Therefore, a few months later, she had to be moved to her mother who had been hiding away further eastward. The undersigned, being a member of the Lvov [Lwów] convent, escorted little Ewa from Tarnów to Stanisławów. The child behaved quietly, but just before reaching Stanisławów she addressed some woman with a telling Jewish accent: 'I think I know you, Mrs' ... Naturally, I was greatly alarmed, but everything ended all right. A third nun took Ewa on her further journey east and the child survived the war.

Apart from the event related above, the Lvov convent helped Mother Teresa Dettlaff in rescuing Kołomyja Jews on several occasions. Accordingly, on 24 October, 1942, Sister Ewelina Z. [Zasada] escorted 10-years-old Ewa Kassler [Kesler?] from Lvov to Warsaw where she accommodated the girl with the Order of the Family of Mary. The girl survived the war. She was a step-daughter of the above-mentioned Mr Ebstein. His wife, Ewa's mother, fared worse. She made her residence in Lvov but was not cautious enough and perished. Blackmailers cashed in on our contacts with her. They followed the tracks down to Kołomyja. The situation was dangerous. They threatened Sister Celestyna T. with arrest; eventually, a hard-gotten ransom of 10,000 złotych saved us and calmed the storm. Acting with foresight, however, the superiors of the Order transferred Mother Teresa Dettlaff to Cracow.

In 1941 or 1942, we took Professor Józef Feldman into safekeeping for the two weeks' duration of an anti-Jewish campaign. We placed him at 12, Jacek [św. Jacka] St. During that time, illicit identity documents were made out in his name. He got them, left for Warsaw, and survived.

Mother Elżbieta Lubińska and Mother Władysława Lewicka assumed responsibility for our aid to Jews in Lvov. For both of them the Ebstein affair, related above, was a harsh experience. First one then the other headed the convent. During her term as Mother Superior, Władysława Lewicka was truly fearless in aiding camp inmates and refugees. It was she who admitted a Mrs Roszko, an elderly Jewish convert, together with her adult daughter Maria to the convent for about a year. The elder Mrs Roszko later moved from the convent to the flat of Mrs Antoniewicz, the mother of one of our nuns, where she died a peaceful death. Her daughter took another hiding place, was eventually escorted by Sister Celestyna T. to a gamekeeper's house, and survived the war.

We also gave a helping hand to a Lvov kiln manager (Rosenberg?). Mother Władysława took his jewelry and trunks and other belongings into safekeeping. Every once in a while, his 15-years-old daughter, Marysia, would come and spend part of the day with us while he was taking out some of his things for ransom. He survived for a long time. We do not know what happened to him later.

The Gadziński family, our neighbours in Lvov, also took a young Jewish couple into hiding. They deposited their belongings with us and then would select some of the things, little by little, to pay for their upkeep.

One more fragment from our Lvov contacts. We were on friendly terms with Doctor K. and his family. That excellent man devoted plenty of attention and loving care to the poor, whom he not only examined but also supplied with medicines. Mrs K was of Jewish origin. One day, when he was in town, the Gestapo came and searched the flat. That brave woman, his wife, succeeded in destroying all papers compromising her husband (he was a member of an organization), and did it practically in the presence of the Gestapo. In the meantime, a chimney-sweep entered. ... He then left the flat, but kept a watch in the street until he could warn the Doctor that the Gestapo had come to his home. Mrs K. and her son (a school boy) were arrested as hostages for the Doctor. The organization forbade him to report to the Gestapo and he despaired lest the Jewish origin of his wife be discovered. He spent a few days with us, later came every day to fetch some bread. Mrs K. was detained for six months, then set free together with the son.

Confirmation of the rescue activities of the Ursulines in Warsaw and Kraków is found in Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volumes 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, at page 360 (Warsaw); Part 2, at pages 928–29 (*supra*, Kraków).

In 1942, when the Germans deported the Jews from the village of Szreniawa to the nearby Cracow ghetto, the Sznajders tried to find a hiding place with Christian farmers in the village. However, the only member of the family who managed to find a hiding place was 16-year-old Genia Sznajder, who was taken in by Barbara Dobrolubow, an old school friend of hers who, together with her family, looked after Sznajder devotedly, without expecting anything in return. A few weeks later, the Dobrolubows decided to send her to relatives of theirs in Warsaw, where no one knew her, on the assumption that, with her Aryan looks, she had a better chance of surviving there. In Warsaw, Sznajder was taken in by Zygmunt and Jadwiga Koczorowski, Dobrolubow's uncle and aunt, who looked after her, obtained Aryan papers for her, and registered her at a convent high school belonging to the Urszulanki [Ursuline] Sisters. The Koczorowskis showed loving concern for Sznajder, who stayed in the home run by the sisters until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in late summer 1944. Sznajder was sent to Germany with the other children of the home and Koczorowski was sent to a concentration camp. After the war, they met up again in Warsaw and Sznajder stayed with the Koczorowskis until she finished her studies. In 1954, Sznajder immigrated to Israel.

Confirmation of the activities of the Ursuline nuns can be found in the accounts of Felicja Kohn from Lwów, and Wanda Z., a woman of Jewish origin from Kraków. (Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.259, 262; Małgorzata Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość: Polscy Żydzi ocaleni na "aryjskich papierach". Analiza doświadczenia biograficznego*. [Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2004], p.152.)

[1] In Cracow I was put up for the night by the mother superior of a convent (Mother Superior Łubieńska of the Ursuline Sisters), despite continuous visitations by the Gestapo. Another sister from the same convent recommended me for suitable jobs, thus making it possible for me to survive. ... Also in Cracow I was very warmly received by Myszk P., who got hold of a Kennkarte for me, from the Reverend [Edward] Lubowiecki.

[2] The nuns in the convent [in Kraków] were extraordinary. They helped us—my family, the PPS [Polish Socialist Party] organization, and later Żegota—tremendously during the war. I would have been unable to secure half of the birth certificates and identity documents without the help of that Ursuline convent. They behaved extraordinarily.

Extensive assistance was provided by the Albertine Sisters in their numerous convents throughout Poland. (The following accounts were compiled in 1961.)

When the Servant of God Brother Albert [Adam Chmielowski] founded his orphanages in 1888, he helped everyone regardless of their status, nationality or religious beliefs. The orphanage took in Catholics, Ruthenians, Jews, in other words everyone.

Religious organizations founded by Brother Albert worked in this same spirit. The Albertine Sisters never turned away anyone who needed help from their orphanages. In the years before the outbreak of the war in 1939, the nurseries run by this order contained many Jewish children who were cared for with the same love as the other children. When in 1942 the terror against the Jews increased sharply, many Jewish children found shelter in the order's orphanages. Jews were to be found in 29 institutions operated by this order. In all 95 Jews were taken in, of whom 50 survived in hiding. Twelve were apprehended and killed; the fate of 35 people is not known. These statistics are based on the testimony of 50 Sisters who are still alive. However, many Sisters who were involved in the running of the order's orphanages have died and thus many facts will never surface.

The following are summaries of statements obtained from the Albertine Sisters. Many of the names of persons who received assistance have been forgotten over time. In some cases people were never asked their names because it was safer not to know. Many of those helped never provided their real names; often they used false identification.

I. Kraków—Shelter at 47 Krakowska Street

1. An unknown person brought two Jewish children to the shelter. One child was ten, the other eleven years old. It turned out that one of these "girls" was actually a boy dressed as a girl. Because the children went to chapel regularly and prayed, they did not arouse any suspicion. Despite numerous searches conducted by the Germans, these two children

survived and were later taken, probably to Sweden.⁹⁵

2. A girl named Marysia, the daughter of a Jewish doctor from Kraków, was occasionally paid a visit by her grandmother. This child did not want to go to chapel and stated openly that she was Jewish and did not need to pray. Some women working at the orphanage reported her to the Gestapo. Most likely she did not survive.

3. Mrs. Barska and her grown daughter—their names had been changed—were sheltered in the shelter for a period of time. During a search by the Germans they were warned by Sister Urbana and escaped through a fence. Their fate is not known.

4. Elżbieta Sękowska was betrayed to the Germans. Sister Urbana therefore placed her in a room with the chronically ill, where no one walked around. She stayed there for two months not once leaving the room. She was cared for by the Sisters during this time. After the war she left for Palestine. She lives with her married daughters and is in good health. She was very grateful to the Sisters and to this day writes and sends food packages. Her last letter is dated December 14, 1960. In that letter she sends her holiday greetings, wishing “Blessings from the Child Jesus”. She writes that she lives comfortably under a beautiful sun with her daughters and grandchildren who love and respect her. Her oldest daughter’s only regret is that she cannot make her young once more. Her address is c/o Leonora Awiezer, Kirjat-Sefer 4, Tel Aviv, Israel.

5. Together with these people there was a young girl named Zosia Kerocka. No one knew if she was Jewish or not because she never admitted it to anyone. Several times she was almost taken to the ghetto but each time she stated steadfastly that they should shoot her outside in the courtyard because she would not go with them. Sister Urbana protected her saying that she was sure that she was not Jewish. Zosia was very bright and hardworking. She went to school and received her high-school diploma. She is presently a teacher in Warsaw and has occasional contact with the Sisters to whom she has remained very grateful.

These statements were made by Sister Urbana and Sister Seweryna. Sister Urbana stated that there may have been other Jews but she does not remember the particulars.

II. Kraków—Nursery at 10 Kołetek Street

The director of this institution was Sister Hermana. During the height of the terror against the Jews more children were left at the nursery. The children were identified as Jewish because they had Semitic physical features and the boys were often circumcised.

1. One evening, at about nine o’clock, a man and a woman brought a year-old child in a white astrakhan coat to the nursery. They said that as they were crossing the Vistula River in a boat, they had heard a splash and noticed something white floating in the water. They moved alongside of it and pulled a child out of the water. The boy was completely soaked through, blue in colour and unconscious. Sister Fidelisa spent about four hours with him until he regained consciousness. The boy had pneumonia. He eventually recovered and was healthy. He was named Józio. When the German terror abated, Jews came and took Jewish children away to their own institutions. Józio was also taken. Some time later a Jewish man from Warsaw came to the nursery looking for his son. From the description that he gave, it was evident that Józio was his son. The father said that he had given the child over to a woman to be sheltered but the woman had disappeared and he had lost track of the child. He probably located his son at the Jewish institution where he had been taken.

2. The [Blue] police brought a lost four-year-old boy to the nursery. The child was bright and knew the Hail Mary but would not tell his name. He answered all questions about his name by saying that his last name is Wróblewski and sometimes he added that he must be Wróblewski because otherwise the Germans would kill him. We called him Tomuś. No one was allowed to undress or bathe him except the Sisters. He was, of course, circumcised and had typical Semitic features. He was terrified of the Germans. When the Germans came to search, the Sisters would lock him up in a room and tell him to sit quietly. He understood and would not move. When the nursery changed locations to Rymanów, he accompanied the other children. After the war he was taken with others by a Jewish organization.

3. In Rymanów, there was a three-year-old circumcised boy. At the time the nursery doctor was a woman who was afraid of the authorities. Once she asked whether there were any Jewish children in the nursery. She was told by Sister Hermana in a very firm manner that she didn’t need to know and that she would not provide that information. Furthermore, all the children were legally admitted. That is why, when the Jewish children were ill, the Sister Superior did not let the doctor examine them, for fear she would turn them in to the Germans. She cared for them herself and, thank God, none of them died.

4. Krzyś was officially accepted into the nursery as a Jew, the illegitimate child of a Jewish woman named Eisenberg. He was brought up in the nursery from infancy and was well behaved. He said his prayers with the other children. When a

⁹⁵ See Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, pp.370–71; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, p.542. See also the memoir of one of these two children: Anita Lobel, *No Pretty Pictures: A Child of War* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1998), portions of which are reproduced earlier.

directive came from the authorities to take all Jewish children to the ghetto, the Mother Superior asked the Director of Social Services for permission to hold on to the child. The child, however, had Jewish identification papers. After protracted and strenuous efforts by the Mother Superior, the director decided to destroy the child's documents and from that time the child was entered as Krzyś NN (last name unknown). When the boy was seven years old he went to the nursery run by the Sisters Servants of Mary in Prądnik Czerwony. It was impossible to baptize him at this time because it would have been dangerous. The Sisters Servants of Mary did not know he was Jewish. New identification was made for him with the last name of Zaleski and Krzyś became a student of the organ. When he was 18 years old he needed a birth certificate. He went to the Sisters Servants of Mary and they in turn sent him back to us. When he was informed that he was never baptized, he decided to be baptized by Father Miś. He is today the organist in Łętowice near Tarnów.

5. A woman from Mostowa Street brought a year-old baby as a foundling. He was named Staś. The child was very sickly and needed care and attention. As a three-year old, Staś went to a foster family who became very attached to him and put in much effort to help him with regard to his health. After some time his older brother and other relatives showed up. The Mother Superior had to admit that this child was indeed their relative. A tragedy ensued. Staś's new family did not want to give him up. The Jewish family took this family to court. After much unpleasantness, the child was taken by his relatives even though he did not want to leave his new family.

6. A certain woman came to the nursery and asked how to save a child from the ghetto. She was told to bring him to the nursery. She did just that. The father of the child came out of an underground sewer and handed over a year-old boy. This woman brought the child to the nursery. As the guardian of this child, she sometimes came to visit him and brought money for his upkeep. The child became sick. Because the parents were worried about the child or did not believe the woman, they wanted to see the child in order to be convinced that he was still alive. The father wanted to come see the child disguised as a workman. The Mother Superior decided against this because it might arouse the suspicion of the lay personnel of the nursery. The father decided to take the child back the same way he had brought him out. The child was two years old. In the rush he was taken to the ghetto in nursery clothes with the name of the institution, St. Joseph's Orphanage for Children, and an image of St. Joseph. When the Jews were driven from the ghetto, this child accompanied his parents and two relatives to a station where the Germans told everyone to get out and leave their belongings to one side. Little Ignas ran out with his arms outstretched in the direction of the German commander. His parents were paralyzed with fear when a German asked to whom the child belonged. Shaking from fear the father stepped forward and said the child was his. "How many are there of you?", he was asked. "Four", was the reply. "To the side." All four Jews with the child went to stand on the side, filled with fright. They were sure they would be shot because of this child's actions. Instead, all the other Jews were sent to their deaths, but they were left alone at an empty station with their belongings. The Germans had let them go. Maybe they were moved by the act of this little boy, but the fact is that a miracle had happened. The entire family eventually reached Westphalia and survived the war. In 1947 they came back and visited the nursery in Kraków and spoke to the Mother Superior. They were very grateful and said that the shirt with the emblem of St. Joseph had saved their lives. They made a donation that was generous at that time—a bolt of linen.

7. Wojtek was a nice little boy who did not like to play with the other children. He later said that his father had told him not to pray to holy paintings and not to cross himself. He was transferred to a different location.

All together at the nursery there survived ten children who were handed over to a Jewish organization after the war. Of those children who were brought in during the war, not one was taken to the ghetto. However, the children who were brought in before the war with Jewish identification, could not be prevented from being taken there and cried when they were taken away. They probably did not survive. There were eight of these children.

III. Częstochowa—Overnight Shelter at 14 Wesola Street

When Jews were being shipped out of the ghetto, a woman about 32 years old came to us. She was a bright, thin, blonde with blue eyes and of average height. She had two children: Ludwik, a seven-year old, and Adusia, a three-year old. The children were bright and looked pleasant. At first they were held out to be the cousins of Sister Hugona and they were given a separate room on the second floor. They attended chapel regularly with the other children. The boy was a good observer who learned quickly how to conduct himself in chapel. Their mother was said to have been the owner of a small factory in Częstochowa. After a period of time we were able to obtain for her a Polish identity card with the name Janina Świtała. The two children were registered under her name. This woman later began catechism lessons with Father [Tadeusz] Wiśniewski from our parish—St. Sigismund. Together with her children, behind closed doors, she was baptized.

She spoke German fluently and did not have Semitic features. She moved around freely and sometimes even travelled to earn an income. She smoked cigarettes. One time a Sister asked little Adusia what her name was. The little girl answered: Horowitz. The little boy turned red and started instructing his sister in a whisper: "Adusia, that was before. Your name is Świtała now."

One of the women on staff went to the Gestapo and betrayed the Jewish women who were sheltered in our institution. It

was at that time Mrs. Świtała moved out to a private apartment with her brother, who was also hiding in Częstochowa. While there, a German agent called the boy over and after confirming that he was Jewish, had all three of them shot in the Jewish cemetery in Częstochowa. The brother survived.

An older woman, about 50 years old, with an identity card with the name Zofia Kowalczyk, came from Radomsko. She was a small, thin, serious woman with regular features. She had blue eyes and greying dark-blond hair. She said that she had hidden in an attic with her two grown sons. The Germans had taken her sons but she had escaped through the fence wearing only one shoe. Because she had money, she was able to bribe a policeman who had stopped her along the way. She spent some time with us after arriving in Częstochowa. After the betrayal, which will be described in detail, she left our house. We do not know her fate. She might have survived.

A mother, 38 years old, a small dark blonde with blue eyes, a Semitic nose and olive complexion. She had a five-year-old daughter named Lola. We were able to get an identity card for her with the name Karolina Wiśniewska. She worked for us for some time as a receptionist. After the betrayal she moved in with friends. At this new location there was a small girl who did not speak Polish well. This was the cause of their being denounced to the Germans.

Another tall, young mother with dark hair and complexion came with a five-year-old girl named Gienia. The last name she assumed was Racińska. She was a very hard worker. She worked for us in the laundry. She had two identity documents (Kennkarte).

After a woman, who was surely the mother of a seven-year-old boy named Jędrus (although she would not admit to this), brought him to us, we had four Jewish adults and four Jewish children staying with us. A girl who was employed in our kitchen threatened to turn in the Jews. We never thought that she would actually go through with this. We had told her that she was mistaken because there were no Jewish people staying with us. Everyone had Polish identity cards that had been obtained with the assistance of St. Sigismund parish, which had provided us with birth and baptismal certificates. This girl did indeed go to the Gestapo and gave them all the names of the Jews and which rooms they lived in. The Germans arrived and took everyone they found with them. They were astonished to see everyone kneel in the chapel and pray fervently before they were taken. At Gestapo headquarters, after a thorough interrogation, the last thing demanded of them was to say prayers. Having gone to chapel daily with the other women, they had learned to pray and consequently were let go and came back to us that same day, though in a very depressed state. They no longer felt safe in our home so they left soon after.

During the Gestapo interrogation, Mrs. Racińska was told that she was too young not to be working. She was dispatched to a sack factory. Not used to hard work, she broke down. She moved out of town with her young child. After a short while she brought the child, for whom she had packed a small bag, back to us. She tried to commit suicide by jumping into the Warta River. She was pulled out and taken to the hospital. She was taken by the Germans and her fate is not known. The child stayed with us for a while, then was adopted by someone.

Two sisters, the daughter of a miller by the name of Borkowski, worked in a Christmas ornament factory. They slept and ate in our house. Both of them survived and later left to join their uncle in America.

Irena Bochenek was a young, blond woman. She knew how to sew. The German police came for her one day and demanded to see the registration books. She was registered but Sister Izydora hid her in the washroom. The police were told that she was not at home. When the Germans left, Sister Izydora disguised her and sent her that day to Warsaw. The next day another German came who did not believe that she was not there. He was told to ask the woman at the gate, who was a retired lay person. When she stated that the woman had not returned home the day before, he left offering some chocolate to a little girl.

Jędrus, the bright five-year-old, was placed in an institution for boys. The Gestapo came for him there and took him away. His mother was said to have been living with our Sisters in Kielce where she survived the war.

An 18-month-old child was brought to the nursery in Częstochowa. There were a number of other people, but I don't remember them all, states Sister Wita Pawłowska ending her testimony.

IV. Bochnia near Kraków—Orphanage

1. Wojciech Pacula, who was a guard in the ghetto, brought a five-year-old girl named Halinka, who was born in 1938. She was a pretty blonde with blue eyes. She did not look Jewish. She was given the name Kubicka. (Her photograph is in ASA.) She was the daughter of Elias Elszajn (Elstein or Elnstein), the proprietor of a leather factory in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, and Róża Weber. She was a very bright girl who went to school with the other children, never spoke about her family background, and studied religion very diligently. At her request she was baptized by Father Pycior on June 6, 1943 and received her First Communion. After the liberation her aunt took her secretly from the school. It was said that her father also survived and took her to Palestine. They both live there and he is grateful to the Sisters for having helped to hide his child.

2. Little Róża, the daughter of a lawyer from Kraków, stayed in the orphanage in Bochnia for three years. She was very

pretty and bright but her Semitic features betrayed her background. She also spoke about her parents to the other children. There was a fear that she would be turned in by the older boys. Her fate is not known.

3. For a short period of time Róża's brother Władysław stayed at the orphanage, but he was taken back because he was circumcised and brought attention to himself.

4. On May 29, 1943 a one-year-old child was brought to us. Judging by her features she was Jewish. Marysia was registered as a foundling and was brought up in safety. During a period when the Sisters were away, according to the other children, a woman had come around asking for Marysia.

5. Ten-month-old Eliza from Bochnia, whose last name was not known, stayed at the orphanage. In 1945 this four-year old was taken by a foster family. When her relatives were later found, they took her with them. Her fate as well as that of the other Jewish children is known by Dr. Jan Krupa from the Health Centre in Bochnia.

6. Jaś Moskowski stayed at the orphanage. After the Germans left, he was sent back to Kraków.

V. Tarnów—Children's Infirmary and Nursery at 6 Nowodąbrowska Street

1. A member of the Polish Blue police accompanied by a brother from the Missionary Order brought a young boy to the nursery. He was four years old and had been found in the Church of the Missionary Fathers. The boy was good looking, well fed and very bright. He wore a medal around his neck depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus and could cross himself very nicely. He kissed his medal often and said his prayers. He said that he had been left in the church by his uncle, who told him to sit quietly and wait for him to return while he bought a violin. The uncle did not return and the priests from the church sent him to the nursery. The boy said his name was Jurek Górski. Later, he told a Sister in secret that his name was not really Jurek but Norek. He was above average in ability and learned quickly. He went to the nursery chapel with the other children. He adapted very quickly. After the liberation, four Jews came with a letter from the reeve and demanded that Jurek be handed over to them. When Jurek was told about this, he took his missal and hid behind the altar in the chapel. No one could find him. He did not want to leave for anything but was eventually taken by force.

2. A girl named Zosia was brought in by a woman who by her behaviour was obviously the mother. For a certain time this woman came to visit the little girl every day, bringing with her anything she could. One day she said good-bye to her daughter and never returned. The child was pretty and bright. A certain German officer took an interest in her and after some efforts brought his wife to the orphanage. They took the child with them to Germany.

VI. Tarnów—Shelter for the Poor at 65 Szpitalna Street

The director of a factory in Boryslaw hid in an attic for two years. The Sisters gave him food. With tears in his eyes he told the Sisters that the Germans had taken his wife. He wore a medal with the Virgin Mary. It was said that after the war he was baptized and found work in a cooperative.

VII. Sulejów near Piotrków Trybunalski

During the German occupation the authorities assigned to the Sisters ten Jews to help in the fields. Every day they came under German guard and under punishment of death were not allowed to be fed. One Sister gave them food in the basement, where one by one they came down to be fed. They were weak from starvation. The German guards checked to see that no one escaped and that they worked well. Although the Jews were not much help the Sisters always reported that they were very hard working.

VIII. Kielce—Shelter of the Holy Trinity at 31 Bandurskiego Street

During the war Józef Freund, a Jew, stayed at the shelter. At the beginning he stayed indoors only. He felt safe and was grateful for his shelter. After a certain time he began going into town, even though he was warned that this was dangerous and he should stay home. Because nothing happened to him he began going every day and returned happily, having seen something or bought something. One day he did not return. The Sisters started to look for him. When they did not find him at the Polish police station, they went to the German one and found out that he had been arrested. They begged for his release but were only given permission to send him food. For a number of days they sent hot dinners to him. The Gestapo found out about this and forbade any visitors. Late at night, Freund himself returned to the shelter asking for help. He had apparently escaped. The Sisters gave him money and sent him to their neighbours. During the night the Gestapo came looking for him at the shelter. They turned over the entire house and shined light into everybody's eyes, but left without ever finding him. His fate is not known.

IX. Lwów-Zamarstynów—Institution for Boys

During the German occupation three Jewish boys were hidden in the institution. After the war, two of them were taken by relatives. The remaining one left for the West because he had no family left.

X. Lwów-Persenkówka

For five months, three Jews hid in the basement. The Sisters would bring food to them. During the first day of bombing they left.

XI. Baworów near Tarnopol

- 1. Pastor Procyk sent a ten-year-old girl to the Sisters. She admitted to the Sisters that she was Jewish. She was baptized.*
- 2. A two-year-old girl was found by people near the forest. She was handed over to the Ukrainian police, who brought her to the Sisters to keep for a few days. She was to be sent to the ghetto in Tarnopol. Because of the efforts of the Sisters she remained in the shelter. She was baptized on June 13, 1943 and given the name Antonina. After the occupation her mother came for her and took her away.*

XII. Tarnopol

- 1. Icek Weiss came secretly at night to our kitchen and everyday, in the attic, so that no one would see him, he got something to eat. He also received clothes on occasion. This lasted for two months after which he disappeared.*
- 2. In 1940, after the Soviets invaded, they took away our Polish charges and brought in sick Jewish people. We took care of them in the same way we treated our Polish patients. At the end of two years the Germans came and they took them to the ghetto.*
- 3. During the time of the most intense anti-Jewish campaign, one afternoon a policeman brought in a basket with a foundling in it that weighed no more than 4 kg. The policeman stated that the little boy was found in an empty house. The child was taken in, given a bath, fed and cared for. Because there was no crib for the baby, we put him into a laundry basket, and the children surrounded the little one like angels around the manger in Bethlehem, happy to be with the new arrival. After a few days, a childless Catholic couple came with a desire to adopt a baby of their own. We will not reveal their last name because the Sister gave her word that she would never tell. When they were shown the little one and were told how he had been found, they were eager to take it. They baptized him, giving him the name of Tadeusz. They showered him with the love of real parents. The child was not attractive. He had a low forehead, a big nose and eyes as black as coal. He was healthy and the parents he had were ideal. No one suspected that the child was not their own.*

XIII. Stanisławów

In 1942 or 1943 a woman was brought to the shelter who had supposedly lost her voice as a result of almost drowning. We suspected that she was Jewish, but told no one. She also told no one and remained mute. After the Germans left, Mother Superior took her aside and told her that she could now speak because she was no longer in danger. Then, speaking nicely in Polish, she admitted that she was a baptized Jew and that her surname was Jarocka. A few days later she left, borrowing some clothes which she said she would bring back. But she never did bring them back. After a while one of the Sisters saw her in Przemyśl in the company of other Jews.

XIV. Śniatyń near Stanisławów—Old Age Home on Kolejowa Street

- 1. A mute Jewish man died at the home. He was baptized before he died.*
- 2. Along with Mojsie Grosshaus, we cared for our Jewish charges in a special way, and watched out that they did not go out into the streets. By doing that they would have put themselves in danger of being taken to the ghetto and killed, as others had been. When the Sisters left for Western Poland [as a result of postwar border changes], Grosshaus remained in Śniatyń.*

XV. Sambor near Lwów

A small two-month-old Jewish child was brought to us. One of the Sisters took care of it for an entire year with great dedication. When it began to walk it was given to an orphanage in the same city run by the Basilian Sisters because our institution was an old age home.

XVI. Brzeżany near Tarnopol

- 1. Józef and Maria Gelber, a married couple, were Catholics but had a Jewish background. They were in the old age home from 1941 to 1944. They were on in years when Józef died in the home.*
- 2. Helena Uchman was the daughter of a Jewish neighbour. She hid in our home for a month. One Saturday she did not return. At that time there was an anti-Jewish campaign and she died along with her parents.*
- 3. Zosia, a little Jewish girl, was given over to the Rada Główna Opiekuńcza (Social Welfare Agency) by a peasant woman, a widow who was leaving Eastern Poland [i.e., fleeing Ukrainian nationalists] with her two children in 1943 and couldn't take her. The RGO directed Zosia to the Sisters. The child was taken in and brought up by them.*

4. A Jewish dentist gave us two rolls of woollen cloth to hold. His wife, who retrieved pieces of the cloth at a time, was able to get money from selling it.
5. During one winter we kept a cow owned by a Jewish neighbour. The Ukrainians had destroyed all his property.
6. During an intensive search for Jews we hid a woman with an eight-year-old boy. Later, when she saw the nuns on the street, she knelt down in front of them, thanking them for saving her life.

XVII. Rawa Ruska near Lwów

A boy who was found on the street was brought to us. He could only tell us that he had had a letter and money, which a woman had taken from him. His name was Zygmus (Zygmunt). He was later transferred to our shelter in Kraków at 6 Podbrzezie Street. His fate after leaving that institution is not known.

XVIII. Kołomyja near Stanisławów

1. Lodka (Leokadia) Rajbach, along with her two brothers, stayed with us for some time. After our home was taken over and included in the ghetto area, for three weeks we tried to help them any way we could by supplying food every evening. Lodka probably did not survive.
2. Tola Litner from Bielsko hid in our house for a certain period. We dressed her as a postulant and sent her to Kraków in the company of one of our Sisters. She spent the night in Kraków with the Sisters and then went on to her friends in Kalwaria.
3. We lived across from the ghetto where our old building was. The Sisters, hungry themselves, shared their bread with the poor Jews who stood near the wire fences and begged for something to eat or drink. Sometimes the Sisters would get a pass from the German command to go into the ghetto under the pretext of having to repair their shoes, umbrella, etc. You could not bring food into the ghetto. The Sisters would hide butter and other food in their sleeves and when they were out of sight of the German guards, they would give these things to the poor families inside the ghetto. They tried in this way to rescue a disabled Jew who was starving to death. He was given a coat, the only one in the home, by one of the Sisters. Once a soldier hit one of the Sisters on the head because he saw her give milk to a Jewish woman.

XIX. Drohobycz near Lwów—Shelter for the Poor on Cerkiewna Street

1. In 1942 a woman from the Polish Committee brought a two-and-a-half-year-old child to us who had been found. He was circumcised. We learned that his name was Tadzio. Because he couldn't say his last name he was given the name of Galewicz. When the advancing Soviet front moved closer and things became very dangerous, Tadzio was baptized because we feared for his soul should he be killed in the bombing. In July of 1944, after the Germans retreated, Tadzio's aunt came to us with a photograph of the child and was able to identify him. The father waited outside. This was Major Mieczysław Hański, who served in the Polish Army and had arrived with the advancing Russian Army. The aunt assured the Sisters that the father would reward the Sisters for having saved his son. And, indeed, he did. When we were evacuated to Wrocław the Sisters along with their poor charges were homeless. They went into the town looking for a place to live. Walking along they met a Jewish man who asked them what they were looking for. They told him of their fate and he answered them by saying that they had a highly placed person who would offer them protection in the person of the Major. This was the Major whose son the Sisters had saved. The man gave the Sisters his address at the army headquarters. When the Sisters met with the Major, he assigned to them the one-story house he had been living in at 8 Serbska Street. He, himself, moved to another house on Karłowicka Street. After a while he came to the Sisters and asked them for his son's baptismal certificate. In 1950, when the house on Serbska Street was being taken away from the Sisters, the Major was living in Legnica. The Sisters contacted him there and asked him for his help.
2. In the institution in Drohobycz, there hid for a time a Jewish woman who said she was a Catholic. She had false identification papers with the surname Kalińska. She went to church, had a rosary and even received the sacraments. Advised not to do this by the Sisters she still would not admit that she was Jewish. When she became deathly ill she still kept pretending until finally she asked to be baptized by our priest. He was surprised at her sudden change of heart. When the Sisters were leaving for the western part of Poland, they took all the sick with them, including her. She died en route in the arms of a Sister who had been taking care of her the entire way. She was buried in Wrocław at Psie Pole.

XX. Przemyśl-Bakończyce

1. Once during the occupation, an elderly Jewish couple came to our institution. They were very hungry. Because we were surrounded by German military objects and lookout posts, the Sisters directed the couple to some thick raspberry patches and brought them Kosher food to eat. When they had eaten, they went on their way. The Sisters do not remember their last name but they remember well the names of their friends from Przemyśl, who lived on Nadworska Street: Wincz, Gepsman, Szebel, and Rajchilbert.

2. Dr. Majzles from Przemyśl (address: 12 Plac Na Bramie) often came to the institution when it was difficult to obtain food. He always received some provisions.
3. Director Szwebel's position was threatened in Przemyśl. At the time, Sister Bernadetta intervened and spoke up at a meeting, stressing his work and sense of duty. He was saved and remained in his position.
4. In 1944 a one-year-old boy with a curved spine was sent to us from the hospital. His name was Henio. He was surrounded by loving care. He was fed goat's milk and egg yolks and returned to health. After the Germans left his relatives came for him and took him.

XXI. Busko-Zdrój near Kielce

The magistrate sent us a Jewish woman with two children whom we were to shelter for the night. They stayed for half a year, during which time we supported them. After the liberation we gave her warm clothing and she left, with her children, for Częstochowa.

XXII. Opoczno near Piotrków Trybunalski

There was a married couple from Przasnysz whose last name has been forgotten. Because they attracted attention to themselves by their appearance, the mayor told them to leave the institution. Consequently, Mother General asked the mother superior in Skarżysko to accept them. They were accepted there.

XXIII. Skarżysko-Kamienna near Kielce

1. This same couple is remembered by another Sister. The man was sick, had a stroke and died in the institution. His wife survived the war and returned to Przasnysz.
2. After the Warsaw Uprising, a Jewish family which was evacuated to Skarżysko under an assumed Polish name left an elderly man at the institution. He died there.
3. A little Jewish girl was sheltered at the orphanage. Her mother had been imprisoned. After she was freed, she came and took the child.
4. A foundling was brought to the institution. There was a brief note with the child stating that it was nine months old and not baptized. A childless couple took the child from the institution and baptized her giving her the name of Barbara. After the war some Jews came to take the child.

XXIV. Wołomin near Warsaw—Orphanage

1. The institution housed two little Jewish girls. One was adopted by a family and the older child, who was sickly, was baptized. Her brother came for her [after the war]. She did not want to go. She hid herself. She was afraid of the Jews. A letter was brought from the voivodship authorities, however, and she was taken. I think her name was Bronia.
2. During the Warsaw Uprising a five-year-old boy was found near the institution. He was poor, in torn clothes, hungry and had lice. The boys from the institution chased him, and even threw stones at him. When a Sister became aware of him, she called him over, washed him, fed him, gave him some clothes and he stayed. He couldn't tell us anything about himself. Because he had a dark complexion, the children called him a Gypsy. At first he was frightened and shy. After a few days he changed and the boys began to like him very much. He remained at the institution until September 1946. At the time the Sister who took care of him was transferred to Siedlce. There a certain Jewish woman who was looking for her child in the local orphanage showed a photograph of him. This Sister recognized the little "Gypsy" from Wołomin. The grateful mother took back her child and as a gift to the Sisters, offered them leather to make shoes.

XXV. Siedlce—Nursery

1. In 1943 a farmer brought a six-month-old Jewish child, along with her mother, to us from the countryside. The mother, out of fear, pretended to be incoherent. The father remained outside. The child was raised by us until the Germans retreated. The father came back and took the child. He said that his wife had been killed in Warsaw and that he, himself, had been sheltered by the Albertine Brothers in Warsaw. He was very grateful to the Sisters that at least this child was saved out of the whole family.
2. When the ghetto was being liquidated, a Jewish infant was left with us. After having been taken care of by Sister P., who hid him from the lay personnel, he was taken by the Jewish social agency.
3. In the Spring of 1943 a Jewish woman kept coming to our convent in Siedlce at 10 Cmentarna Street. She received food and worked at small jobs in the kitchen in order to stay with us. This lasted several weeks. She never told us her last name and no one ever asked. All that was necessary was to help this person in need.
4. Sometimes Jews would come to the orphanage from the ghetto and ask for bread. If there were no Germans nearby we gave them food.

5. About 1943 two women came to the nursery asking that a child be taken in. Because the Sisters could not do this without formal papers, they told the women to leave the child at night. The women did this. The little girl, who was only a few months old, stayed in the orphanage for some time. Later a friend of the mother's, a Polish woman, came to take the child.⁹⁶

6. A father came looking for his daughter Róża Zoik, a foundling, after the Germans retreated. He had been hidden by a Catholic woman in Warsaw, and after his wife died in the ghetto, he married this woman.

7. A farmer from the countryside brought in a little three-year-old girl with Jewish features because he was afraid to hide her any longer. This child was mortally afraid of Germans. She did not even look out the window for fear of being seen by the Germans. After a while someone told the authorities that the institution was harbouring a Jewish child. When the Germans came, a Sister covered this little girl up in a bed and showed them another child indicating that this was the one in question. That child had typical Aryan features so they patted her on the head and said that they must have received false information.

8. In 1945 the wounded were brought in from the front. These were Jews and Russians. The hospital's lay personnel left before the front reached us. Two Albertine Sisters went to the hospital to help the other nuns—Sisters of Charity—who were working there. Together with Dr. Krakówka, they carried the wounded to beds, dressed wounds and treated everyone with equal loving care.

XXVI. Mników near Kraków

During the German occupation evacuees from Warsaw came to us. Along with others, a Jewish woman and her child and two elderly Jewish sisters from Warsaw stayed with us. They told us that, in Warsaw, they had stood behind the chimney of a burned-out building, on the third floor, for two days. They had prayed to the Blessed Virgin of Częstochowa for help. After two days they were rescued by the fire department. These people stayed with us for two weeks, until the local reeve, who was afraid of the Germans, told them to leave the village.

XXVII. Kraków: 6 Podbrzezie Street

Two Jewish boys were accepted into the institution. They were seven and ten. One of them was named Jurek. Their last name had been changed to a Polish one, Nowak. Their mother came to see them three times a week and brought them various things. She was wealthy because it was said that the family owned two large stores on Floriańska Street and their own house. The mother promised the Sisters a large reward for sheltering these children. The children went outside once and were caught by the Germans. Because of this incident the institution had much unpleasantness: reports, German inspections, etc.⁹⁷

XXVIII. Rzęska near Kraków

1. A ten-year-old girl named Hania Raj gave the impression of being physically developed beyond her years. She was brought to us by her aunt, who said that the girl's parents were taken to a camp and then left for England, and that she did not have the means to keep the girl. Hania attended school and was a good student. At the request of her aunt she was prepared by the Sisters for Confession and Holy Communion. When the Russians came the aunt took her and placed her in the Jewish Orphanage in Kraków.

2. A 70-year-old woman walking to Rzęska met some Sisters and asked them whether she could stay overnight. The next day she asked to stay another night because she had no place to go. She did not admit to being Jewish. She prayed, received the sacraments and only when the local priest admonished her, did she stop taking Holy Communion. She lived in a room with the children, behind a screen, because there was no other place to put her. She was fluent in German and Russian and helped the children with their lessons. As soon as the Germans left, she went to Kraków.

XXIX. Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony

A certain lady came to Mother General asking her to accept Jaś into the shelter. He was the son of a rich neighbour

⁹⁶ This account appears to refer to Rachela, the daughter of Tzipora Zonszajn (née Jabłoń), who left her infant in the care of her friend, Irena Zawadzka, in Siedlce. Irena, with the help of one of her schoolmates, Lucyna Rzewuska, placed Rachela in the orphanage. They took her away a few months later when the child became ill. The child survived the occupation. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, p.928.

⁹⁷ Another Jewish child who was sheltered at this orphanage was Sara Warszawiak, who passed as Irena Jabłońska. She was transferred to Kraków from a convent in Brody in the winter of 1943, and was later adopted by Professor Jan Pilch and his wife, Julia. See her memoir: Sara Avinun, *Rising from the Abyss: An Adult's Struggle With Her Trauma as a Child in the Holocaust* (Hod Hasharon, Israel: Astrolog Publishing House, 2005), 96–106, 152. Sara remained with the Pilch's for some time after the war. Despite her desire to be baptized, Father Archilles, a Capuchin monk, dissuaded her from doing so. Ibid., 185–86.

from Rząska who was a lawyer. The parents were Catholics, but of Jewish background. Jaś, using the name of Moskowsky, was sent to our orphanage in Bochnia. He survived the war and returned to his family.

Additional Data:

1. One Sister stated that in Szczawnica a Mr. Majerczak hid a Jewish man in his basement. He brought this man food in a basket used for coal. After the war this person rewarded him.
2. Another Sister stated that while she was still living with her parents (Jan and Anna Zielonka, in the village of Filipy, in the county of Końskie), during the third year of the war, there was a Jewish family who went from house to house looking for a place to stay the night. Her parents took them in and that night the woman gave birth to a child. They could not stay any longer because the Germans made a thorough search of all of the houses.
3. A Sister stated that in 1939, after the German invasion, her friend from school, Salomea Baldinger, begged her to help her receive the Sacrament of Baptism. The baptism was performed by Father Józef Kosibowicz, the pastor of Sromowce Wyżne. As her Godmother, the Sister felt a responsibility to take care of her friend. Her friend's family was very angry with her. After two years the benefactor became a Sister. Not too long after Maria Salomea came to the Sister asking for help because her entire family had been killed by the Germans.

Miraculously, the friend was able to reach Kraków. Mother General instructed that she be accepted into the convent in Lubicz as a helper. After a few weeks she came back to the Mother House to ask for different work because she said working with the mentally ill depressed her. She later left for Germany to work. After the liberation she returned to Poland. In 1952 she came to us to ask for a baptismal certificate which she couldn't obtain during the war. She received one, got married and I was present at her daughter's First Holy Communion. At the present time she is doing well.

The above statements are based on the testimonies of the following Sisters:

1. S. Adelajda Tomasiak—Kołomyja
2. S. Adolfa Szczerbowska—Baworów, Brzeżany, Tarnopol
3. S. Aniceta Wierzbicka—Brzeżany, Siedlce
4. S. Anzelma Krupa—Skarżysko, Wołomin, Życzyn
5. S. Apolonia Leśniak—Bochnia, Kołomyja
6. S. Balbina Bielańska—Bochnia
7. S. Bernadetta Wołk—Przemyśl
8. S. Blandyna Tkaczyk—Kraków (Mother House)
9. S. Bonawentura Chrobak—Sulejów
10. S. Cypriana Mrzyglód—Drohobycz
11. S. Efrema Lis—Lwów-Zamarstynów
12. S. Emanuela Minko—Częstochowa, Mników, Siedlce, Wołomin (orphanage)
13. S. Emeryka Gaca—Tarnów (nursery)
14. S. Eleonora Janik—Przemyśl, Tarnopol
15. S. Eufrazja Wiatrowicz—Wołomin (orphanage)
16. S. Eugenia Gajewska—Brzeżany, Busko-Zdrój
17. S. Eulalia Dzidek—Siedlce, Skarżysko
18. S. Ewencja Panasiuk—Rząska
19. S. Ferdynanda Grzenkowicz—Kołomyja
20. S. Fortunata Kołodziej—Rząska
21. S. Helena Wilkolek—Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony
22. S. Hermana Bąk—Kraków (nursery)
23. S. Hugona Klimpel—Częstochowa
24. S. Ignacja Pluta—Kraków (Krakowska Street)
25. S. Józefina Latka—Śniatyni
26. S. Kaliksta Gózdź—Kielce
27. S. Katarzyna Bikowska—Drohobycz
28. S. Leokadia Sowińska—Mników
29. S. Lidwina Święs—Tarnów
30. S. Longina Konieczna—Tarnopol
31. S. Łucjana Stano—Bochnia
32. S. Magdalena Kaczmarczyk—Częstochowa
33. S. Marcelina Wędzicha—Bochnia
34. S. Maria Kotas—Baworów

35. S. Maurycja Wohnout—Brzeżany, Tarnopol
36. S. Modesta Wierzchowska—Mników
37. S. Pankracja Solarz—Opoczno
38. S. Paulina Adamczyk—Wołomin (orphanage), Siedlce
39. S. Rafaela Kupczyk—Stanisławów
40. S. Scholastyka Bogacz—Częstochowa
41. S. Serwacja Dobrotowska—Sambor
42. S. Seweryna Domaradzka—Kraków (Krakowska Street), Tarnów (Shelter for the Poor)
43. S. Stanisława Kluz—Kraków (Nursery), Tarnów (Nursery), Lwów
44. S. Suplicja Kogutowicz—Skarżysko, Kraków (educational institution)
45. S. Sykstusa Kardyś—Busko-Zdrój, Śniatyn
46. S. Taida Baland—Drohobycz
47. S. Teresa Wilhelm—Drohobycz
48. S. Urbana Kondeja—Kraków (Krakowska Street)
49. S. Wita Pawłowska—Częstochowa
50. S. Waleriana Żuchowska—Rawa Ruska

Zygmunt Weinreb, born in 1935, found refuge in a shelter on Krakowska Street in Kraków run by the Albertine Brothers, as recorded in Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, at page 114:

I stayed at the Albertine Brothers and Mrs Thiel, the teacher, guessed that I was Jewish, and the Brother Superior did too, and they helped me a lot. They did not say anything to me, but the Brother told me to bathe in bathing trunks like the older boys, and the teacher got angry whenever anyone called me a Jew and secretly taught me things so that no one would be able to tell I was Jewish. But then everyone began whispering about me, so the teacher took me home with her and put me in a school where the headmaster, Mr Chrzan, knew that I was Jewish and helped me a lot. ...

When the Russians arrived the Brother Superior read in the newspaper that there was a Jewish Committee, and he told me to go to Długa Street to find out if my father had registered there.

Not all Jewish children returned to their families and faith after the war. The following account is related in Zosia Goldberg, as told to Hilton Obenzinger, *Running Through Fire: How I Survived the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 2004), at pages 36–37.

On my mother's side of the family there were cousins. My mother's mother's sister was Telca Trauman and she had two children, Lutek and Franka. Her son Lutek was married to Hela ... Lutek and Hela went through the wall [of the Warsaw ghetto] to live in the Aryan section. They took their daughter Hanka and lived with his mother Telca. His sister Franka also lived there, and brought her daughter Bronia.

Telca made believe she was deaf and mute in order to hide her Jewish accent. She had blue eyes, a good face. ... And they got through the war this way to die natural deaths. Bronia's father, Adolf, was taken away one day near the Umschlagplatz and killed, but Franka and her mother, Telca, were able to get some kind of papers and hide in the apartment in the Aryan section. Lutek Trauman was stopped one day, the Germans pulled his pants down, and when they saw that he was circumcised, they killed him on the spot.

Soon after they got to the Aryan side Bronia was put in a Catholic convent. She was five years old, and she was told by a priest, "You are a Jewish girl, but now you are a Christian, and never say anything. After the war you can be Jewish again." But Bronia after the war did not want to be Jewish anymore and she remained Catholic. After all the suffering, her mother, Franka, was driven out of her mind because her daughter remained a Christian. Bronia is still in Poland, while Hela and her daughter Hanka moved to Israel.

Jews in concentration and slave labour camps also encountered members of the Polish clergy who were willing to extend a hand to their fellow prisoners when the opportunity arose. Michel (Mendel) Mielnicki, a young Jew from Wasilków near Białystok, described one such event that occurred in the slave labour camp at Mittelbau-Dora near Weimar in his memoirs *Bialystok to Birkenau: The Holocaust Journey of Michel Mielnicki*, as told to John Munro (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 2000), at pages 202–203.

Well, very early one morning, I was awakened when my head hit the wooden sleeping shelf beneath it with a thud. I knew instantly what had happened. I was out of my bunk and onto the back of a prisoner who'd stolen my bread in a second.

But not fast enough to stop him from stuffing my bread into his mouth. Possessed of a strength that in retrospect still surprises me, I quickly had him down on the floor with my hands locked on his throat, when the Polish priest, who was our Blockältester [block elder], came out of his room to see who was making all the racket.

I can't say whether it was my intention to strangle the thief or just to stop him from swallowing my bread (and thus my ability to stay alive). Whatever the case, I was on the brink of choking the final breath out of the man, when this priest, who was tall, and heavy enough to have pulled me away with one hand, instead said, "So what will you accomplish if you kill him? He's already eaten most of your bread, and you'll be hanged tomorrow. Remember your Ten Commandments. Let him go, and I'll tend to his punishment." So I let the son of a bitch go. At which point the big priest added, "God will help you." In Hebrew! Somehow, he had known from the outset that I was a Jew. I don't recall that in my subsequent dealings with him, which, given his position, were considerable, he ever so much as alluded to this again. And I couldn't be more grateful to this Christian man of the cloth if I tried. In his own way, he too saved my life.

Similar accounts attest to the selfless sacrifice of Polish priests and nuns imprisoned in other Nazi German concentration camps. Rev. Michał Piaszczyński, who maintained friendly relations with Jews in his native Łomża before the war, and even invited rabbis to the seminary where he taught, shared his meagre food ration with other prisoners of Sachsenhausen (Oranienburg), where he died of malnutrition and disease in December 1940. When a Jew in his block was denied his food ration one day, Rev. Piaszczyński gave his over to the Jew (a lawyer from Warsaw by the name of Kott); the latter turned to Rev. Piaszczyński with tears in his eyes and said: "You Catholics believe that in your churches there is a living Christ in your bread. I believe that in this bread there is a living Christ who told you to share it with me." (Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.144–46.) An inmate of Dachau, where "altruism is almost completely unknown," records how Rev. Jan Tymiński of the diocese of Łomża volunteered to be transferred to one of the blocks that was ridden with the typhus epidemic in order to help his fellow prisoners who were less fortunate than he was: "He hops from one bunk to another, blesses the dying, no matter of what nationality or faith they are, consoles those who are still conscious." (S.J. [Stanisław Jerzy] Sagan, *Food Carries Out!* [Toronto: n.p., 1982], p.110.) Rev. Tadeusz Gaik, who was also interned in Dachau, struck up a deep friendship with a Jew by the name of Dawid Jakubowski from his hometown of Bochnia, and provided him with food and a sweater. (Tadeusz Gaik, "Moje krótkie wspomnienie," in Antoni Gładysz and Andrzej Szymerski, eds., *Biografia byłych więźniów politycznych niemieckich obozów koncentracyjnych*, volume 1 [Philadelphia: Promyk, 1972], pp.72–74.) Rev. Witold Kiedrowski, from the Chełmno diocese, who was imprisoned in Majdanek, witnessed how Rev. Julian Chruścicki (Chróścicki), a priest from the Warsaw suburb of Włochy who had been arrested for helping Jews, joined with a rabbi in reciting psalms from the breviary he had managed to smuggle into the camp. In his capacity as pharmacist, Rev. Kiedrowski visited sickrooms in the camps in which he was interned, namely, Majdanek, Birkenau and Ohdruf, bringing both medical and spiritual assistance to prisoners of all nationalities, including Jews, for whom he would recite psalms. During the massacre of Jewish prisoners in Majdanek on November 3, 1943, Rev. Kiedrowski was badly beaten for trying to protect a Jewish boy. (Witold Kiedrowski, "Świat potrzebuje pomnika żywej modlitwy," *Miesięcznik Franciszkański*, September 12, 1987.) Sister Julia (Stanisława) Rodzińska, a Dominican nun from Wilno who was arrested in July 1943 and imprisoned in Stutthof, died there in February 1945, after contracting typhus while visiting and caring for inmates infected with typhus. A fellow Jewish inmate by the name of Eva Hoff recalled: "She helped us with her inner strength." (Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.281–85.)

Even as the war was drawing to a close, Jews would still find themselves in need of protectors. Six Jewish women who were evacuated from Auschwitz by the Germans in the so-called death marches managed to escape and hid in a barn. A Polish priest brought them food and sheltered them until the arrival of the Soviet army. (Leah B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT–369) and Sara E. Holocaust Testimony (HVT–1085), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.)

Edith Zierer credits Pope John Paul II with saving her life in the final months of the war. ("The Pope in the Holy Land," *Catholic Insight* [Toronto], May 2000, p.21.)

Liberated in January 1945, she left the Skarzysko-Kamienna [Skarżysko-Kamienna] camp totally weakened by

tuberculosis and other ailments that had her virtually paralyzed. A young seminarian by the name of Karol Wojtyła [Wojtyła] found her, gave her a sandwich and a cup of tea. Then he carried her on his shoulders for almost two miles, from the concentration camp to the railway station, where the girl joined other survivors. After staying in a Kraków [Kraków] orphanage and a French sanatorium, in 1951 she emigrated to Israel where she married.

Pola Hipsz, who returned to Poland after the war from exile in Siberia, credits Karol Wojtyła, then a young priest, with helping her to locate her husband, Daniel Sztarksztejn, and reuniting with him in London, England. (See Marilyn Schimmel, *Witnesses: Voices from the Holocaust* [Melbourne: Macmillan, 2005].) There also exist some sketchy accounts of Karol Wojtyła's wartime rescue activities. According to Paul Johnson, *Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Restoration* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), at page 10: "His name also figured on a Nazi blacklist on account of his activities on behalf of the Jewish community in Cracow and its neighbourhood. As recorded in the archives of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Jewish organization, he belonged to an underground group which took Jewish families out of the ghettos, gave them new identity papers and, if necessary, found them hiding places." According to another source, Marek Halter, *Stories of Deliverance: Speaking with Men and Women Who Rescued Jews from the Holocaust* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois, 1997), at pages 258–59: "Many people have told me: he was one of the people who took risks for the Jews. We know, for example, that he made false papers for them during the war. ... this young man participated in making, inside the Bishop's palace, false papers destined for Polish members of the Resistance and Jews."

A little known chapter of the war is the rescue effort of Henryk Sławik, the Polish *chargé d'affaires* in Budapest, who is credited with rescuing at least five thousand Polish Jews, both members of the military and civilians, who fled to Hungary during the war. When Germany invaded Hungary in March 1944 and embarked on a massive deportation of its Jews to Auschwitz, the fate of Polish Jews living in camps for Polish refugees became very precarious. The rescue operation required that Polish Jews pass as Catholic Poles, and therefore Sławik turned to the Polish Committee and the Polish Catholic Mission in Hungary, headed by the Pauline priest, Rev. Michał Zembrzusi, for assistance. The Polish Catholic Mission, which counted some 60 priests, stationed for the most part in the camps set up for refugees, issued instructions to all its priests to assist any Jew who needed to assume a new identity as a Christian. Every Jew who sought a false baptismal certificate was issued one without question, without having to undergo baptism or conversion. Although this fact became widely known among the Polish Catholic refugees, none of the Jew was denounced. All of them were able to escape and leave Hungary in time. About 100 Jewish children were placed in a special orphanage in the town of Vác, ostensibly housing children of Polish officers, where they posed as Catholics. A Piarist priest from Slovakia, Rev. Pavel Boharčík (also known as Bucharczyk), pretended to teach religion to the children. The children and Jewish personnel attended Sunday mass at the local church as part of their guise. Itzhak Bretler, a Jew passing as a Catholic by the name of Władysław Bratkowski, taught the children the Old Testament and Torah. When Fr. Zembrzusi visited the orphanage, the Jewish children would greet him with the words "Praised be Jesus Christ!" The children still recall the warm and caring atmosphere that permeated the orphanage. Sławik was arrested by the Germans on March 19, 1944. Although brutally tortured, he did not betray any of his Hungarian and Polish colleagues. He was sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp where he was executed probably in August 1944. Henryk Sławik and Rev. Boharčík were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentile. (Henryk Zvi Zimmermann, *Przeżyłem, pamiętam, świadczę* [Kraków: Baran i Suszczyński, 1997], chapter 32.) The following account is from Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, volume 5: *Poland*, Part 2, at pages 768–69.

With the defeat of Poland in September 1939 and the subsequent German [and Soviet] occupation, thousands of Poles crossed into Hungary and settled there. The Polish refugees were followed by hundreds of Jewish families. Among them were also many orphaned children. Izaak Brettler (Władysław [Władysław] Bratkowski) and his wife, Mina, took care of many of them. In July 1943, they gathered a group of 76 children between the ages of three and 19 from Budapest and led them out to the locality of Vác [Vác], some 30 kilometers away. There, Izaak organized a boarding school and with the help of the local Jews got in touch with the delegate to Hungary of the Polish Government-in-Exile, Mr. Henryk Sławik [Sławik], and asked him for help. In September 1943, the boarding school was proclaimed a Polish educational institution acting on behalf of the Polish Committee in Hungary. All students and personnel were given forged documents and Polish army officer Franciszek Swider [Świder] was appointed director of the school. Maria Tomanek, a teacher, also

volunteered to work there. With the invasion of German troops into Hungary on March 19, 1944, the institution appeared to be under threat. To give the school a more Polish and Christian image, all the students and teachers attended regular church services at the local church. In addition, a priest from Slovakia, Dr. Pavel Boharcik [Boharčík], came to the school to teach religion, but in reality he was teaching the students Hungarian.

The following testimonial bears eloquent witness to the sacrifice and selflessness of countless Polish rescuers, among them members of the clergy, whose identity will never be known. (Gilbert, *The Righteous*, pp.179–80.

Yehuda Bauer, a pioneer of research and writing on the Holocaust, tells a story from his personal experience in Israel after the war ... 'On my kibbutz,' he writes, 'there lives a man whom we shall call here Tolek. All he knows about himself is his name. He was born near Cracow [Kraków], or in Cracow, prior to World War II, and he was three when the war broke out. He was in an orphanage, probably because his father had died and his mother could not support him. A Polish woman took this circumcised man-child to her home and raised him there during the Nazi occupation, in alliance with a Catholic parish priest. When the Nazis came searching Polish homes for Jewish children, the woman used to hand over Tolek to the priest. Tolek still remembers how, at the age of five and six, he used to assist the priest at Mass, swinging the incense around, walking behind the priest through the church. They survived the war, and when liberation came, the woman took Tolek to a Jewish children's home and said, "This is a Jewish child, I have kept him throughout the war, he belongs to your people, take him and look after him." Tolek does not know the name of the Polish woman, nor does he know the name of the priest.'

Once the German occupation came to an end, as we have seen, priests who were entrusted with Torah scrolls for safekeeping, returned them to the remnants of the Jewish community. (Yehuda Weinstock, "Returned from the Red Army," in Shuval, *The Szczepreszyn Memorial Book*, p.191.)

Arriving in Lublin, after I was let go from the Red Army in the year 1944, ... Lublin could be compared to a [prison] camp. The bombs fell on the side where the Nazis were. No people could be seen in the streets. I ran into single Jews and they told me about the terrifying fate that had befallen all the Jews of Poland.

As a soldier in the Red Army, they invited me to the 'Peretz House,' where there were several hundred Jews—men and women, mostly partisans from the forests, a large number from out of the country, who were dragged by German fascists to the Polish camps to be killed.

The day was precisely Hoshana Rabbah. The Jews made a pulpit out of stones in order to conduct services, and a Polish priest that had concealed 6 Torah scrolls, brought them to the 'Peretz House.' All of the several hundred Jews began to pray and prepare for the Festival Holiday.

Select Bibliography

Many additional testimonies and descriptions of assistance by the Catholic clergy can be found in the following publications:

- Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewin, eds., *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles Helped the Jews, 1939–1945* (London: Earls Court Publications, 1969), especially at pages 329–62. (See also pp.lxxxii–lxxxiv, 13–15, 18, 50–52, 61, 86–87, 130, 132, 150–53, 167–70, 173, 201–202, 216, 233, 259–60, 277–80, 295, 306–308, 375, 396, 397, 399–401, 404–405, 406, 415–17, 513–17, 522–23, 588–90.) A significantly abridged version of this book was published in the United States as *The Samaritans: Heroes of the Holocaust* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970).
- Nahum Bogner, “The Convent Children: The Rescue of Jewish Children in Polish Convents During the Holocaust,” in *Yad Vashem Studies* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority, 1999), volume 27: pp.235–85. Internet: <http://www1.yadvashem.org/download/about_holocaust/studies/bogner_full.pdf>.
- Nahum Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers: The Rescue of Hidden Jewish Children in Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009).
- Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), pp.1–180.
- Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, volume 2 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005).
- Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*. Volumes 4 & 5: *Poland*, 2 parts (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004).
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- Ewa Kurek-Lesik, “The Conditions of Admittance and the Social Background of Jewish Children Saved by Women’s Religious Orders in Poland From 1939–1945,” in *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1988), volume 3: pp.244–75.
- Ewa Kurek-Lesik, “The Role of Polish Nuns in the Rescue of Jews, 1939–1945,” in *Embracing the Other: Philosophical, Psychological, and Historical Perspectives on Altruism*, edited by Pearl M. Oliner, Samuel P. Oliner, Lawrence Baron, Lawrence A. Blum, Dennis L. Krebs, and Zuzanna M. Smolenska (New York: New York University Press, 1992), pp.328–34.
- Ewa Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine: How Polish Nuns Saved Hundreds of Jewish Children in German Occupied Poland, 1939–1945* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1997), especially at pages 139–204. Kurek identifies 53 orders of nuns who rescued no fewer than 1,200 Jewish children in almost 200 convents and institutions.
- Wiktoria Śliwowska, ed., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, volume 1 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998).
- Zygmunt Zieliński, “Activities of Catholic Orders on Behalf of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland,” in *Judaism and Christianity Under the Impact of National Socialism*, edited by Otto Dov Kulka and Paul R. Mendes-Flohr (Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel and The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1987), pp.381–94.

Important Polish-language sources include:

- Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, eds., *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej: Polacy z pomocą Żydom 1939–1945*, Second revised and expanded edition (Kraków: Znak, 1969). This volume is more comprehensive than the two English-language versions noted above and contains numerous additional examples of clergy rescue.
- Teresa Antonietta Frącek, “Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć,” 6 Parts, *Nasz Dziennik*, March 8–9, March 12, March 15–16, March 19, March 26, April 4, 2008.
- Michał Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993).
- Franciszek Kącki, *Udział księży i zakonnic w holokauście Żydów*, second revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Adiutor, 2002).
- Ewa Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach: Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Clio, 2001). This is an expanded version of Ewa Kurek’s English-language book *Your Life Is Worth Mine*.
- Katarzyna Meloch and Halina Szostkiewicz, eds., *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, volume 3 (Warsaw: Midrasz and Stowarzyszenie “Dzieci Holocaustu” w Polsce, 2008).

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Religious and Monastic Orders of Women Who Rescued Jews

Albertine Sisters (Sisters Servants of the Poor) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Posługujących Ubogim Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—Siostry Albertynki*): Baworów, Bochnia, Brzeżany, Busko-Zdrój, Częstochowa, Drohobycz, Kielce, Kołomyja, Kraków (2 institutions), Kraków-Podbrzezie, Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony, Lwów-Persenkówka, Lwów-Zamarstynów, Mników, Opoczno, Przemyśl-Bakończyce, Rawa Ruska, Rząska, Sambor, Siedlce, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Śniatyn, Stanisławów, Sulejów, Tarnopol, Tarnów, Wołomin.

Sisters of the Angels (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr od Aniołów—Siostry od Aniołów*): Chylice, Wilno, Wisary.

Antonian Sisters of Christ the King (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Antonianek od Chrystusa Króla Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—Siostry Antonianki*): Łódź.

Antonine Sisters (Sisters of Social Service of St. Anthony) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Opieki Społecznej pod wezwaniem św. Antoniego—Siostry Antoninki*): Wieluń.

Benedictine Sisters (Order of St. Benedict) (*Mniszki Zakonu Sióstr św. Benedykta—Siostry Benedyktynki*): Lwów, Nieśwież, Przemyśl, Staniatki near Kraków, Wilno.

(Benedictine) Sisters of Our Lady of Loreto (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Matki Bożej Loretańskiej—Siostry (Benedyktynki) Loretanki*): Warsaw.

Benedictine Missionary Sisters (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Benedyktynek Misjonarek—Siostry Benedyktynki Misjonarki*): Luck.

Benedictine Sisters of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (*Mniszki Benedyktynki od Nieustającej Adoracji Najświętszego Sakramentu—Siostry Benedyktynki Sakramentki*): Lwów.

(Benedictine) Samaritan Sisters of the Cross of Christ (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Benedyktynek Samarytanek Krzyża Chrystusowego—Siostry (Benedyktynki) Samarytanki*): Henryków, Niegów, Pruszków, Pruszków-Żbików.

Bernardine Sisters (Franciscan) (*Mniszki Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—Siostry Bernardynki*): Borki-Luków, Łowicz.

Sisters of the Family of Bethany (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Rodziny Betańskiej—Siostry Betanki*): Lublin, Mełgiew, Międzylesie near Warsaw.

Discalced (or Barefoot) Carmelite Sisters (*Mniszki Bose Zakonu Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Góry Karmel—Siostry Karmelitanki Bose*): Lwów (2 institutions), Przemyśl, Warsaw.

Carmelite Sisters of the Infant Jesus (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Karmelitanek Dzieciątka Jezus—Siostry Karmelitanki Dzieciątka Jezus*): Sosnowiec.

Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Karola Boromeusza—Siostry Boromeuszki*): Łańcut, Przemyśl.

Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration (*Mniszki Klaryski od Wiecznej Adoracji—Mniszki Klaryski*): Kraków, Lwów, Nowy Sącz.

Daughters of Divine Love (*Zgromadzenie Córek Bożej Miłości—Córki Bożej Miłości*): Kraków-Pleszów, Kraków-Wola Justowska.

Daughters of Mary Immaculate (*Zgromadzenie Córek Maryi Niepokalanej—Córki Maryi Niepokalanej*): Hrubieszów, Kielce, Końskie, Lida, Radom, Rawa Mazowiecka, Wiszniew near Wołożyn, Warsaw.

Daughters of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Zgromadzenie Córek Najczystsze Serca Najświętszej Maryi Panny—Córki Najczystsze Serca NMP (sercanki bezhabitowe)*): Kolno, Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, Otwock, Sitnik, Skórzec, Warsaw (two institutions), Wilno.

Sisters of Divine Providence (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Opatrzności Bożej—Siostry Opatrznościanki*): Międzyrzec Podlaski, Przemyśl, Rzeszów, Skole, Sterdyń.

Sisters Shepherds of Divine Providence (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Pasterek od Opatrzności Bożej—Siostry Pasterki*): Lubartów, Lublin.

Dominican Sisters (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Dominika—Siostry Dominikanki*): Biała Niżna near Nowy Sącz, Chorzów, Kielce, Wilno, Żurów near Rohatyn.

Dominican Sisters (cloistered) (*Mniszki Zakonu Kaznodziejskiego—Siostry Dominikanki (klauzury)*): Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno.

Dominican Missionary Sisters of Jesus and Mary (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Dominikanek Misjonarek Jezusa i Maryi—Siostry Dominikanki Misjonarki*): Warsaw and vicinity.

(Grey) Sisters of St. Elizabeth (Silesia) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Elżbiety Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—Siostry Elżbietanki (śląskie) (szare)*): Otwock.

(Franciscan) Sisters of St. Elizabeth (Cieszyn) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Elżbiety Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—Siostry Elżbietanki (cieszyńskie)*): Cieszyn.

Felician Sisters (Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Feliksa z Kantalicjo Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—Siostry Felicjanki*): Chełm, Dobranowice near Wieliczka, Kraków, Lwów (3 institutions), Otwock, Przemyśl (2 institutions), Pustomyty, Sądowa Wisznia, Staniątki, Warsaw (2 institutions), Wawer near Warsaw, Widawa.

Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross (Laski) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek Służebnic Krzyża—Siostry Franciszkanki Służebnice Krzyża*): Laski near Warsaw, Zakopane, Żulów.

Franciscan Sisters of the Suffering (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek od Cierpiących—Siostry Franciszkanki od Cierpiących*): Kozienice, Łuck, Wilno.

Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek Rodziny Maryi—Siostry Franciszkanki Rodziny Maryi*): Anin near Warsaw, Beresteczko, Białoleka Dworska near Warsaw (2 institutions), Brwinów (2 institutions), Brzezinki, Dubno, Dźwiniaczka near Borszczów, Grójec, Izabelin near Warsaw, Kołomyja, Kostów, Kostowiec, Krasnystaw, Łomna near Turka, Lwów (3 institutions), Maciejowice near Warsaw, Mickuny near Wilno, Międzylesie near Warsaw (3 institutions), Mirzec, Mszana Dolna near Rabka, Nieborów near Łowicz, Nienadowa, Ostrówek near Warsaw, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Pastyń, Płudy near Warsaw, Podhajce, Pustelnik, Puźniki near Buczac, Raków, Sambor, Soplicowo near Warsaw, Szymanów, Turka, Warsaw (5 institutions), Wilno, Wołkowysk, Wola Gołkowska.

Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek Misjonarek Maryi—Franciszkanki Misjonarki Maryi*): Radecznica, Zamość.

Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Najświętszej Rodziny z Nazaretu—Siostry Nazaretanki*): Częstochowa, Kielce, Komańcza, Nowogródek, Olsztyn, Warsaw.

Missionary Sisters of the Holy Family (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Misjonarek Świętej Rodziny—Siostry Misjonarki Świętej Rodziny*): Białystok, Prużana.

Canon Sisters of the Holy Spirit (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Kanoniczek Ducha Świętego de Saxia—Siostry Duchaczki*): Biskupice, Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Kraków, Leżajsk, Lublin, Pacanów, Zabłocie.

Sisters of the Robe of Jesus (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Westiarek Jezusa—Siostry Westiarki Jezusa*)

Sisters of the Gratification of the Most Holy Countenance (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Wynagrodzicielek Najświętszego Oblicza—Siostry Obliczanki*): Częstochowa, Lublin, Miedzeszyn near Warsaw, Wilno, Zielonka.

Sisters of the Most Holy Name of Jesus Under the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of the Faithful (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Najświętszego Imienia Jezus pod opieką Najświętszej Maryi Panny Wspomożenia Wiernych—Siostry Imienia Jezus*): Klimontów, Suchedniów, Wilno.

Sisters Servants of Jesus (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Sług Jezusa—Siostry Sługi Jezusa*): Bychawka near Lublin, Kielczewice, Lublin, Tarnów.

Sisters (of Charity) of St. Joseph (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr (Miłosierdzia) św. Józefa—Siostry Józefitki*): Łaszczów, Mielec, Narajów, Skalat, Sokal, Smanczykowczyki, Stryj, Tarnów, Trzesówka, Zamość.

Michaelite Sisters (Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Michała Archaniola—Siostry Michalitki*): Godowa, Miejsce Piastowe, Przytyk, Radom, Wysoka Głogowska, Wysoka Strzyżowska.

Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy (Magdalene Sisters) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Matki Bożej Miłosierdzia—Siostry Magdalenki*): Częstochowa, Derdy, Kraków, Lwów, Rabka, Radom, Walendów, Warsaw, Warsaw-Grochów, Wilno.

Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny—Siostry Niepokalanki*): Buraków, Jarosław, Koźle, Nowy Sącz, Słonim, Szymanów, Warsaw, Wrzosów.

Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Pleszew) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Pleszewa—Siostry Służebniczki Pleszewskie (Wielkopolskie)*): Czersk nad Wisłą, Piotrków Trybunalski, Przesmyki, Warsaw, Włodzimierzów.

Sisters of Mary Immaculate (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Maryi Niepokalanej—Siostry Maryi Niepokolanej*): Katowice, Zgoda.

Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Mariówka) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służek Najświętszej Maryi Panny Niepokalanej z Mariówki—Siostry Służki*): Bychawa, Chomotów, Czyżów, Drzewica, Grodno, Jeżewo, Lisków, Łomża, Mościska, Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, Warsaw.

Sisters Servants of the Virgin Mother of God Immaculately Conceived (Dębica) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Bogarodzicy Dziewicy Niepokalanie Poczętej—Siostry Służebniczki Dębickie*): Proszówki near Bochnia.

Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (Stara Wieś) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Najświętszej Maryi Panny Niepokalanie Poczętej ze Starej Wsi—Siostry Służebniczki Starowiejskie*): Brzeżany, Chotomów, Chrostów, Częstochowa, Grodzisko near Leżajsk, Jasionów near Brzozów, Końskie, Kopyczyńce, Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony, Lesko, Łązniew, Łódź, Lublin, Miechów, Piotrków Trybunalski, Róża, Rzepińce, Stara Wieś, Staromieście near Rzeszów, Szywałd, Tapin, Tarnopol, Tarnów, Turkowice, Wola Rzędzińska.

Sisters of Common Work of Immaculate Mary (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Wspólnej Pracy pod wezwaniem Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny—Siostry Wspólnej Pracy*): Warsaw.

School Sisters of Notre Dame (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Szkolnych de Notre Dame—Siostry Notre Dame*): Lwów (2 institutions), Mikuliczyn.

Sisters (Ladies) of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Zgromadzenie Panien Ofiarowania Najświętszej Maryi Panny—Siostry Prezentki*): Kraków, Ujazdy near Rzeszów, Wilno.

Sisters Servants of the Mother of the Good Shepherd (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebnic Matki Dobrego Pasterza—Siostry Pasterzanki*): Białystok, Częstochowa, Piaseczno.

Sisters of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Zakon Nawiedzenia Najświętszej Maryi Panny—Siostry Wizytki*): Wilno.

Seraphite Sisters (Sisters (Daughters) of Our Lady of Sorrows) (*Zgromadzenie Córek Matki Bożej Bolesnej; Zgromadzenie Córek Najświętszej Maryi Panny od Siedmiu Bolesci—Siostry Serafiki*): Drohobycz, Jarosław, Nowy Targ, Pysznica, Stryj.

Norbertine Sisters (Sisters of St. Norbert) (*Zakon Norbertanek—Siostry Kanoniczki Regularne Zakonu Premonstratensów—Siostry Norbertanki*): Imbramowice.

Pallottine Sisters (Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Misjonarek Apostolstwa Katolickiego—Siostry Pallotyńki*): Nowogródek, Rajca.

Passionist Sisters (Sisters of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Męki Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa—Siostry Pasjonistki*): Janów Lubelski, Kielce, Stopnica.

Resurrectionist Sisters (Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Zmartwychwstania Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa—Siostry Zmartwychwstanki*): Częstochowa, Lwów, Mir, Stara Wieś near Węgrów, Warsaw (4 institutions), Warsaw-Żoliborz, Wejherowo.

Sacré Coeur Sisters (Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus) (*Zgromadzenie Najświętszego Serca Jezusa Sacré-Coeur—Siostry Sacré Coeur*): Lwów.

Sisters Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebnic Najświętszego Serca Jezusowego Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—Siostry Sercanki*): Brody near Lwów, Krosno, Przemyśl-Błonie, Radomsko, Rymanów Zdrój, Zakopane.

Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Oblatek Serca Jezusa—Siostry Oblatki Serca Jezusa*): Częstochowa.

Sisters of the Most Holy Soul of Christ the Lord (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Najświętszej Duszy Chrystusa Pana—Siostry Duszy Chrystusowej*): Kraków, Kraków-Azory, Kraków-Skotniki, Zielonka near Kraków.

Sisters of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Teresy od Dzieciątka Jezus—Siostry Terezjanki*): Luboml, Włodzimierz Wołyński.

Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus (Grey Ursulines) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Urszulanek Serca Jezusa Konającego—Siostry Urszulanki Serca Jezusowego (szare)*): Brwinów, Czarna Duża, Milanówek, Ołtarzew, Radość, Sieradz, Suchedniów near Radom, Warsaw (3 institutions), Wilno, Zakopane.

Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union (*Unia Rzymska Zakonu św. Urszuli—Siostry Urszulanki Unii Rzymskiej*): Częstochowa, Kołomyja, Kraków, Lublin, Lwów, Rokiciny Podhalańskie (near Rabka), Stanisławów, Tarnów, Warsaw, Włocławek, Zakopane.

Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo—Siostry Miłosierdzia—Siostry Szarytki*): Białystok, Budzanów, Czerwonogród near Zaleszczyki, Góra Kalwaria, Ignaców near Mińsk Mazowiecki, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska near Kraków, Kielce, Klarysew near Warsaw, Kraków, Kurozwęki, Lwów, Przeworsk, Radom, Supraśl, Szczawnica, Warsaw (8 institutions), Werki near Wilno, Wilno.

Religious and Monastic Orders of Men Who Rescued Jews

The following list does not include male diocesan clergy.

Albertines (*Bracia Albertyni, Zgromadzenie Braci Albertynów Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka Serafickiego Posługujących Ubogim—albertyni*): Przemyśl, Kraków, Warsaw.

Benedictines (*Mnisi Reguły św. Benedykta (OSB)—benedyktyni*): Tyniec.

Bernardines (*bernardyni*) or **Franciscans** (*franciszkanie*): Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Kraków, Lwów, Tarnawica Polna near Tłumacz, Radeczna.

Camaldolese (*Kongregacja Eremitów Kamedułów Góry Koronnej (EC)—kameduli*): Bielany near Warsaw.

Capuchins (*Zakon Braci Mniejszych Kapucynów (OFMCap)—kapucyni*): Drohobycz, Horodno (Polesie voivodship), Kraków, Lublin, Nowe Miasto nad Policą, Warsaw.

Carmelites (*Zakon Braci Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Góry Karmel (OCarm)—karmelici*): Bolszowce near Rohatyn, Kraków, Wilno.

Cistercians (*Zakon Cystersów (OCist)—cystersi*): Mogiła near Kraków.

Dominicans (*Zakon Braci Kaznodziejów (OP)—dominikanie*): Czortków, Lwów.

Franciscans (Conventuals) (*Zakon Braci Mniejszych Konwentualnych (OFMConv)—franciszkanie konwentualni*): Grodno, Niepokalanów, Warsaw.

Franciscans (Reformed) (*Zakon Braci Mniejszych (OFM), Prowincja Matki Bożej Anielskiej—franciszkanie reformaci*): Przemyśl-Panewniki, Sadowa Wisznia.

Franciscans (not identified) (*franciszkanie*): Łagiewniki near Łódź, Limanowa, in/near Kraków, in/near Warsaw.

Jesuits (*Towarzystwo Jezusowe (SJ)—jezuici*): Albertyn near Słonim, Janówka near Tarnopol, Lwów, Nowy Sącz, Otwock near Warsaw, Słonim, Stara Wieś, Tarnopol, Turkowice near Hrubieszów, Warsaw (various priests), Wilno.

Marians (*Zgromadzenie Księżąt Marianów Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny (MIC)—marianie*): Bielany near Warsaw, Warsaw.

Congregation of St. Michael (*Zgromadzenie św. Michała Archanioła (CSMA)—michalici*): Struga near Warsaw, Miejsce Piastowe.

Oblates of Mary Immaculate (*Zgromadzenie Misjonarzy Oblatów Maryi Niepokalanej (OMI)—oblaci*): Okopy near Rokitno.

Orionists (*Małe Dzieło Boskiej Opatrzności (FDP)—orioniści*): Warsaw.

Pallotins (*Stowarzyszenie Apostolstwa Katolickiego (SAC)—pallotyni*): Warsaw.

Paulines (*Zakon św. Pawła Pierwszego Pustelnika (OSPPE)—paulini*): Częstochowa, Hungary.

Redemptorists (*Zgromadzenie Najświętszego Odkupiciela (CSsR)—redemptoryści*): Mościska, Tuchów, Warsaw (various priests).

Resurrectionists (*Zgromadzenie Zmartwychwstania Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa (CR)*—*zmartwychwstańcy*): Międzyrzecz Podlaski, Nowy Sącz or Kraków.

Salesians (*Towarzystwo św. Franciszka Salezego (SDB)*—*salezianie*): Częstochowa, Głusków, Przemyśl, Supraśl, Warsaw (various locations).

Vincentians (Missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul) (*Zgromadzenie Księży Misjonarzy św. Wincentego à Paulo (CM)*—*misjonarze*): Kraków, Lwów, Tarnów, Warsaw (various priest).

**Polish Roman Catholic Priests and Nuns
Recognized as “Righteous Among the Nations”
by Yad Vashem,
Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Authority**

As of January 1, 2010, the distinction of “Righteous Among the Nations” has been granted to 6,195 Poles, who form the single largest national group honoured by that institution.⁹⁸ The vast majority of Poles who extended assistance to Jews have not received any recognition. Among those recognized by Yad Vashem are sixty-two members of the Roman Catholic clergy (of the Latin rite). Proportionally, in relation to their numbers, the Polish clergy has been awarded more often than the Catholic clergy of other occupied countries,⁹⁹ this despite their own incomparably greater persecution and far more endangered status. The representation of Catholic clergy among the “Righteous” exceeds that of the Protestant and Orthodox clergy by far.

Polish Priests Recognized by Yad Vashem

1. Brunon Boguszewski (Kraków)
- [Antoni Bradło, not then yet a priest]
2. Stanisław Falkowski (Piekuty Nowe near Białystok)
3. Władysław Głowacki (Warsaw)
4. Marcei Godlewski (Warsaw)
5. Józef Gorajek (Wąwolnica near Lublin)
6. Michał Kubacki (Salesian Father, Warsaw)
7. Albin Małysiak (Kraków, now a bishop)
8. Stanisław Mazak (Szczurowice near Radziechów)
9. Franciszek Orzechowski (Dobczyce near Kraków)
10. Aleksander Osiecki (Brzeźnica near Dębica)
11. Andrzej Osikowicz (sometimes spelled Osikiewicz, Borysław)
12. Jan Patrzyk (Lipinki near Gorlice)
13. Jan Pawlicki (Zborów)
14. Jan Poddębniak (Krężnica Jara near Lublin)
15. Jan Sielewicz (Worniany near Wilno)
16. Franciszek Smorczewski (Stolin, Polesie or Polesia)
- [Witold Stolarczyk, not then yet a priest]
17. Adam Sztark (Jesuit Father, Słonim)
18. Witold Szymczukiewicz (Rukojnie near Wilno)
19. Ludwik Wolski (Otwock near Warsaw)
20. Ludwik Wrodarczyk (Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Okopy, Volhynia)
21. Mieczysław Zawadzki (Będzin)
22. Jan Zawrzycki (Rymanów near Krosno)
23. Ignacy Życiński (Trójca near Zawichost)

⁹⁸ For a complete list of Poles awarded by Yad Vashem as of January 1, 2010, see http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/pdf/virtual_wall/poland.pdf. Additionally, a number of Poles from Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Germany, Austria and France have also received recognition. For information about the rescue activity of individual Poles recognized by Yad Vashem see <http://www.savingjews.org/>. See also Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 8: *Europe (Part I) and Other Countries* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007), pp.31–32, 70–71, 86–87, 115–16.

⁹⁹ The count for various countries with a sizeable Catholic population is: Austria—none, Belgium—103, Croatia—3, Czech Republic—none, England—one, France—136, Germany—7, Hungary—25, Italy—52, Latvia—one, Lithuania—15, Luxembourg—none, Poland—59, Netherlands—8, Slovakia—5 (including two Eastern-rite Greek Catholics), Switzerland—one, and Ukraine (part of interwar Poland)—8 Eastern-rite Greek Catholics (Uniates).

Polish Nuns Recognized by Yad Vashem

1. Irena Adamek (Sister Małgorzata, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
2. Euzebia Bartkowiak (Sister of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mir)
3. Stanisława Bednarska (Sister Stefania, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
4. Irena Bielawska (Mother Superior Maria Honorata, Felician Sister, Przemyśl)
5. Anna Borkowska (Sister Bertranda, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
6. Krystyna Bykowska (Sister of St. Elizabeth, Otwock)
7. Genowefa Czubak (formerly Sister Dolorosa, Missionary Sister of the Holy Family, Pruzana)
8. Aleksandra Drzewiecka (Wilno)
9. Helena Frąckiewicz (Sister Diana, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
10. Bronisława Galus (Sister Róża, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived, Turkowice near Hrubieszów)
11. Wanda Garczyńska (Sister Wanda, Sister of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Warsaw)
12. Matylda Getter (Mother Matylda, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary, Warsaw)
13. Maria Stefania Górską (Sister Andrzeja, Ursuline Sister of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, Warsaw)
14. Anna Grenda (Sister Ligoria, Sister Servant of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Przemyśl)
15. Bronisława Hryniewicz (Mother Beata, Daughter of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Skórzec near Siedlce)
16. Klara Jaroszyńska (Sister Klara, Franciscan Sister Servant of the Cross, Laski near Warsaw)
17. Stanisława Józwickowska (Sister Stanisława, Daughter of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Skórzec near Siedlce)
18. Leokadia Juśkiewicz (Sister Longina, Sister Servant of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Przemyśl)
19. Janina Kierocińska (Mother Teresa, Carmelite Sister of the Infant Jesus, Sosnowiec)
20. Aniela Kotowska (Sister Klara, Felician Sister, Przemyśl)
21. Bogumiła Makowska (Sister Zofia, Franciscan Missionary Sister of Mary, Zamość)
22. Ludwika Małkiewicz (Sister of St. Elizabeth, Otwock)
23. Antonina Manaszczuk (Sister Irena, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived, Turkowice near Hrubieszów)
24. Stanisława Marciniak (Sister Gertruda, Mother Superior, Sister of St. Elizabeth, Otwock)
25. Julia Michrowska (Sister Bernadeta, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
26. Maria Mikulska (Benedictine Sister, Wilno)
27. Joanna Mistera (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Ignaców near Mińsk Mazowiecki)
28. Maria Neugebauer (Sister Imelda, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
29. Maria Ostreyko (Sister Jordana, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
30. Maria Pietkiewicz (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Kamionek in Warsaw)
31. Aniela Polechajło (Sister Stanisława, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived, Turkowice near Hrubieszów)
32. Johanna Reiter (Sister Zygmunt, Felician Sister, Wawer near Warsaw)
33. Marianna Reszko (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Ignaców near Mińsk Mazowiecki)
34. Józefa Romansewicz (Sister Hermana, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived, Turkowice near Hrubieszów)
35. Maria Janina Roszak (Sister Cecylia, Dominican Sister, Kolonia Wileńska near Wilno)
36. Rozalia Domicella Sidelko (Sister Bernarda, Sister Servant of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Przemyśl)
37. Julia Sosnowska (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Ignaców near Mińsk Mazowiecki)
38. Eugenia Wąsowska-Renot (formerly Sister Alfonsa, Sister Servant of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Przemyśl)
39. Bronisława Wilemska (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Kraków and Szczawnica)
40. Helena Zienowicz (Sister of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Wilno)

Polish Roman Catholic Clergy and Religious Murdered by the Germans for Assisting Jews

Among the several thousand Poles—women, men, and children, often entire families and sometimes even whole communities—put to death by the Germans for coming to the assistance of Jews, there were dozens of priests and religious. Wacław Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity: Christian and Jewish Response to the Holocaust*, Part One (Washington, D.C.: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987) lists, with source references, the following priests as having been killed, usually by summary execution, for assisting Jews:

[1] Fr. Antoni Grzybowski, a Jesuit from Albertyn near Słonim, was executed on October 20, 1943 for providing shelter to Jews in the Jesuit Novitiate (Entry 39);

[2] Rev. Andrzej Osikowicz (Osikiewicz), pastor of Borysław, was deported to Majdanek for openly encouraging his parishioners to assist Jews and perished there on December 29, 1943 (Entry 74);

[3] Rev. Henryk Opiatowski, a Home Army chaplain from Brańsk near Bielsk Podlaski, was shot on July 15, 1943 for assisting Jews and Soviet deserters from labour camps (Entry 76);

[4] Rev. Mieczysław Akrejc, pastor of Brasław, in northeastern Poland, perished in June 1942 while interceding on behalf of persecuted Jews (Entry 77);

[5] Rev. Jan Urbanowicz, dean and pastor of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish in Brześć nad Bugiem in Polesie (Polesia), was executed in June 1943 for giving aid to Jews, especially issuing false birth and baptismal certificates (Entry 84);

[6] Rev. Teodor Popczyk of St. Barbara's Parish in Częstochowa was shot on June 16, 1943, after being identified by a Jew who had received false documentation from this parish (Entry 124)—see also Jan Pietrzykowski, "Księża diecezji częstochowskiej w walce z okupantem," *Wrocławski Tygodnik Katolicki*, May 10, 1970;

[7] Rev. Bolesław Wróblewski, the elderly pastor of the cathedral church in Częstochowa, who had placed some 60 Jewish children in various Catholic institutions, was killed in the parish rectory in 1944 (his sister was also killed and two other women were severely injured) (Entry 131);

[8] Rev. Adam Sekuła, assistant pastor of Dobra near Limanowa, in southern Poland, was killed in the jail in Nowy Sącz on April 7, 1941 after refusing to betray the names of Jews to whom he had issued baptismal certificates (Entry 141);

[9] Fr. Michał Klimczak (Father Dionizy), guardian of the Conventual Franciscan monastery in Grodno (Entry 168)¹⁰⁰;

[10] Monsignor Albin Jaroszewicz, dean and pastor of Grodno, was executed on July 14, 1943 (Entry 168);

[11] Rev. Władysław Grobelny, vicar of Kobryń near Brześć nad Bugiem, was murdered on October 15, 1942

¹⁰⁰ On Fr. Dionizy see Tadeusz Krahel, "Zginęli 15 lipca 1943 r. przy fortach koło Naumicz," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 8, August 2003. Fr. Dionizy was arrested several times, last on July 14, 1944, and executed the following day outside Grodno. The precise cause of his arrest is not known.

together with the Jews he was helping (Entry 222);

[12] Monsignor Jan Wolski, pastor of Kobryń was executed on October 15, 1942 for assisting partisans and Jews fleeing from the ghetto which was being liquidated (Entry 223);

[13] Monsignor Zygmunt Surdacki, the Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Lublin, was deported to Auschwitz for aiding Jews and perished there on April 30, 1941 (Entry 271);

[14] & [15] Two young unidentified priests were shot to death on February 21, 1942 in the Lwów suburb of Zamarstynów, when they were apprehended in their attempt to bring two Jewish families to their monastery (Entry 278)—see also Jacek E. Wilczur, *Do nieba nie można od razu: Zapiski z okupowanego Lwowa* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1991), 34;

[16] Another unidentified monk from Lwów was shot dead on February 28, 1942 when he was caught carrying food and money to the ghetto and tried to escape (Entry 279)—see also Jacek E. Wilczur, *Do nieba nie można od razu*, 34–35;

[17] Rev. Fabian Poczubutt-Odlanicki, dean and pastor of Łuniniec near Pińsk in Polesie (Polesia), was executed on July 4, 1944 for organizing aid for Jews and partisans (Entry 300);

[18] Rev. Antoni Mackiewicz, pastor of Mir near Stołpce (voivodship of Nowogródek), was executed in Kołdyczewo concentration camp on November 14, 1942, along with other Poles, for helping Jews (Entry 322). However, according to other sources, although he did assist Jews, Rev. Mackiewicz was arrested in the sweep directed against the Polish intelligentsia in the region—see Tec, *In the Lion's Den*, pp.73, 96, 98–99, and 254 n.13;

[19] Rev. Tadeusz Kaczmarczyk, an assistant pastor from Nowy Sącz who refused to betray the Jews to whom he had provided baptismal certificates, even under torture, was executed on August 21, 1941 (Entry 343);

[20] Rev. Władysław Deszcz, also from Nowy Sącz, who provided Jews with baptismal certificates and other forms of assistance (he smuggled himself into the ghetto to bring sacraments to converted Jews) was executed on August 21, 1941 (Entry 344). According to another source, however, the two priests from Nowy Sącz were arrested in May 1941 for their suspected role in the escape of Jan Karski, a member of the Polish underground, from the local hospital where he was being held in between interrogation and torture sessions, and were executed in a mass reprisal against 32 Poles in Biegonice—see E. Thomas Wood and Stanisław M. Jankowski, *Karski: How One Man Tried to Stop the Holocaust* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), pp.89–90;

[21] Monsignor Witold Iwicki, vicar general of the diocese of Pińsk, after refusing an offer of clemency was executed in Janów Poleski on January 22, 1943 for assisting Jews (Entry 376);

[22] Rev. Paweł Dołyk, pastor of Derewna (Pińsk diocese), was shot to death on August 8, 1943 for aiding partisans and Jews (Entry 377);

[23] Monsignor Józef Bajko, pastor of Naliboki near Nowogródek (Pińsk diocese), and

[24] his assistant, Rev. Józef Baradyn, were locked in a barn and burned alive in August 1943 for aiding Jews and partisans (Entry 378);

[25] Rev. Leopold Aulich, dean of Iwje (Iwie) and pastor of Kamień near Nowogródek (Pińsk diocese), and

[26] his assistant, Rev. Kazimierz Rybałtowski, were executed in August 1943 on suspicion of aiding Jews and

partisans (Entry 379);

[27] Rev. Błażej Nowosad, pastor of Potok Górny near Tomaszów Lubelski, was beaten by the SS Galizien in order to extract information about the location of Polish partisans and Jews hiding in the vicinity and then shot to death on December 19, 1943 (Entry 395);

[28] Fr. Adam Sztark, administrator of the parish in Żyrowice, provided various forms of assistance to Jews. He placed Jewish children in the convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Słonim, where he was the chaplain. He was arrested on December 18, 1942 together with two Sisters from this convent, Kazimiera Wołowska, the mother superior, and Bogumiła Noiszewska. All three of them were executed the following day in a mass execution of several hundred Poles (Entries 463 and 702)—see also Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.385–86, 390–92;

[29] Fr. Wojciech Kopliński, known as Father Anicet, a Franciscan from the Capuchin monastery on Miodowa Street in Warsaw, was arrested in June 1941 for, among other reasons, helping Jews. He was deported to Auschwitz where he perished in a gas chamber on October 16, 1941 (Entry 531)—see also Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.334–35;

[30] An unidentified priest from Warsaw who worked closely with the Malicki family in providing false baptismal certificates and identification to Jews was shot to death on December 19, 1942 after being identified by one of the Jews who was caught with the false documents (Entry 537). According to Teresa Prekerowa, the priest in question was the pastor of the cathedral parish of St. John the Baptist; he was executed after a certificate he issued for Maria Rajbenbach fell into the hands of the Gestapo. See Teresa Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982), pp.148–49. See also the account of Maria Rajbenbach and annotations found in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, pp.233, 235, and Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., pp.552, 554 (reproduced *supra*);

[31] Monsignor Roman Archutowski, rector of the Archdiocesan Seminary of Warsaw, was arrested in late November 1942 for, among other reasons, helping Jews. He was imprisoned in Pawiak and tortured. He was deported to Majdanek on March 25, 1943 and died there on April 18, 1943 (Entry 547)—see also Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.210–12;

[32] Rev. Franciszek Garncarek, pastor of St. Augustine's church in the Warsaw ghetto, was murdered on December 20, 1943; he was shot on the steps of the presbtery of another church outside the ghetto (Entry 574)—see also Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *Getto warszawskie: Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście* (Warszawa: IFiS PAN, 2001), p.621, translated as *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009);

[33] Fr. Józef Leńko, from the Missionary Congregation of St. Vincent, a vicar at the Holy Cross parish in Warsaw, was arrested for the second time and brought to Pawiak prison on February 7, 1944 for helping Jews. He was deported to Gross Rosen concentration camp where he perished on May 20, 1944 (Entry 585). Fr. Leńko was particularly active in issuing false baptismal certificates to Jews. See Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, p.646;

[34] Fr. Leon Więckiewicz, from the Missionary Congregation of St. Vincent, a vicar at St. Augustine's church in the Warsaw ghetto, was arrested for helping Jews on December 3, 1943; he was deported to Gross Rosen concentration camp where he died on August 4, 1944 (Entry 590)—see also Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie*, p.621. However, according to Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, pp.647–48, it is believed that the immediate cause of Fr. Więckiewicz's arrest was not his extensive assistance to Jews but his open display of support for a group Poles slated for execution;

[35] Rev. Alfonsas Lipniūnas, a Lithuanian priest from Wilno, where he was assistant rector of the Ostra Brama chapel and a preacher at the University Church of St. John, was arrested by the Gestapo on March 17, 1943 for his sermons admonishing those who stole Jewish property and participated in violence against Jews. He was sent to the Stutthof concentration camp; he fell ill with typhus when being moved from the approaching Soviet forces and died on March 28, 1945 (Entry 642). See also *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, volume 3, p.349;

[36] & [37] Two Basilian Fathers from the Uniate monastery in Wilno were arrested for helping Jews and not heard of again (Entry 643);

[38] Rev. Józef Kuczyński, pastor of Wsielub near Nowogródek (Pińsk diocese), was executed on July 31, 1942 for sheltering Jewish children (Entry 665).

Other priests killed for helping Jews identified in Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*:

[39] Rev. Franciszek Żak from Dolina (archdiocese of Lwów) was shot for rendering assistance of various forms to Jews (such as helping them escape to Romania and Hungary and providing false birth certificates)—p.157;

[40] Rev. Bolesław Gramz, pastor of Idołta near Brasław—pp.44 and 54¹⁰¹

[41] Witold Sarosiek, pastor of Kundzin—pp.50 and 54¹⁰²;

[42] Monsignor Karol Lubianiec, dean and pastor of Mołodeczno and vicar general for Byelorussia—pp.44 and 54¹⁰³;

[43] Rev. Kazimierz Grochowski, pastor of St. Andrew's Parish in Słonim—p.44. See also Waclaw Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom* (Warszawa: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce–Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 1987), Entry 210.

The last four priests who hailed from the archdiocese of Wilno were also involved in other “subversive” activities—pp.44 and 54.

[44] Rev. Dominik Amankowicz, pastor of Widze (archdiocese of Wilno), collapsed and died on July 26, 1941 as a result of the news of the execution of Jews brought to him by terrified Jews who had sought shelter in the church rectory—p.52;

[45] Rev. Romuald Świrkowski, pastor of Holy Spirit parish in Wilno, who, according to one version, was betrayed by one of the Jews whom he had sheltered, was arrested on January 15, 1942 and executed in Ponary on May 5, 1942—p.52¹⁰⁴;

¹⁰¹ On Rev. Gramz see Tadeusz Krahel, “Ksiądz Bolesław Gramz,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 8, August 1999. Rev. Gramz extended help to Jews, Gypsies and others in need. He was arrested on June 8, 1944 and executed. The precise cause of his arrest is not known.

¹⁰² On Rev. Sarosiek see Tadeusz Krahel, “Ks. Witold Sarosiek (1888–1944),” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 4, April 2000. Rev. Sarosiek was a member of the Home Army who extended help to Jews and others in need. He was arrested on April 10, 1944, imprisoned in Białystok, and sent to the Gross Rosen concentration camp where he died on December 14, 1944. The precise cause of his arrest is not known.

¹⁰³ On Monsignor Lubianiec see Tadeusz Krahel, “Ks. Prałat Karol Lubianiec,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 8, August 2000. Monsignor Lubianiec, born in 1866, settled in village of Plebania near Kraśne where he was in charge of a small church; he was highly regarded by all. He was arrested in July or September 1942 and executed. Neither the precise cause of his arrest or the circumstances of his death are clear.

¹⁰⁴ On Rev. Świrkowski see Tadeusz Krahel, “Ks. Romuald Świrkowski (1886–1942),” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 2, February 2000. Rev. Świrkowski was the archdiocesan representative in the Polish underground and extended help to

[46] Rev. Piotr Pianko, the administrator of the parish in Szumowo near Zambrów, was shot on September 4, 1941 in his liturgical vestments for refusing to announce German orders calling on the population to obey the German authorities, surrender their arms and capture Soviet soldiers—p.74. See also *Martyrologium*, volume 2, p.184. The memoirs (typescript) of Józef Klimaszewski (*nom de guerre* “Cień”), *W cienie czerwonego boru*, at p.20, indicate that Rev. Pianko also incurred German wrath for defending the Jews. For a different version of the execution of Rev. Pianko and Rev. Aleksander Łuniewski by German gendarmes see the eyewitness account in Jan Żaryn, “Przez pomyłkę: Ziemia łomżyńska w latach 1939–1945. Rozmowa z ks. Kazimierzem Łupińskim z parafii Szumowo,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 8–9 (September–October 2002): pp.112–17;

[47] Rev. Leon Bujnowski, pastor of Niedźwiedzica (Pińsk diocese), was arrested on June 27, 1943 during a religious ceremony on suspicion of, among other reasons, helping Jews and perished soon after—pp.83–84. See also Maria Suchecka, “Proboszcz z Niedźwiedzicy,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Kraków), April 1, 1990; Rev. Jan Urbanowicz (*supra* [5], see *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, Entry 84)—p.84;

Rev. Józef Kuczyński (*supra* [38], see *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, Entry 665)—p.84;

[48] Rev. Władysław Klimczak, pastor of Porzecze, was executed in July 1943 for aiding Jews (Pińsk diocese)—p.84;

[49] Rev. Jan Grodis, principal of Romuald Traugutt high school in Nieśwież (Pińsk diocese)—p.84;

[50] Rev. Edward Tabackowski, pastor of Tłumacz, who sheltered a Jewish student in the church rectory and provided many false baptismal certificates and other forms of assistance to Jews, was put to death on October 20, 1942—pp.154–55. See also Yisrael Gutman and Shmuel Krakowski, *Unequal Victims: Poles and Jews During World War Two* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1986), p.227; Kamil Barański, *Przeminęli zagońcy, chliborobi, chasydzi...: Rzecz o ziemi stanisławowsko-kołomyjsko-stryjskiej* (London: Panda Press, 1988), pp.417–18; *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane*, Entry 741; Shlomo Blond, et al., eds., *Memorial Book of Tłumacz: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Community* (Tel Aviv: Tłumacz Societies in Israel and the U.S.A., 1976), pp.xxxiv, cxxix and clxxiii. It is believed that he was betrayed to the Gestapo by a Jewish woman from Tłumacz. See Lesław Jeżowski, “Ks. Edward Tabackowski,” *Semper Fidelis* (Wrocław), no. 3 (16), 1993, p.10.

An account in Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, p.33, identifies

[51] an unnamed priest in the village of Ossowo near Wilno, who was killed for extending help to Jews.

Kamil Barański, in his *Przeminęli zagońcy, chliborobi, chasydzi...*, pp.84 and 173, also identifies

[52] Rev. Remigiusz Wójcik, administrator of the parish in Święty Stanisław near Stanisławów (archdiocese of Lwów), who hid a Jewish woman in the bell tower of the church. After his arrest by the Ukrainian police in September 1942, he was taken to the Gestapo prison in Stanisławów where he was held and beaten for three days and, on the fourth day, he was ripped apart by dogs in the prison courtyard. See also *Na Rubieży* (Wrocław), no. 35 (1999), p.33 (based on the eyewitness account of Michał Przygodzki); Szczepan Siekierka, Henryk Komański, and Eugeniusz Różański. *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie stanisławowskim 1939–1946* (Wrocław: Stowarzyszenie Upamiętnienia Ofiar Zbrodni Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów we Wrocławiu, 2008), 503–4.

Franciszek Stopniak, “Katolickie duchowieństwo polskie i Żydzi w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *Polskie podziemie polityczne wobec zagłady Żydów w czasie okupacji*, Conference Papers, Warsaw, April 22, 1987 (Warszawa: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce–Instytut Pamięci Narodowej and Polskie

Towarzystwo “Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata,” 1988), at p.70, cites

[53] Rev. Dominik Przyłuski, pastor of Garbów near Lublin, who died of a heart attack after his rectory was inspected by the Germans. The Jews hidden there were not found.

For information concerning:

[54] Father Maximilian [Maksymilian] Kolbe, who was arrested in February 1941 for, among other reasons, his protective care of over 1,500 Jewish refugees lodged in the Franciscan monastery in Niepokalanów and who was eventually put to death in Auschwitz on August 14, 1941—see Treece, *A Man for Others, Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz*, pp.91–93 and endnote 12;

[55] Rev. Józef Pawłowski, the rector of the Higher Seminary in Kielce (until November 1939) and pastor of the cathedral parish, who was arrested on February 10, 1941 for ministering to the faithful and extending aid to Jews and others. He was deported to Auschwitz and then to Dachau, where he was murdered on January 9, 1942—see Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.102–104; “Biogramy 108 męczenników,” *Głos Polski* (Toronto), May 18–24, 1999;

[56] Rev. Jan Gielarowski, the pastor of Michałówka near Radymno, with the assistance of an elderly priest from a nearby village, provided false baptismal certificates to a number of Jews and sheltered Jews in the parish rectory. At least one of the Jews survived the war. Rev. Gielarowski was arrested by the Germans but did not give anyone away. He was deported to Auschwitz where he died in April 1943—see Władysław Smólski, ed., *Za to groziła śmierć: Polacy z pomocą Żydom w czasie okupacji* (Warszawa: Pax, 1981), pp.113–19; *Martyrologium*, volume 4, p.292; Stanisław Zygarowicz and Witold Jedynak, eds., *Świadkowie wiary Diecezji Przemyskiej z lat 1939–1964* (Przemyśl, Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Przemyskiej: 2001), pp.85–86, Jolanta Chodorska, ed., *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny: Świadectwa nadesłane na apel Radia Maryja* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sióstr Loretanek, 2002), Part Two, pp.213–14; *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), pp.77–78.

According to a family source,

[57] Rev. Paweł Szczygieł, the retired pastor of the parish of Jakubowice near Nowy Sącz, was arrested on April 14, 1942 for sneaking food into the ghetto in Nowy Sącz, which he used to visit under the pretext of caring for his parishioners. He was sent to Auschwitz concentration camp where he died on October 31, 1942. See Hanna Haska, “Poland’s Holocaust—żywi świadkowie historii, czyli 45-lecie ‘Kacetowców,’” *Głos Polski* (Toronto), January 19–25, 1999.

Memoirs of Jewish survivors also contain additional examples of Polish priests who were believed to have been executed for their rescue efforts on behalf of Jews. Joseph Riwash, *Resistance and Revenge 1939–1949* (Montreal: n.p., 1981), p.144, records that

[58] a priest in Wołkołata in northeastern Poland, Rev. Romuald Dronicz, who, like many other priests in the area, fed and sheltered Jews, did not take advantage of an opportunity to escape, and was executed by the Gestapo in July 1942. See also Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, pp.23 and 44.

According to the memoirs of Silverman, Smuschkowitz, and Smuszkowicz, *From Victims to Victors*, pp.246–47 and 325,

[59] & [60] two priests from Ikażń and Prozoroki were shot in a forest outside of Głębokie in northeastern Poland in March 1942 after being arrested for imploring their parishioners to assist Jews and not to take part in persecution directed against them. Written statements of Peter (Pejsach) Smuszkowicz, dated November 18–23 and November 20, 1993 (in the possession of the author) confirm this. See also Ariel Machnes and Rina Klinov, eds, *Darkness and Desolation: In Memory of the communities of Braslaw, Dubene, Jaisi, Jod, Kislowszczizna, Okmienic, Opsa, Plusy, Rimszan, Slobodka, Zamosz, Zaracz* (Tel Aviv: Association of Braslaw and

Surroundings in Israel and America and Ghetto Fighters' House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, n.d.), pp.571 and 575. According to Polish sources, Rev. Władysław Maćkowiak, pastor of Ikażń, and his vicar, Rev. Stanisław Pyrttek, were arrested in December 1941 for their ardent preaching and illegally teaching religion to children. They were detained in the jail in Brasław, and later in Głębokie, along with Rev. Mieczysław Bohatkiewicz, who was arrested in Dryssa in January 1942. All three of them were executed by the Germans on March 4, 1942 in Borek forest near Berezwezc, outside Głębokie. See Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, pp.38–39, 58; Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.9–18; Tadeusz Krahel, “Nasi Męczennicy,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, May 1999 and his “Błogosławieni Męczennicy z Berezwezcza,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, March 2001.

Another Jewish survivor, Wili Fink, mentions

[61] an unidentified Polish priest in the Wilno area, “who paid with his life for those (birth) certificates given to Jews.” See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, p.397.

Francesca Bram (née Grochowska) recalls that

[62] the village priest of Grodziec demonstrated tremendous compassion and organized community assistance for the Jews expelled from Konin to surrounding villages in the summer of 1940. According to her testimony, “The Germans sought an opportunity to arrest him and this happened after he helped the Jews in Grodziec. Soon afterwards came news of his death.” See M. Gelbart, ed., *Kehilat Konin be-Frihata u-ve Hurbana (The Community of Konin: Its Flowering and Destruction)* (Tel Aviv: Association of Konin Jews in Israel, 1968), pp.526–27, as cited in Richmond, *Konin*, p.163.

Yehudis Pshenitse of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki recounts the story of

[63] an unnamed parish priest from her town to whom she, as a young girl, turned to assistance after being separated from her family. Not only did the priest shelter her but also, after he was reported to the Germans, he refused to surrender her. Having been beaten mercilessly by the Germans and left to die, the priest had the young girl brought to him, blessed her, and implored his housekeeper to find a safe hiding place for her. He died in her presence. “His body was pierced in several places, and his face was unrecognizable.” See Kugelmass and Boyarin, *From A Ruined Garden*, pp.177–78.

The Grajewo Memorial Book mentions

[64] Rev. Aleksander Pęza of Grajewo, who “tirelessly” called on the Christian population, at the daily masses, not to cooperate with the Germans and their anti-Semitic provocations. When word of this reached the Germans, he was shot. See George Gorin, ed., *Grayever yizker-bukh (Grayevo Memorial Book)* (New York: United Brayeever Relief Committee, 1950), pp.xxxii–xxxiii. Witold Jemielity gives the date of Rev. Pęza’s execution as July 15, 1941—see Witold Jemielity, “Martyrologia księży diecezji łomżyńskiej 1939–1945,” *Rozporządzenia Urzędowe Łomżyńskiej Kurii Diecezjalnej*, no. 8–9 (1974): p.53; whereas *Martyrologium*, volume 2, p.184 gives the date as August 15, 1943.

Another source of danger for priests, and Poles in general, who assisted Jews in Poland’s southeastern provinces, were the activities of Ukrainian nationalists who waged a campaign of ethnic cleansing aimed at the non-Ukrainian elements, particularly the Poles and the Jews. A case in point is Rev. Błażej Nowosad (*supra* [27]), who was murdered in Potok Górny near Tomaszów Lubelski. Similar examples are cited by Edward Prus, *Holocaust po banderowsku: Czy Żydzi byli w UPA?* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1995), pp.148 and 150:

[65] Rev. Antoni Wierzbowski of Bybło (Rohatyn county, voivodship of Stanisławów) was murdered by Ukrainian nationalists in November 1943 along with a school teacher after refusing to betray the whereabouts of five Jews hidden in a shelter—see also Urszula Przybyła, “Pamięci tych, co rozdawali miłość,” *Słowo–Dziennik Katolicki* (Warsaw), November 28, 1995;

[66] Rev. Andrzej Kraśnicki from Jazłowiec (Buczacz county, voivodship of Tarnopol) was tortured, abducted,

and killed by Ukrainian nationalists in December 1943 killed for refusing to break his confessional vow and reveal information about parishioners who were sheltering Jews;

[67] When the Gestapo took a group of Jews from Kolno through the village of Borkowo near Łomża on July 9, 1941, the housekeeper rang the church bell to announce the morning mass. Believing this to have been done as a sign of solidarity with the Jewish prisoners passing near the church, they arrested the pastor, Rev. Stanisław Rejmentowski, and his housekeeper. They disappeared without a trace, and were likely executed in a nearby forest. See Stanisław Łukomski, "Wspomnienia," in *Rozporządzenia urzędowe Łomżyńskiej Kurii Diecezjalnej*, no. 5–7 (May–July) 1974: p.62; Witold Jemielity, "Martyrologium księży diecezji łomżyńskiej 1939–1945," in *Rozporządzenia urzędowe Łomżyńskiej Kurii Diecezjalnej*, no. 8–9 (August–September) 1974: p.55; Jan Żaryn, "Przez pomyłkę: Ziemia łomżyńska w latach 1939–1945. Rozmowa z ks. Kazimierzem Łupińskim z parafii Szumowo," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 8–9 (September–October 2002): pp.112–17.

Relying on Soviet and Jewish sources, Israeli historian Leonid Smilovitskii (Smilovitsky) has confirmed that the Germans executed priests in a number of towns of northeastern Poland for helping Jews (Brasław, Brześć, Grodno, Wilejka, Mołodeczno, and Pińsk), and mentions some of those priests by name:

[68] Rev. Mieczysław Kubik, the dean and pastor of Nieśwież (formerly rector of the church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in Nowogródek),

[69] Rev. Michał Dalecki, the dean and pastor of Nowogródek,

[70] Rev. Tadeusz Grzesiak, the pastor of Kleck,

as well as the aforementioned Rev. Władysław Grobelny (of Kobryń) [*supra* 11], Rev. Józef Kuczyński (of Wsielub) [*supra* 38], Rev. Fabian Poczobutt-Odlanicki (of Łuniniec) [*supra* 17], Rev. Jan Urbanowicz (of Brześć) [*supra* 5], and others. See Leonid Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.* (Tel Aviv: Biblioteka Matveia Chernogo, 2000), p.132. Another priest identified by Smilovitskii as having helped Jewish partisans is Rev. Aleksander Hanusewicz of Raków.

According to Polish sources, Rev. Kubik, the dean and pastor of Nieśwież, was executed in Baranowicze in 1942 for contacts with partisans and for assisting Jews. See Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, p.84; Laryssa Michajlik, "'Sąsiedzi' obok 'sąsiadów'? Ratowanie Żydów przez chrześcijan na terytorium Białorusi w latach 1941–1944," in Krzysztof Jasiewicz, ed., *Świat niepożegnany: Żydzi na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII–XX wieku* (Warsaw and London: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Rytm, and Polonia Aid Foundation Trust, 2004), p.737. This information is also confirmed by Józef Halperin, who was imprisoned with Rev. Kubik in Baranowicze. See Józef Halperin, *Ludzie są wszędzie* (Warsaw: ASPRA-JR, 2002), p.173.

[71] Rev. Aleksander Ciszewicz, rector of an auxiliary church in the parish of Niedźwiedzica (Pińsk diocese), was arrested by the Belorussian police during a hunt for Jews and handed over to the Gestapo. He was executed in Hult 1942 near Nieśwież. Ibid. (Michajlik in Jasiewicz), p.735.

[72] Rev. Zygmunt Milkowski, pastor of Wiszniew, was arrested for helping Jews and perished in the jail in Wołożyn in 1943. Ibid. (Michajlik in Jasiewicz), pp.736–77.

[73] Rev. Antoni Udalski, formerly the pastor of Wołożyn, was arrested in Soleczniki Wielkie near Wilno by the Lithuanian police in mid-1942 for helping Jews. He agreed to baptize a child born to a Jewish mother and a Polish father named Dratwicki, which led the arrest and execution of the priest and godparents. Rev. Udalski was put to death in Wołożyn in 1943. Ibid. (Michajlik in Jasiewicz), p.737; Tadeusz Krahel, "Ksiądz Antoni Udalski: Zginął za ratowanie Żydów," *W służbie Miłosierdzia* (Białystok), no. 4 (April 2007).

[74] Lily Fenster, who passed as a Christian, describes the execution of a priest she witnessed in Łuków for the crime of helping Jews. (Testimony of Lily Fenster, November 8 and 10, 1994, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet:

<<http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/fenster/section028.html>>.)

Not all of the cases cited can be definitively confirmed as having been the victims of German repression *solely* for helping Jews. Often there was more than one reason for a priest's arrest and execution. In these instances, although the exact charge levelled by the Germans may not have been known, the priest in question was known to have been active in rendering assistance to Jews. In some cases, the names of the priests in question have been forgotten. (These incidents are usually based on the recollection of Jews recorded many years after the fact.) Furthermore, not all of these cases have been confirmed or recorded in Wiktor Jacewicz and Jan Woś's monumental register of members of the Polish clergy killed during the German occupation, *Martyrologium polskiego duchowieństwa rzymskokatolickiego pod okupacją hitlerowską w latach 1939–1945*, 5 volumes (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1977–1981).

Many additional examples that cannot be confirmed independently at the present time are recorded in Franciszek Kącki, *Dzieło miłosierdzia chrześcijańskiego: Polskie duchowieństwo katolickie a Żydzi w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej* (Warszawa: Chrześcijańskie Stowarzyszenie Społeczne, 1968). Some repressions of clergymen attributed to assistance rendered to Jews have been disproved or are doubtful. For example, there is the case of the Salesian priests from the residence on Ks. Siemca Street in Warsaw, cited in Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, p.352. According to Adina Blady Szwajger, a Jewish woman who worked in a child care centre of the Central Relief Council (RGO) housed in the Salesian Fathers' residence, the priests and the secular staff who were heavily involved in the Polish underground were taken away by the Germans in the spring of 1944 with no explanation and hanged in the depopulated ghetto. The reason for their execution remains unknown. See her memoirs, *I Remember Nothing More: The Warsaw Children's Hospital and the Jewish Resistance* (London: Collins Havrill, 1990), pp.122–24.

A number of priests who were wanted or arrested for assisting Jews managed to escape and hide or survived in prison. For example, Rev. Julian Chruścicki (Chróścicki), pastor of Włochy (a Warsaw suburb), who was active in the Central Relief Council (RGO), was arrested on August 18, 1942 and imprisoned in Pawiak and Majdanek; Rev. Władysław Miś, pastor of All Saints parish in Kraków, was arrested on September 1, 1942, for issuing a false birth certificate to a Jewish woman and survived three concentration camps—see *Martyrologium*, volume 3, p.106; Rev. Ignacy Świrski, professor at the Stefan Batory University in Wilno, had to hide from the Germans near the village of Turgiele for two and a half years—see Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, p.52; Rev. Mieczysław Kmita, curate of a parish church in Białystok, was warned of his impending arrest and fled to Śliwna where he hid until the end of the war—see Kazimierz Litwiejko, “Działalność społeczno-oświatowa Kościoła w południowo-zachodniej części archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945,” *Nasza przeszłość: Studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce* (Kraków: Instytut Wydawniczy Księży Misjonarzy), no. 81 (1994), p.303.

Prior to October 15, 1941, when the death penalty was officially decreed in the General Government for any assistance rendered to Jews, members of the clergy were generally deported to concentration camps (and not summarily executed) for their activities on behalf of Jews, e.g., Father Maximilian Kolbe, Father Anicet (Wojciech Kopliński), Rev. Franciszek J. Gabryl, Rev. Witold Dzięcioł of Kielce. Some, but not all, of these priests perished in the camps.

Wacław Zajęczkowski, in his *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, at p.257 (Entry 591), as well as Szymon Datner, in *Las sprawiedliwych* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1968), p.103, list the names of eight Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul who were executed in Warsaw's Wola district in August 1944 for refusing to surrender the Jewish children who were housed in their orphanage on Dzielna Street which was later transferred to the vicinity of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the New Town:

[1] Zofia Dziewanowska, [2] Helena Jezierska, [3] Zofia Kowalczyk, [4] Anna Apolonia Motz, [5] Maria (Marianna) Nadolska, [6] Józefa Ogródowicz, [7] Aurelia Pomierny, and [8] Maria Florentyna Wilman.

Other nuns listed by Zajęczkowski are:

[9] & [10] Two Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary—Kazimiera Wołowska (Sister Maria Marta of Jesus), the superior of the convent, and Bogumiła Noiszewska (Sister Maria Ewa of Providence), a medical doctor—were arrested in Słonim (voivodship of Nowogródek) on December 18, 1942 for sheltering Jews in the convent and on its grounds. They were executed the following day in a mass execution of several hundred Poles together with the Jesuit priest, Fr. Adam Sztark, administrator of Żyrowice parish and chaplain of the Sisters' convent in Słonim, who had brought Jewish children to the convent (Entries 463 and 702)—see also Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.385–86 and 390–91. Their story is detailed above.

[11] Sister Jadwiga Assadowska, the superior of the convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Wołkowysk near Białystok in eastern Poland, was repeatedly arrested on suspicion of assisting Jews and others (Entry 663).

Another nun who lost her life for sheltering sickly Polish and Jewish children from Warsaw and assisting Jews escaping across the nearby Polish-Slovak border was [12] Sister Maria Klemensa (Helena Staszewska), who was the superior of a convent of the Ursulines of the Roman Union in Rokiciny Podhalańskie near Rabka. She was arrested by the Gestapo in January 1943, and perished in Auschwitz in July of that year. See Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, pp.445–51. Sister Maria Julia, born Stanisława Rodzińska, the superior of a convent and director of an orphanage in Wilno, was arrested on July 12, 1943. She was imprisoned in Pravieniškės (Prowieniszki) outside Kaunas, and then in Stutthof concentration camp where she died of typhus on February 20, 1945. She shared her meagre food rations with fellow prisoners in the Jewish barracks and, according to a Jewish inmate, lifted their spirits by her inner strength. *Ibid.*, 282–85.

It should be remembered that Catholic priests and nuns constituted only a small but representative portion of Polish rescuers and the several thousand Poles who were burned alive, executed or died from torture because they befriended Jews. In total, several thousand Christian Poles—men, women and children, entire families and even whole communities—were tortured to death, summarily executed, or burned alive for rendering assistance to Jews. Hundreds of cases of Poles being put to death for helping Jews have been documented though the list is still far from complete (the author is aware of scores of additional cases). See the following publications on this topic: Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), pp.184–85; Waław Zajęczkowski, *Martyrs of Charity: Christian and Jewish Response to the Holocaust*, Part One (Washington, D.C.: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), Part One; Waław Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce–Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 1987); The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation–The Institute of National Memory and The Polish Society For the Righteous Among Nations, *Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*, Part One (Warsaw, 1993), Part Two (Warsaw, 1996), and Part Three (Warsaw, 1997). A portion of the last of these publications is reproduced in Appendix B in Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation, 1939–1944*, Second revised edition (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), and an extensive list of Polish victims also appears in Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 1998), pp.119–23.

Some Holocaust historians who deprecate Polish rescue efforts, such as Lucy S. Dawidowicz, have attempted to argue that essentially there was no difference in the penalty that Poles and Western Europeans such as the Dutch faced for helping Jews. See Lucy C. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), p.166. However, the sources on which Dawidowicz relies belie this claim. Western Europeans very rarely faced the prospect of death for helping Jews. Raul Hilberg described the situation that prevailed in the Netherlands as follows: “If caught, they did not have to fear an automatic death penalty. Thousands were arrested for hiding Jews or Jewish belongings, but it was German policy to detain such people only for a relatively short time in a camp within the country, and in serious cases to confiscate their property.” See Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books/Harper Collins, 1992), pp.210–11. According to a Dutch historian, “usually, if Gentiles who helped Jews were punished, they were punished with short-term Schutzhaft, or protective custody; only severe cases were sent

to concentration camps in Germany.” See Marnix Croes, “The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Winter 2006): pp.474–99. In Belgium, a decree of June 1, 1942 warned the local population against sheltering Jews under punishment with “imprisonment and a fine.” See Mordechai Paldiel, *Churches and the Holocaust: Unholy Teaching, Good Samaritans, and Reconciliation* (Jersey City, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 2006), pp.131–32. Nor is there evidence of any death penalty being issued for helping Jews within Germany proper: “German law did not specifically prohibit helping Jews. ... In cases of violation, the non-Jewish German party was threatened with protective custody or three months in a concentration camp.” See Beate Kosmala, “Facing Deportation in Germany, 1941–1945: Jewish and Non-Jewish Responses,” in Beate Kosmala and Feliks Tych, eds., *Facing the Nazi Genocide: Non-Jews and Jews in Europe* (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), p.35. Moreover, unlike in occupied Poland, a significant group of people defined as “mixed race” and even Jews married to Germans could escape most of the Nazi regime’s anti-Semitic policies, provided they and their children did not practice the Jewish faith. However, thousands of Jews subsequently committed suicide when their protection came to an end. See Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2008), pp.70–71, 251, 272–73. Likewise, in Austria no specific penalty was legally established for concealing Jews, yet rescue efforts there, as in Germany proper, were exceedingly rare. See Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 8: *Europe (Part I) and Other Countries* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007), pp.xxix, liii. Although the death penalty was also found on the books in a few jurisdictions such as Norway and the Czech Protectorate, there too it was rarely used. Such laxity was virtually unheard of in occupied Poland, where the death penalty was meted out with utmost rigour. Several Norwegian resistance fighters were executed for helping Jews to escape to Sweden, and a number of persons were imprisoned. See Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House; New York: The Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers, 1993), p.366. Several dozen individuals in the Czech Protectorate were charged by Nazi special courts and sentenced to death. See Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), pp.218–27, 303–304. Some rescuers were also put to death in other occupied countries such as Lithuania. See Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), pp.326–27. See also Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, pp.111–18, 284–86, 294, 295, for some other examples.

Historian István Deák has eloquently summed up the argument in the following way (István Deák, “Memories of Hell,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 26, 1997):

The penalty for assisting or even trading with a Jew in German-occupied Poland was death, a fact that makes all comparisons between wartime Polish-Jewish relations and, say, Danish-Jewish relations blatantly unfair. Yet such comparisons are made again and again in Western histories—and virtually always to the detriment of the Poles, with scarce notice taken of the 50,000 to 100,000 Jews said to have been saved by the efforts of Poles to hide or otherwise help them ... one must not ignore the crucial differences between wartime conditions in Eastern and Western Europe.

Collective Rescue Efforts of the Poles

As for the accomplishments of Poles in rescuing Jews, the most comprehensive research regarding the Warsaw area is that conducted by Gunnar S. Paulsson. Paulsson has summarized some of his findings in an article entitled, “The Rescue of Jews by Non-Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland,” which appeared in *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, volume 7, nos. 1 & 2 (summer/autumn 1998): pp.19–44.

In the league of people who are known to have risked their lives to rescue Jews, Poland stands at the very top, accounting for more than a third of all the ‘Righteous Gentiles’. ...

Of the 27,000 Jewish fugitives in Warsaw, 17,000 were still alive 15 months after the destruction of the ghetto, on the eve of the Polish uprising in 1944. Of the 23,500 who were not drawn in by the Hotel Polski scheme, 17,000 survived until then. Of these 17,000, 5,000 died in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, and about 10,500 were still alive at liberation. ...

As it happens, there is an excellent standard of comparison, because it is estimated that in the Netherlands, 20–25,000 Jews went into hiding—about the same number as in Warsaw—of whom 10–15,000 survived—again, about the same number. ... The conclusion, then, is quite startling: leaving aside acts of war and Nazi perfidy, a Jew’s chances of survival in hiding were no worse in Warsaw, at any rate, than in the Netherlands. ...

The small number of survivors, therefore, is not a direct result of Polish hostility to the Jews ... The Jews were deported from the ghettos to the death camps, not by Poles, but by German gendarmes, reinforced by Ukrainian and Baltic auxiliaries, and with the enforced co-operation of the ghetto police. Neither the Polish police nor any group of Polish civilians was involved in the deportations to any significant degree, nor did they staff the death camps. Nor did the fate of the Jews who were taken to their deaths depend to any significant degree on the attitudes and actions of a people from whom they were isolated by brick walls and barbed wire. ...

The 27,000 Jews in hiding in Warsaw relied on about 50–60,000 people who provided hiding-places and another 20–30,000 who provided other forms of help; on the other hand, blackmailers, police agents, and other actively anti-Jewish elements numbered perhaps 2–3,000, each striking at two or three victims a month. In other words, helpers outnumbered hunters by about 20 or 30 to one. The active helpers of Jews thus made up seven to nine per cent of the population of Warsaw; the Jews themselves, 2.7 per cent; the hunters, perhaps 0.3 per cent; and the whole network—Jews, helpers and hunters—constituted a secret city of at least 100,000: one tenth of the people of Warsaw; more than twice as many as the 40,000 members of the vaunted Polish military underground, the AK [Armia Krajowa or Home Army]. ...

How many people in Poland rescued Jews? Of those that meet Yad Vashem’s criteria—perhaps 100,000. Of those that offered minor forms of help—perhaps two or three times as many. Of those who were passively protective—undoubtedly the majority of the population. All these acts, great and small, were necessary to rescue Jews in Poland.

A further study of this topic by Gunnar S. Paulsson appeared in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, volume 13 (2000), at pages 78–103, under the title “The Demography of Jews in Hiding in Warsaw, 1943–1945.” Paulsson wrote at pages 96 and 99:

For the sake of comparison, the case of the Netherlands might be examined. There, 20,000–25,000 Jews are estimated to have gone into hiding, mainly in Amsterdam, of whom 10,000–15,000 survived the war. The overall survival rate in Holland was thus 40–60 percent, and in Warsaw, after levelling the playing field, notionally 55–75 percent. Thus the attrition rate among Jews in hiding in Warsaw was relatively low, contrary to expectation and contemporary perceptions. The main obstacles to Jewish survival in Warsaw are seen to have been the Hotel Polski trap and the 1944 uprising and its aftermath, rather than the possibility of discovery or betrayal.

Despite frequent house searches and the prevailing Nazi terror in Warsaw (conditions absent in the Netherlands), and despite extortionists, blackmailers, and antisemitic traditions (much less widespread in the Netherlands), the chance that a Jew in hiding would be betrayed seems to have been lower in Warsaw than in the Netherlands.

... it is clear that Warsaw was the most important centre of rescue activity, certainly in Poland and probably in the whole of occupied Europe. The city accounted for perhaps a quarter of all Jews in hiding in Poland ... The 27,000 Jews in hiding there also constituted undoubtedly the largest group of its kind in Europe ...

See also Gunnar S. Paulsson, “Evading the Holocaust: The Unexplored Continent of Holocaust Historiography,” in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of*

Genocide (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), vol. 1, pp.302–318; Gunnar S. Paulsson, “Ringelblum Revisited: Polish-Jewish Relations in Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945,” in Joshua D. Zimmerman, ed., *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), pp.173–92; and a newly published monograph by Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

Contrary to what is often claimed in Holocaust literature, there are many recorded cases of entire villages sympathizing with the Jews and participating in their rescue. With rare exceptions, these rescuers—and indeed the vast majority of those who extended assistance to Jews—have not been recognized by Yad Vashem. Emanuel Ringelblum recorded: “I heard from Jews of Głowno [Główne] how peasants helped them during the whole of the winter. A Jew who went out to a village in search of food usually returned with a bag of potatoes ... In many villages, the peasants showed open sympathy for the Jews. They threw bread and other food [through the barbed-wire fence] into the camps ... located in their neighborhood.” See Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers’ Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), p.116. Hercek Cedrowski, Tojwje Drajhorm and Jankiel Borkowski wrote in 1947: “The Jews of Ozorków maintained contact with the Poles. The Polish population did not help the Germans in the liquidation of the Jews. They traded with the Jews and brought food to the ghetto. The Jews were afraid of speaking with Poles, and Poles were afraid of helping Jews, but there were no denunciations of Jews.” See Michał Grynberg and Maria Kotowska, comp. and eds., *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945: Relacje świadków* (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 2003), p.488. Menachem Superman, who was survived in the Rzeszów area, wrote: “the entire village knew that I was Jewish, but [my rescuer] always said to me that I shouldn’t be afraid, because no one will hand me over to the Germans.” See Elżbieta Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), p.128. Isadore Burstyn, as a boy of eleven, was able to survive through the friendship of people in the village of Głupianka near Otwock (outside of Warsaw), where his father was confined in the ghetto: “In my case the entire village sheltered me even though I know there were still about 20 per cent anti-Semites among them.” See “Edmonton survivor returns to Poland,” *The Canadian Jewish News* (Toronto), August 2, 1990, and “Return to Otwock brings back rush of memories,” *The Canadian Jewish News*, August 30, 1990. See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, p.927. When Abram Jakub Zand, a tailor from the village of Bolimów near Warsaw, “stole back to his village; the local peasants welcomed him back, and he was passed from house to house, working a week or two in each. ... ‘If I were to thank everyone, whole villages would have to visit me.’” See Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963), p.27. A Polish Red Cross worker gave over to a Polish couple by the name of Kaczmarek, themselves refugees from Western Poland living in the town of Żyrardów near Warsaw, a young Jewish girl found abandoned in an empty death train: Many of the neighbours knew that she was Jewish, yet no one informed.” See Zbigniew Pakula, *The Jews of Poznań* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), p.51. In the village of Osiny, “the peasants arranged among themselves that each would hide a Jewish girl for a certain period so that ‘everyone would be guilty and no one could inform.’” See Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, p.27; Krzysztof Czubaszek, *Żydzi z Łukowa i okolic* (Warsaw: Danmar, 2008), p.252. Henryk Prajs survived the war passing as a Pole in the village of Podwierzbie near Magnuszew where the fact that he was Jewish was widely known, with the protection of the head of the village. See the testimony of Henryk Prajs, January 2005, Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>>. In the small village of Bokowo Wielkie near Sierpc four Jews were rescued by diverse Polish farmers. See Leon Gongola, “O prawach i ludziach,” *Polska* (Warsaw), no. 7 (1971): pp.170–72. A Jew by the name of Duczy was sheltered in his native village of Tarczyniechy near Zamość, with the knowledge of all of the villagers. See Philip Bialowitz, as told to Joseph Bialowitz, *Bunt w Sobiborze: Opowieść o przetrwaniu w Polsce okupowanej przez Niemców* (Warsaw: Nasza Księgarnia, 2008), pp.214–15. The case of author Jerzy Kosinski and his parents, who lived openly in Dąbrowa Rzeczycka near Stalowa Wola, is another example. The Kosiński family attended church in nearby Wola Rzeczycka, obtained food from villagers in Kępa Rzeczycka, and were sheltered temporarily in Rzeczyca Okrągła. Other Jews were also assisted by the local villagers. See James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton/Penguin, 1996), pp.7–54.

Faiga Rosenbluth, a penniless teenage Jewish girl from Kańczuga, roamed the countryside moving from one village to the next for some two years; she helped out by very many peasants and was not betrayed, even though she was readily recognized as a Jew. See Fay Walker and Leo Rosen (with Caren S. Neile), *Hidden: A Sister and Brother in Nazi Poland* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), passim. Marian Gołębiowski, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, placed Dr. Bernard Ryszard Hellreich (later Ingram) and his future wife Irena Szumska, who went by the names of Zbigniew and Irena Jakobiszyn, in the village of Czeremna near Jasło, where their presence was known to all the villagers and they enjoyed the protection of the owners and manager of a local estate. See Piotr Zychowicz, “Ratowali Żydów i nie godzą się na kłamstwa,” *Rzeczpospolita*, October 30, 2009; Polish Righteous, Internet: <<http://www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl>>. Henryk Schönker recalled that when he was fingered in Wieliczka by a boy who started to chase him, the passers-by ignored the boy’s cry to “catch the Jew.” No made an effort to apprehend him. One of the onlookers seized the boy and admonished him. See Henryk Schönker, *Dotknięcie anioła* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2005), pp.135–36. The case of Doctor Olga Lilien, a Holocaust survivor from Lwów with a very marked Jewish appearance, who lived with a Polish family near Tarnobrzeg, is another example of solidarity among the Polish villagers. A German came looking for a fugitive and summoned the villagers to a meeting to question them about his whereabouts. “Suddenly he looked at me and said, ‘Oh, but this is a Jewess.’ The head of the village said, ‘Oh, no, she cooks at the school. She is a very good cook.’ Nobody said, ‘Oh, well, she is Jewish. Take her.’ He let me go. The population of the village was about two thousand. They all knew there was something ‘wrong’ with me. Any one of them could have sold me to the Germans for two hundred deutsche marks, but out of two thousand people nobody did it. Everybody in the village protected me. I had very good relations with them.” See Ellen Land-Weber, *To Save a Life: Stories of Holocaust Rescue* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), pp.204–206, 246. The villagers of Czajków near Staszów were known for the support they gave to Jews who were hiding from the Germans: “it was something exceptional to see the humane way the villagers behaved. These simple people helped us of their own free will, and without receiving any money in return. From them we often heard some kind words, quite apart from the money, loaves of bread and boiled potatoes they gave us from time to time.” See Gabriel Singer, “As Beasts in the Woods,” in Elhanan Ehrlich, ed., *Sefer Staszow* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Staszowites in Israel with the Assistance of the Staszowite Organizations in the Diaspora, 1962), p.xviii (English section). More than a dozen villagers have been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vols. 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, p.197; Part 2, p.670. Many villagers in Głuchów near Łańcut were also engaged in sheltering Jews, and did so with the support of the entire community. See Mariusz Kamieniecki, “Ratowali Żydów przed zagładą,” *Nasz Dziennik*, November 24, 2005. An illiterate Jewish woman who survived in a village near Lublin acknowledged that “the entire village rescued me. They all wanted me to survive. And when the Germans were routed, I left the village and shall never return there.” When asked why she didn’t want to see the people who saved her life, she replied: “Because I would be beholden to the entire village. So I left and won’t return.” See Klara Mirska, *W cieniu wiecznego strachu: Wspomnienia* (Paris, n.p.: 1980), p.455. The villagers of Wola Przybysławska near Lublin took turns sheltering and caring for a young Jewish girl who survived a German raid on a forest bunker. She was passed from one home to another, thus ensuring there wouldn’t be any informing. See Shiye Goldberg (Shie Chehever), *The Undeclared* (Tel Aviv: H. Leivick Publishing House, 1985), pp.166–67. A Jewish woman named Berkowa (née Zelman) was rescued by Jan Łoś in the village of Żabno near Żółkiewka; although this was widely known, no one betrayed her. The Wajc family, consisting of Mendel and Ryfka and their two young sons, Jankiel and Zygmunt, survived in the village of Różki near Żółkiewka, where they were known to the villagers. See Chaim Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel: Przez Kottłas, Buzuluk, Ural, Polskę, Niemcy i Francję*, Second revised and expanded edition (Lublin: Akko, 2004), 169, pp.171–72. A Jewish boy of seven or eight years named Abraham, who tended geese for a farmer near Sandomierz, was known to the peasants as “Żydek” (little Jew). See Eva Feldenkreis-Grinbal, ed., *Eth Ezkera—Whenever I Remember: Memorial Book of the Jewish Community in Tzoymir (Sandomierz)* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots’e Tsoizmir be-Yisra’l: Moreshet, bet iedut ‘a. sh. Mordekhai Anilevits’, 1993), p.544. The Idasiak family took in a teenaged Jewish boy by the name of Dawid, whom they sheltered for almost two years. The neighbours were fully aware that he was Jewish and also helped him. He herded cows and played with the village children. See the account of B. Idasiak, “Jedwabne: Dlaczego kłamstwa?,” *Nasz Dziennik*, February 26, 2001. A 9-year-old Jewish boy by the name of Wintluk (Wintel), who

had lost his mother and three fingers when shot at by Germans while escaping, was taken in by a poor Polish family in Mulawicze near Bielsk Podlaski and then cared for and protected by the entire village who took pity on him: "The entire village, which was more aware of the danger, took responsibility for his survival. The village administrator gave warning of visits by the Germans, who were stationed in the village school. Thanks to this collective effort, the boy survived the war." See Alina Cała, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1995), pp.209–10. Alfreda and Bolesław Pietraszek sheltered several Jewish families consisting of 18 people on their farm in Czekanów near Sokołów Podlaski for a period of two years. Although they had to rely on the assistance of neighbors for food for their charges, no one betrayed them. See "Odznaczenia dla Sprawiedliwych," Internet: <<http://www.forum-znak.org.pl/index.php?t=wydarzenia&id=6109>>. Two young Jewish men were passed from farmer to farmer in the village of Zdziebórz near Wyszaków and were eventually accepted into the Home Army. See Krystian Brodacki, "Musimy ich uszanować!" *Tygodnik Solidarność*, December 17, 2004. Yitzhak Kuniak from Kaluszyn hid among peasants for whom he was sewing secretly. He moved about in a few villages where he was fed and sheltered. See Layb Rochman, "With Kuniak in Hiding," in A. Shamri and Sh. Soroka, eds., *Sefer Kaluszyn: Geheylt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kaluszyn in Israel, 1961), 437ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn*, Internet: <<http://jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>>. A teenaged boy and his mother, who lived in a damaged, abandoned house in Drzewica where he openly played with village boys, survived the war despite his Semitic appearance. See Sven Sonnenberg, *A Two Stop Journey to Hell* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2001). A poor Jewish tailor survived the war by being passed from home to home in the village of Dąbrowica near Ulanów. See Jolanta Chodorska, ed., *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny: Świadectwa nadesłane na apel Radia Maryja* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sióstr Loretanek, 2002), Part Two, pp.161–62. Jerzy and Irena Krępeć, who were awarded by Yad Vashem, sheltered and otherwise assisted a number of Jews on their farm in Gołębki near Warsaw. Their son, a 14-year-old boy at the time, recalled: "the fact that they were hiding Jews was an open secret in the village. At times, there were 20 or 30 people living on the farm. Many of the visitors were urban Jews who spoke Polish with an accent. Their children attended underground schools that moved from house to house. 'The neighbors knew. It would have been impossible to manage this without people finding out. But everyone knew they had to keep quiet—it was a matter of life or death.'" In fact, many of the Krępeć's Polish neighbours helped, "if only to provide a meal." See Peggy Curran, "Decent people: Polish couple honored for saving Jews from Nazis," *Gazette* (Montreal), December 10, 1994; Janice Arnold, "Polish widow made Righteous Gentile," *The Canadian Jewish News* (Montreal edition), January 26, 1995; Irene Tomaszewski and Tecia Werbowski, *Żegota: The Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland, 1942–1945* (Montreal: Price-Patterson, 1999), pp.131–32. Ludwika Fiszer was one of three women who escaped naked from an execution pit where Jews from the Poniatowa labour camp were taken by Germans and their Ukrainian henchmen. Roaming from village to village, despite their dishevelled appearances, they received various forms of assistance, even though the peasants were clearly terrified of Ukrainian retaliation. Although most peasants were reluctant to keep them for any length of time, no one betrayed them, and several weeks later they met up with a Polish woman who took them to Warsaw. See the account of Ludwika Fiszer in the web site *Women and the Holocaust* (Personal Reflections—In Ghettos/Camps), Internet: <<http://www.interlog.com/~mighty/personal/ludwika.html>>. Joseph Dattner, from Bielsko in Upper Silesia, recalls: "I survived, like my brothers, by pretending to be Christian. I took the name Poluk but I was well-known and most people knew I was Jewish." See Al Sokol, "Holocaust theme underscores work of artist," *Toronto Star*, November 7, 1996. Several Jews were hidden in a forest bunker near the village of Leńce near Białystok. The villagers in the area knew about these Jews, but no one denounced them. See Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, eds., *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, Second revised and expanded edition (Kraków: Znak, 1969), pp.741–42. In the village of Dziurków near Radom, a local Jew lived openly throughout the war with two Polish families under an assumed identity furnished by the Home Army, and even took seasonal employment with the Germans, without being betrayed. See Tadeusz Kozłowski, "Spotkanie z żydowskim kolegą po 50 latach," *Gazeta* (Toronto), May 12–14, 1995. In the village of Olsztyn near Częstochowa, four Jewish families passed as Polish Christians with the collusion of the villagers. See Frank Morgens, *Years at the Edge of Existence: War Memoirs, 1939–1945* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), pp.97, 99. Another eyewitness writes: "In Kielce Voivodship I know of cases where an entire village knew that a Jew or a Jewess were hiding

out, disguised in peasant clothes, and no one betrayed them even though they were poor Jews who not only could not pay for their silence but had to be fed, clothed and housed.” See Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewin, eds., *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles Helped the Jews, 1939–1945* (London: Earls Court Publications, 1969), p.361. A similar attitude in several villages near Łowicz is described by Joseph Szmekura. See Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Łowicz, A Town in Mazovia: Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Lowitcher Landsmanshaften in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, 1966), pp.xvi–xvii. Hanna Mész, along with her mother, spent the period September 1944 to February 1945 in the village of Korzeniówka near Grójec, working for various peasants who knew they were Jews. See Wiktoria Śliwowska, ed., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998), pp.120–23. A similar case near Łaskarzew is recorded in Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), pp.118–124: Zygmunt Śrul Warszawer hid for 26 months moving from place to place among numerous villages, such as Wielki Las, in the triangle formed by Łaskarzew, Sobolew, and Wilga, “visiting every farm because he figured that if everyone helped him no one would turn him in—to do would mean self-destruction.” No one turned him away empty handed during those 26 months: “‘No one ever refused to help you?’ ‘No, not food! In twenty-six months, not once. Sometimes they were afraid to let me into the house, or into the barn. It varied, but their food they shared.’” The following examples can be found in Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003). Eva Safszyccka, not yet 20 at the time, left the ghetto in Siedlce, obtained false identity documents with the help of a Pole, a stranger she happened to encounter, and took a position as a domestic on an estate owned by a Pole. She recalled: “I met with so much kindness from the Poles, so many were decent and helpful that it is unbelievable. ... They hid other Jews, one of them a girl of eleven.” Ibid., p.224. Tema Rotman-Weinstock from the Lublin area presents a similar story. Dressed as a peasant, during the last stage of the war she roamed the familiar countryside moving from employer to employer, most of whom were hungry themselves and found it hard to feed her. She met a cousin who lived with his wife in a bunker in the forest, but he refused to let her join them. Once when she was on the verge of collapse, kind peasants took her into their home. After a month, afraid to keep her, they directed her to a woman who lived on a farm with her daughter in the village of Kajetanówka. She remained there until the liberation, even though the word had spread that she was Jewish. “Fortunately, no bad consequences followed because she found a powerful protector in the local priest. He baptized Tema and defended her ... ‘The priest stood up for me, arguing that conversion was a wonderful Christian deed.’” Ibid., pp.227–29. Rina Eitani (11 years old at the time) and her mother and sister (10 years old) supported themselves by smuggling farm goods from the countryside to Warsaw. They worked separately to lessen the risk of discovery. While the Germans were ruthless toward smugglers, the natives treated them kindly: “One day I was buying something in a store. A little girl came in, warning me, ‘The Gestapo are in the house where you live.’ Right away, the owner of the store, a woman, put me in the cellar. She wouldn’t let me go until the Gestapo left. ... We stayed a lot in the villages where we bought the produce. The peasants were nice to us. They would feed us and sometimes, in exchange, we worked for them.” Ibid., 231–32. Chava Grinberg-Brown roamed the countryside near Żyrardów (she hailed from the village of Wiskitki) for the last years of the German occupation: “... at the end of each day, I would beg people to let me come in and sleep. I remember that once someone gave me a place to stay and offered me chicken soup ... In another home, one of the women gave me medication for my skin condition. They knew that I was Jewish ... it was obvious. As I wandered from one little place to another, people fed me and let me sleep in their homes or close to them; in barns, pigstys, etc.” When a Pole who recognized her wanted to turn her in, “Some peasants who realized what he was after threatened to give him a beating he would never forget. That stopped him from bothering me.” Her story continues: “I went to the place I had worked before [the war]. I stayed there for a few days. After that, I kept moving from one place to another. Some refused me work. Then a peasant offered me a more stable job. ... I remained with this peasant for most of the summer. Then I left and went to another village. I went from one village to another. Even during the summer I would change places. When the Poles sent me away, I was not angry. I understood that they were afraid or had not enough food and could not share the little they had. I did not particularly feel their anti-Semitism. ... Most people knew right away when I came in that I was Jewish, but they did not harm me. Only a few times did I have to run away. ... When I entered a village I would go first to the head of the village, and he would send me to a peasant. Usually they were not afraid if they had a note from the head of the village. ... I have no bad feelings toward the Christians. I survived the war thanks to them.” Ibid., pp.225–27.

A 31-year-old barber named Zimler, who wandered with his wife in the Wiskitki area near Żyrardów in 1941, cutting hair for farmers, wrote that “the attitude of the farmers to us was extremely good.” The farmers in various villages such as Oryszew, Wyczółki and Janówka, allowed them to stay in their homes, gave them food, washed their laundry, and even invited them to a wedding. See Marta Markowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Dzień po dniu Zagłady* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, Dom Spotkań z Historią, and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2008), 100–1. In an unspecified village outside Warsaw, “A Jew who had been starving in the woods turned up one day, asking for water. The farmer called the police, who shot the Jew on the spot. This had so outraged the village that the offender had to flee to Warsaw in fear of reprisal.” See Natan Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), pp.248–49. A number of Jews were sheltered in another unnamed village outside Warsaw, with the knowledge of the entire village, and no one was betrayed. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., pp.572–73. Franciszka Aronson, from a village near Mińsk Mazowiecki, wandered about many villages, including villages where she was known, before she was taken in by nuns at a convent in Ignaców where several Jews and a Gypsy woman were sheltered. See Ewa Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach: Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce a latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Clio, 2001), p.116. Dr. Zofia Szymańska, who was sheltered by the Grey Ursulines in Ożarów, received material care and an abundance of spiritual comfort from many nuns and priests, without any effort on their part to convert her. News of her stay was widely known to the villagers but no one betrayed her, not even when a German military unit was, at one point, quartered in the convent. Her 10-year-old niece, who had a very Semitic appearance, was sheltered by the Sisters of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Szymanów, along with more than a dozen Jewish girls. All of the nuns were aware that their young charges were Jews, as were the lay staff, the parents of non-Jewish children and many villagers. None of the Christian parents removed their children from the school despite the potential danger, and in fact many of them contributed to the upkeep of the Jewish children. Dr. Szymańska wrote: “The children were under the protection of the entire convent and village. Not one traitor was to be found among them.” See Zofia Szymańska, *Byłam tylko lekarzem...* (Warsaw: Pax, 1979), pp.149–76. Another example is provided by Mary Rolicka, whose mother, one other Jewish woman and two Jewish men were sheltered by the Sisters of Charity, with the assistance of their chaplain, Rev. Albin Małysiak, in the Helcel Institute in Kraków and later at an old age home in Szczawnica. Rev. Małysiak recalled: “All of the charges of the institute as well as the personnel (nuns and lay staff) knew that there were Jews hidden among us. It was impossible to conceal that fact, even though it was known what danger faced those who were responsible for sheltering Jews. After the passage of weeks and months many of the residents of Szczawnica learned of the Jewish boarders. No one betrayed this to the Germans, who were stationed in the immediate vicinity.” See Mary Rolicka, “A Memoir of Survival in Poland,” *Midstream*, April 1988, pp.26–27. It was universally known that the young daughter of Reb Moshe of Grodzisko near Leżajsk was sheltered in an orphanage run by nuns in that village, yet no one betrayed her. See Bertha Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1980), p.199. Marian Małowist, who survived the war in the village of Jabłoń near Parczew, said: “The family with whom I lived knew everything about me—in fact, two families knew. After the war it came out that more families knew, and also the chief of the navy-blue police, a Pole, a very decent person. Juliusz Kleiner was hiding in the neighbourhood; in the next village there was a Jewess; in that area many were hiding.” See “Marian Małowist on History and Historians,” in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13 (2000): p.338. Jewish partisan Gustaw Alef-Bolkowiak identifies the following villages in the Parczew-Ostrów Lubelski area as ones where “almost the entire population was actively engaged in helping fugitives from the ghettos”: Rudka, Jedlanka, Makoszka, Tyśmienica and Bójki. He also states that in the village of Niedźwiada near Opole Lubleskie, the foresters sheltered several Jewish families with the knowledge of the entire village. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., pp.533–34. About one hundred and fifty Poles were killed in mass executions in the villages of Białka in the Parczew forest and Sterdyń near Sokołów Podlaski for extensive help given to Jews by those villages. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, pp.123–24, 228. More than a dozen villagers in Mętów near Głusk, outside of Lublin, sheltered Jews. See Dariusz Libionka, “Polska ludność chrześcijańska wobec eksterminacji Żydów—dystrykt lubelski,” in Dariusz Libionka, ed., *Akcja Reinhardt: Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2004), p.325. Survivors from Sokoły recall: “The village Landowa [Lendowo near Brańsk] had a good name among the Jews who were hiding in the area around Sokoly,

and they regarded it as a paradise. Many Jews began to stream there. ... there wasn't a house in Landowa where there weren't three or four Jews." (Liba Goldberg-Warobel) "Finally, we came to the village of Landowa [Lendowo]. ... we knocked on the door of a house, not far from the forest. An old farmwoman brought us into the house. ... I remained alone with the old farmwoman. ... Over time, it became known to all of them that I was not related to her family and that I didn't even know Polish. The farmwoman did not hesitate to admit that she had adopted me, a Jewish girl, as her daughter. ... The farmwoman began to teach me Christian prayers, and on Sundays I went with her to church. ... The *goyim*, residents of the village who knew I was Jewish, did not hand me over to the Germans." (Tzipora Tabak-Burstein) See Shmuel Kalisher, ed., *Sokoly: B'ma'avak l'haim* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Sokoly Emigrés in Israel, 1975), pp.188–207, translated as *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>>. Another survivor writes: "This village Lendowo became a refuge for a lot of wandering Jews, they called this village the Garden of Eden. ... here they opened wide the doors without having any fear. Soon there were Jews in every house." See Luba Wrobel Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: n.p., 1998), p.63. Rywka Chus and her husband, a grain merchant from Ostrów Mazowiecka, were protected by the villagers of Króle Duże who respected and helped them survive the war. See Andrzej Żbikowski, *U genezy Jedwabnego: Żydzi na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej. Wrzesień 1939–lipiec 1941* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2006), p.69. Klamen Wewryk describes the assistance he received from numerous peasants as he wandered from village to village in an area south of Chełm populated by decent but frightened Poles and Ukrainian Baptists. A family of five Jews hid in Teresin near Chełm: "Everybody in the hamlet knew that this family was hiding, but nobody knew where and they didn't want to know. Moishe told me how they were loved in that hamlet—there were decent people there." See Kalmen Wawryk, *To Sobibor and Back: An Eyewitness Account* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), pp.66–68, 71. A teenager, Marian Finkielman wandered the villages in the vicinity of Dubeczno where he was employed as a farmhand by various farmers: "In 1941 and 1942 many young Jews wandered from village to village, offering their services in exchange for room and board. The peasant farmers knew who they were, and for some time took advantage of their help, just as the farmer in the village of Kozaki benefited from my situation." In Kozaki, "Luckily, during my stay there from April through July 1942, ... none of the inhabitants of the village, Ukrainians or Poles, informed of Jurek's [a Jewish boy from Warsaw who also worked as a herdsman] or my existence. It seemed that there were no informants in this village ..." See Marian Finkielman, *Out of the Ghetto: A Young Jewish Orphan Boy's Struggle for Survival* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2000), pp.34–36. The villagers of Kubra near Radziłów (in the Białystok District) did not betray the family of Helena Chlewicka when the Gestapo came looking for them in July 1942, and she and her mother survived the war penniless moving from village to village. See Danuta and Aleksander Wroniszewski, "...aby żyć," *Kontakty–Łomżyński Tygodnik Społeczny*, July 10, 1988. Mirla Frydlich (Szternzys), from Żółkiewka, was shot in the thigh when she jumped from a train headed for the Bełżec death camp. A Pole who happened to be driving by took her in his carriage and nursed her back to health with the help of another Pole. When Mirla returned to Żółkiewka she received assistance from a number of Poles in several nearby villages. See Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel*, pp.181–84. About 12 miles outside Lwów, Abraham Trasawucki, dressed only in rags, jumped from a death train headed for Bełżec in the middle of winter. Although he was easily identifiable as a Jew on the run, the villagers did not betray him, rather he was offered temporary shelter, food, clothing and money at two random Polish farmsteads, and given rides in the wagons of other Poles. He was sold a train ticket by an official, allowed on the train by a guard who checked his ticket, and not denounced by the passengers, even though everyone recognized him as a Jew. See Abraham Tracy, *To Speak For the Silenced* (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2007), pp.165–72. Ryfka Goldiner, a young Jewish child, was rescued by Stanisław and Helena Wiśliński in Bełżyce near Lublin. Although the villagers were aware of her origin no one betrayed them. The local priest did not agree to formally baptize the child in the event her parents survived the war and returned for her, which they did. See Anna Dąbrowska, ed., *Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata. Relacje* (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN," 2008), pp.56–61. Luba Hochlerer, ten years of age, lived openly with Józef and Bronisława Zajac in the hamlet of Witoldów near Wojsławice, where she attended village school, yet no one betrayed her. Ibid., pp.106–7. Irena Sznycer, a Jewish girl with strikingly Semitic features, who was sheltered by a Polish woman in the village

of Bełżec, recalled shortly after the war: “I was well cared for by that lady and was not afraid of anything. Although the neighbours knew I was Jewish, this lady had no enemies so nothing [bad] could happen.” See Teresa Prekerowa, “Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): p.104. According to three separate testimonies of Jewish escapees from the death camps of Treblinka and Sobibór, they “walked about the villages” and were “known to everybody,” including the farm-hands and school children, without being betrayed. Ibid., p.108. A Jew who escaped from the Treblinka death camp recalled the help he received from peasants: “I was free. I walked to a village. ... I knocked to ask for bread. The peasants looked at me in silence. ‘Bread, bread.’ They saw my red hands, torn jacket, worn-out slippers, and handed me some hard, gray crusts. A peasant woman, huddled in shawls, gave me a bowl of hot milk and a bag. We didn’t talk: my body had turned red and blue from the blows and the cold, and my clothes, everything proclaimed *Jew!* But they gave me bread. Thank you Polish peasants. I slept in a stable near the animals, taking a little warm milk from the cow in the morning. My bag filled with bread.” See Martin Gray, with Max Gallo, *For Those I Loved* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1972), p.178. A Jew from Seroch (north of Warsaw) who escaped from a German execution site badly wounded was cared for by many many villagers where he sought refuge. See Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), p.134. Izaak Zemelman of Płock recalled the assistance provided by a large number of Polish families in the nearby village of Sikórz where he and his family took shelter: Stawiski, Romanowski, Górski, Danielak, Adamski, Kłosiński, and others. See Janusz Szczepański, *Spółeczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku* (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna imienia Aleksandra Gieysztora w Pułtusku, 2005), p.492. Some Jews came to realize that their guise as Christian Poles was not as foolproof as they had believed, but this had not caused them to be betrayed. One Jew who called on farmhouses in the Urzędów area, pretending to be a Christian, recalled: “I would cross myself, bless Jesus Christ, and ask for something to eat. I had made up a story in case questions were asked. Most farmers were not talkative. Viewed suspiciously, sometimes I would be given soup or bread and asked to leave quickly: sometimes I was just told to go. Later it dawned on me that I was crossing myself incorrectly, touching my chin rather than the chest.” See David Makow, *Dangerous Luck: Memories of a Hunted Life* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 2000), p.28. In 1942, Jerzy Mirewicz, a Jesuit priest, escorted a Jewish fugitive by train from Biłgoraj to Milanówek near Warsaw, so that he could join members of his family who were being hidden by a Christian family. Even though the priest had permission to travel, officials were constantly checking the papers of passengers. When the train reached Dęblin, a policeman came into the car and demanded to know if his companion was a Jew. Fortunately for the priest and the fugitive, the whole compartment came to their rescue by insisting that priest was escorting a “lunatic” to a hospital asylum. See Vincent A. Lapomarda, *The Jesuits and the Third Reich* (Lewiston/Queenston and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), p.130. A Jewish lawyer was able to continue his practice in Mielec, in defiance of a Nazi ban, with the collusion of the town’s entire legal profession, until he was denounced by a fellow Jew, first to the Gestapo and then to the Justice Department. See Mark Verstandig, *I Rest My Case* (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), pp.viii, 109–13, 130–32. In the village of Goszcza near Miechów, everyone was aware that Jews, some of them with a marked Semitic appearance, were being sheltered yet no one betrayed them. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., pp.643–44. Similar reports come from the villages of Gałuszowice and Chrzastów near Mielec. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., pp.721–22. In Majdan Niepryski, several families sheltered a young Jewish girl thrown from a train headed for Bełżec. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., pp.709–710. A teenage boy with a Semitic appearance, the son of a Jewish beggar woman, lived openly in the village of Głowaczowa near Dębica, with the Polish farmer who had taken him in, without being betrayed. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., p.640. In Grodzisk, a small community just outside Warsaw, an elderly Jewish teacher married to a Polish Catholic woman was able to live openly with his wife throughout the war: “Everybody knew my uncle was Jewish but no one reported him to the Gestapo.” This family took in other Jews, also without incident. See Sylvia Rothchild, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: Nal Books/New American Library, 1981), p.225. A foundry in Wołomin, outside of Warsaw, engaged a Jew whose appearance and manner of speaking readily gave him away, yet no one betrayed him. See Antoni Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbrownione* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995), pp.159–60; Antoni Marianowicz, *Life Strictly Forbidden* (London:

Vallentine Mitchell, 2004). The most frequent form of assistance was, however, casual assistance for short periods of time offered by many fearful but courageous Poles whose names will never be remembered and whose deeds are largely forgotten. One Jew from Zabłudów has made an effort to recall the numerous Poles who helped him to survive the German occupation in the Białystok District: “We heard the shooting and immediately went to the path leading to the village we knew very well. Some farmers gave us flour, barley, and butter ... Early in the morning they took us through the path where we could go to Białystok ... [The Nazis] kept hitting me until I fainted. ... I dragged myself to the road; some Christians that stood there and saw me started crying. ... Other [Jewish families] went through back ways to the village to get some food. I managed to get a job from Vintzig Volnetzick, the Christian ... His son-in-law, Chashick [Czesiek], promised me that if I stayed with him I wouldn't have to work for the Germans ... One day Vinchick, the Christian that I lived with drove me to Białystok ... Zabłudów's Jewish women went to the Christian's field to get some potatoes for the winter. ... We hid in Vinchik Velosoviches barn deep in the hay ... The helpful Christian's wife came to the barn begging me to leave. “There were whispers in the city that you were not seen among the people in the wagons, saying that you are probably hiding.” She asked that I pity her, because if I would be caught her family will be held responsible, and they will be punished severely. I was able to convince her to let me stay until Sunday. ... I came to Novosad [Nowosady] village, I knew a good Christian there. My appearance scared him, and immediately he told me about the order that they have to bring any Jews without delay to the Nazi headquarters. “I have to be very careful,” he said. He gave me some food and took me to a place behind the barn where I could escape. When evening came I arrived at a new village. I had a friend there ... He too took me in courteously and brought me food, but refused to let me stay. Fearfully he gave me food quickly and begged me to leave, I continued my wandering ... later on I had the opportunity to find shelter in an agriculture farm of Christian people I knew. I left the place when they told me that the Germans were hunting the area and were planning to sleep in their house. I wandered all night through fields and forests until I got to Baranke [Baranki] village, where my father used to live. A farmer, a good acquaintance that we knew from the past took me in nicely. I shaved and bathed; they even provided me with clean clothes. I hid in the side section of the house where no one lived. ... I stayed in the forest until the evening, and then I came back to the Christians. The Germans were not in the village anymore, but the farmer didn't let me stay and take the risk. I wandered again, and soon I got to another agriculture farm and stayed there a couple of days. The farmer didn't allow for me to stay with him; he was afraid the children might talk and risk giving me away. From there I moved to a farm near Araje. ... The farm's owners gave me shelter. I knew his son from the old days where we were both captured by the Germans. For a while I was able to rest. When the Christians' holiday came I took part in the ceremonies, and I acted like them. ... In the forests there were a lot of Russian partisans ... When I realized that the Nazis raided around the farm where I was staying I decided to escape. ... I got to a big village by the name of Zavick [Zawyki]. I slipped away secretly to the barn and laid there until the morning. The barn's owner found me, but he was a good man who was ready to help. He took me to his house, fed me, and helped me hide. It was a secret basement under the dining room. ... the Nazis searched the village and came to the farmer's house. ... They were looking for Jews and partisans. ... I stayed in the hiding place for a few days. I was asked to leave by his wife who had started to cry, saying that I was putting her family in danger. “I'm a mother of six children,” she said. “If they'll find out that I am hiding you they will kill us. I'll give you food and drink and be on your way. Have pity on us, and save your soul.” I promised that I would leave that night. ... I got to the previous farm from which I had escaped. The frightened Christian told me that the night I escaped the Nazis searched the house and barn. ... It was dangerous to stay in the village, where to go? I decided to go toward Białystok. On the way I stopped at different villages. ... The Christian who told me the news was ready to leave the next morning with his wagon to bring food to Białystok. I asked him to take me with him in his wagon. His wife gave me bread and fat. We left early in the morning so that nobody would see me. ... When we approached Białystok the farmer got scared and asked me to get off the wagon. I got off, raised my collar and continued by foot ...” See the account of Phinia Korovski in Nechama Shmueli-Schmusch, ed., *Zabłudow: Dapim mi-tokh yisker-bukh* (Tel Aviv: The Zabłudow Community in Israel, 1987), an English translation of which is posted on the Internet at: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/zabludow/>. Other examples of communal assistance by Poles in central Poland are recorded in Stanisław Wroński and Maria Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1971), p.269 (Niedźwiada near Opole Lubleskie), p.307 (an entire street in the city of Przemyśl was aware of a Jewish hideout), p.322 (Runów near Grójec), p.343 (Gorzyce near Dąbrowa

Tarnowska), p.349 (Przydonica, Ubiad, Klimkówka, Jelna, Słowikowa, and Librantowa), p.353 (Rakszawa); Isaac Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945*, vol. 3 ((Brooklyn, New York: Jewish Combatants Publishers House, 1986), p.308 (two villages near Parczew); Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), pp.207ff. (Mchy near Krasnystaw); Diane Armstrong, *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations* (Milsons Point, New South Wales: Random House, 1998), pp.576–81 (Piszczac near Biała Podlaska); Roman Soszyński, *Piszczac: Miasto ongiś królewskie* (N.p., n.p., 1993), p.95 (Kolonja Dworska near Piszczac), p.97 (Piszczac); Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vols. 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, p.95 (villages near Lublin), p.317 (villages near Lublin), p.326 (villages near Lublin), pp.343–44 (villages near Skierniewice), p.452 (Różki near Krasnystaw), Part 2, p.647 (villages near Zamość), p.673 (villages near Radzymin), p.692 (villages near Radzymin), p.927 (villages near Otwock). Public executions of Polish rescuers did not bring rescue activity to a halt. See, for example, Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part One, p.21 (Mariampol). Even in large cities like Warsaw, Jews passing as Christians have acknowledged that they unexpectedly ran into many Poles whom they knew without being betrayed: “I often met people I knew who either looked at me without greeting me, or greeted me with open sympathy. . . . Occasionally, I did not even realize that the person I met knew me.” See Stefan Chaskielewicz, *Ukrywałem się w Warszawie: Styczeń 1943–styczeń 1945* (Kraków: Znak, 1988), pp.35–36. Marcus David Leuchter, who lived in “Aryan” Warsaw for more than two years, attested: “Having escaped from the Ghetto [in Kraków], I assumed a Polish gentile identity. While everybody around me knew, or at least suspected, that I was a Jew, nobody betrayed me.” See his “Reflections on the Holocaust,” *The Sarmatian Review* (Houston, Texas), vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000). Henryk Grabowski, the famed liaison officer between the Polish and Jewish underground who smuggled scores of Jews out of the Warsaw ghetto, often used his small, crowded home in Warsaw to hide Jews, a fact widely known among the neighbours. See Barbara Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych* (Warsaw: ABC, 1997), p.91. An entire apartment building in the working-class district of Mokotów in Warsaw was aware that an extended Jewish family, some of them Semitic-looking and speaking Polish poorly, resided in their midst. See Marek Halter, “Tzedek,” *Wprost*, June 13, 1993. Feliks Tych, a historian at the Jewish Historical Museum in Warsaw, who survived the war as a teenager, recalls: “I lived with my adopted family for some time until liberation in the Warsaw suburb of Miedzeszyn. There the neighbours could not have not known that in our house several Jews were sheltered. And nothing happened to any of them. No one was denounced.” See “O ukrywaniu się po ‘aryjskiej stronie’: Z profesorem Feliksem Tychem rozmawia Barbara Engelking,” in *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN, 2005), vol. 1, p.234. A Jewish woman who had to find new lodgings in Warsaw for herself and a friend with a Jewish appearance recalled: “Maria’s physician paid a house call, bringing some medication and an injection. It was only one of several visits for which he never asked payment or information of any kind. . . . We combed the neighborhood, asking in the storefronts if there might be a room to let. We gave many in those streets occasion to wonder about the two forlorn young women, one with a black-and-blue face. But no one denounced us a Jews or escapees from the ghetto. In fact, one morning the owner of a barber shop on Rakowiecka Street offered Maria his shop to stay in. All he asked was that she come late and leave early, before his help arrived.” See Blanca Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last: Survival under False Identity, 1941–45* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), p.122. Employees of the Warsaw Department of Social Services were heavily involved in the rescue of Jewish children, placing hundreds of them in Catholic convents. “Once we were informed that two boys were hidden in a cubbyhole in [the suburb of] Praga. One of them was running a high fever and it was imperative to move them. A nun took the sick boy on a streetcar and he started to scream out something in Yiddish. The driver was astute enough to sense the danger and yelled out: ‘This streetcar is going to the depot. Everyone out.’ At the same time he signalled to the nun that she and the boy should remain.” See “Traktowałem to jako obowiązek chrześcijański i polski” (an interview with Jan Dobraczyński), *Słowo–Dziennik Katolicki*, Warszawa, no. 67 (1993). A Jewish woman who was being pursued by a blackmailer in Warsaw turned to the conductor of the streetcar she had boarded with a plea, “‘Sir, that man is an extortionist and he’s persecuting me.’ Without hesitating, the conductor went over to the intruder and slapped him twice across the face.” In the ensuing confusion, she managed to jump off. See Gross, *Who Are You Mr Grymek?*, pp.249–50. A network of Poles in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz was engaged in finding rooms among trusted for Jews passing as Poles. See Marian Turski, ed., *Losy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów

i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1999), vol. 2, p.150. As another Jew remarked, “in the small houses in Warsaw’s Żoliborz district inhabited mostly by the Polish intelligentsia there were hidden many Jews who had escaped from the ghetto. I was in such a home which belonged to a known prewar Endek [nationalist]. Having learned that he was sheltering two Jewesses I asked with surprise: ‘You who before the war were an anti-Semite are now harbouring Jews in his home???’ He replied: ‘We have a common enemy and I am fighting in my way. They are Polish citizens and I have to help them.’” See Zdzisław Przygoda, *Niezwykłe przygody w zwyczajnym życiu* (Warszawa: Ypsilon, 1994), p.49.

Assistance by Polish villagers in Eastern Galicia and in Volhynia was also plentiful. Jewish historians Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski list several examples of help extended by entire rural communities. In Kretówka, in Tarnopol voivodship, “several dozen Jews were able to move about almost freely because the whole village shielded them from the Nazis.” In Woronówka near Ludwipol, Volhynia, “the collusion of the peasants was cemented by blood ties: every villager was either a Kuriata or a Torgoń. The peasants in Kościejów, in the vicinity of which ran the railway line leading to the extermination camp at Bełżec, tended to Jews who jumped out of the ‘death trains.’ They not only brought them food and clothing but also sent word to Jews in the nearby village of Kulików to come and fetch the heavily injured immediately; the rest were taken by the peasants themselves to Kulików under cover of darkness. In Bar [near Gródek Jagielloński] villagers supplied a group of 18 Jews hiding in the neighbouring woods with food; they came into the village at night for their provisions and thanks to this help were able to hold out until the area was liberated by the Soviet Army.” See Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland 1939–1945*, pp.27, 45–46; Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, p.444. One of those rescued praises the “noble attitude of the entire population, without exception, of the Polish village of Bar” (near Gródek Jagielloński) who helped more than twenty people hiding in nearby forests to survive. See Gerszon Taffet, *Zagłada Żydów żółkiewskich* (Łódź: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1946), p.62; Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, p.444. Almost every Polish family in the hamlet of Zawolocz near Ludwipol, in Volhynia, sheltered or helped Jews. None of the Jews were betrayed. See Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, pp.77–78. Jews hiding in the forests in the vicinity of Berezne (Bereżne) near Kostopol, Volhynia, received extensive assistance from Polish villagers and partisans. See the account of Seweryn Dobroszkłanka, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, testimony 1222; Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, pp.324–25. Polish villages in the vicinity of Korzec, Volhynia, helped Jews hiding in the forests. See Nyuma Anapolsky, “We survived thanks to the kind people—Ukrainians and Poles,” in Boris Zabarko, ed., *Holocaust in the Ukraine* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005), pp.10–11. A report about the village of Stara Huta near Szumsk, in Volhynia, states: “The people of a small Polish village named Stara Hota [sic] welcomed a group of Jews to stay and hide in their homes. The Ukrainians found out about the Jewish presence in the village. They informed the Germans right away. The Poles had managed to help the Jews run into the fields, but they were all caught and killed during their escape.” See Ruth Szejnman Halperin, “The Last Days of Shumsk,” in H. Rabin, ed., *Szumsk: Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Szumsk*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/szumsk/szumsk.html>>, translation of *Shumsk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Shumsk* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Szumsk in Israel, 1968), pp.29ff. Dawid Sasower recalls: “near Zaturne [near Łuck], there was a Polish village in which about twenty Jews lived. In the daytime they worked in the fields and at night the Poles gave them rifles so that they could protect themselves from the banderovtsy [Ukrainian nationalist partisans].” See Rima Dulkanienė and Kerry Keys, eds., *Su adata širdyje: Getų ir koncentracijos stovyklų kalinių atsiminimai; With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis and Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2003), pp.319–20. Regarding conditions in Kosów near Kołomyja, Bronia Beker states: “My aunt didn’t have to hide. She was so well loved and respected by all because she always helped the poorest of the poor, that while she was walking around freely, living among the ruins nobody gave her away. ... The people in the town also made sure she had food at all times.” See her account in “Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters,” www.interlog.com/~mighty/personal/bronia.htm, originally published in the *Journal of the Center for Holocaust Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4 (spring 1990). Samuel Eisen, a teenager who survived in the forest near Tluste, recalled: “We had no money, but in the village nearby lived a lot of Poles who knew us and were good to us. They were afraid to hide us but they gave us food.” See Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and Noe Grüss, eds., *The Children Accuse* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996), p.206. Maria Fischer Zahn, who hid near Zborów, stated:

“Everybody in the neighborhood knew we were hiding, but nobody told the Germans. The people in Jezierna were good people. They didn’t give us away. They helped us with food. We couldn’t have survived without them.” See Carole Garbuny Vogel, *We Shall Not Forget!: Memories of the Holocaust*, Second edition (Lexington, Massachusetts: Temple Isaiah, 1995), p.280, and also p.276. Shlomo Berger, who passed as a Pole in a small town near Czortków, working for Tadeusz Duchowski, the Polish director of a company, recalled: “I rented a room in Niżniów with one of the Polish workers. I learned from him that the man who was in charge of the office was the son of a judge who was a Jew who had converted to Catholicism. The son was probably raised as a Christian, but by German criteria he was still Jewish. The people at the office knew who he was, but nobody said anything.” See Ronald J. Berger, *Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust: A Life History of Two Brothers’ Survival* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1995), p.55. A number of Jews were sheltered by Polish villagers in Ułaskowce near Czortków. See Abraham Morgenstern, *Chortkov Remembered: The Annihilation of a Jewish Community* (Dumont, New Jersey: n.p., 1990), pp.83–84, 98. Markus Lecker, who joined up with a large group of Jews living in a forest bunker in the vicinity of Borszczów, describes their relations with a Polish settlement that provided them with food: “The colony ... consisted of six houses with six Polish families living there. ... These 6 Polish families were the main support for us Jewish outcasts who lived in the bunker. We used to go to the Polish colony at night and exchange whatever we had left for food ... But I must say these Polish colonists did supply us with some food ... even if we didn’t have what to give them in return ...” See Marcus Lecker, *I Remember: Odyssey of a Jewish Teenager in Eastern Europe* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), p.56. Scores of Jews were helped by the Polish villagers of Hanaczów, about 40 km east of Lwów. See Jerzy Węgierski, *W lwowskiej Armii Krajowej* (Warsaw: Pax, 1989), pp.77–78; Eliyahu Yones, *Smoke in the Sand: The Jews of Lvov in the War Years 1939–1944* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2004), pp.227–28; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, pp.204–207; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, pp.886–87. Other examples of communal assistance by Poles are recorded in the following publications: Abraham Weissbord, *Death of a Shtetl*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Skalat1/Skalat.html>>, translation of *Es shtarbt a shtetl: Megiles Skalat* (Munich: Central Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone of Germany, 1948), p.65 (Ostra Mogiła near Skalat: “The people in this village were friendly to the Jews and provided them with whatever they could. ... Twenty-nine Jews survived in Ostra-Mogila.”); Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, p.263 (Konińsk near Sarny), p.265 (Pańska Dolina near Dubno), p.266 (Świnarzyn near Dominopol), p.307 (an entire street in the city of Przemyśl was aware of a Jewish hideout), pp.324–25 (in the vicinity of Bereźne near Kostopol), p.327 (Woronówka near Ludwipol), pp.361 and 389 (Obórki), p.386 (Wólka Kotowska near Łuck), p.392 (Przebraże); Edward Prus, *Holocaust po banderowsku: Czy Żydzi byli w UPA?* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1995), p.82 (Zdołbunów), p.144 (Adamy), p.167 (Huta Brodzka); Bronisław Szeremeta, “Zagłada wsi Adamy—rok 1943,” *Semper Fidelis* (Wrocław), no. 1 (14), 1993: p.19 (Adamy); Asher Tarmon, ed., *Memorial Book: The Jewish Communities of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, and Kolki (Volyn Region)* [Tel-Aviv: Organization of Survivors of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, Kolki and Surroundings Living in Israel and Overseas, 2004], pp.39–40, 67–68, 74, 85 (Konińsk near Sarny); E. Leoni, ed. *Rokitno (Volin) ve-ha-sevivah: Sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rokitno in Israel, 1967), translated as *Rokitno-Volyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/Rokitnoye.html>>, pp.293ff. (Blizhov—“I must say that these peasants treated us fairly well. In the area of Blizhov there were no attacks or denunciations of Jews.”); pp.317ff. (Netreba and Okopy near Kisorycze), pp.327ff. (Netreba), pp.334ff. (Netreba, Borowskie Budki, and Okopy—“in the village of Netrebe [sic], tens of Jews from Rokitno and the area found shelter. They were helped by the villagers who not only did not harm them but also hid them near the village during the day. At night they took them to their homes. Many Jews survived there until the liberation by the Red Army. In the Polish village of Budki some Jews survived ... In the same area, in the Polish village of Okopi [sic], some tens of Jews were saved thanks to two special individuals... the Catholic priest [Rev. Ludwik Wrodarczyk] and the village teacher. The priest used to give sermons to his followers telling them not to be involved in the extermination of Jews. He asked them to help the Jews to survive ... The village teacher also had compassion for the unfortunate Jews. Their suffering touched her heart and she helped in any way possible. She was killed by a Ukrainian gang

on the way from the village of Rokitno where she was helping a Jewish family. The priest was burned alive in his church.”), pp.342ff. (Netreba), p.351 (“in a Polish village near Snodovich [Snodowicz], we found a few Jewish families working in the houses and fields of the villagers”); Yehuda Bauer, “Sarny and Rokitno in the Holocaust: A Case Study of Two Townships in Wolyn (Volhynia),” in Steven T. Katz, ed., *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2007), 273 (Okopy, Budki Borowskie, Dołhań, and Netreba); Denise Nevo and Mira Berger, eds., *We Remember: Testimonies of Twenty-four Members of Kibbutz Megiddo who Survived the Holocaust* (New York: Shengold, 1994), p.209 (Huta Sopaczewska near Sarny), 257 (Polish villages near the village of Berezolupy near Rożyszcze: “When I arrived in the Polish village, someone told me that five kilometers from there, here was another Polish village where I might find my brother ... I went there and asked the farmers about him. They told me where to go, and I found him in a forest, with a group of six other Jews. ... They too had spent the winter in the forest, and at night they had brought potatoes and bread from the Polish village. ... I was accepted by an older couple ... My brother also got a job with another Polish farmer, about four kilometers from the village where I was. ... I stayed with that farmer for almost a year, until the Russians freed our area in April 1944.”); Yitzhak Ganuz, ed., *Our Town Stepan*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/stepan/Stepan.html>>, translation of *Ayaratenu Stepan* (Tel Aviv: Stepan Society, 1977), pp.213ff. (Karaczun near Kostopol, where both the Polish underground and Polish villagers were extremely helpful to Jews who hid in the forest), 287 (Huta Stepańska); Stanisław Siekierski, ed., *Żyli wśród nas...: Wspomnienia Polaków i Żydów nadesłane na konkurs pamięci polsko-żydowskiej o nagrodę imienia Dawida Ben Guriona* (Płońsk: Zarząd Miasta Płońsk, Miejskie Centrum Kultury w Płońsku, and Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Płońskiej, 2001), p.121 (Karaczun near Kostopol); Sonya Tesler-Gyraph, “Memories from the Nazi Period,” in Yosef Kariv, ed., *Horchiv Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Horchiv Committee in Israel, 1966), p.63 (a village near Horochów); Donald L. Niewyk ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p.164 (Huta Olejska near Lwów); Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), pp.250–52 (Kurdybań Warkowicki, Bortnica, Pańska Dolina, Żeniówka, all in Volhynia); Account of Mordechai Tennenbaum in Israel Zinman, ed., *Memorial for Greater Mezirich: In Construction and Destruction* (Haifa: Organization of Meziritsh Association, 1999), Internet: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/mezhirichi/> (a Polish village in the vicinity of Międzyrzec near Równe, Volhynia); Daniel Kac, *Koncert grany żywym* (Warsaw: Tu, 1998), p.183 (Przebraże and Huta Stepańska, in Volhynia); Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej—Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006), p.309 (a Polish settlement near Aleksandria in Volhynia where all the villagers knew about and assisted the sisters Cypa and Rywa Szpanberg); Stepan Makarczuk, “Straty ludności w Galicji Wschodniej w latach II wojny światowej (1939–1945),” in *Polska–Ukraina: Trudne pytania*, vol. 6 (Warsaw: Światowy Związek Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej, Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, and Karta, 2000), p.240 (Rakowiec and Hołosko Wielkie, both near Lwów); “Letter of Chayeh Kanner,” *Khurbn Glinyane* (New York: New York: Emergency Relief Committee for Gliniany and Vicinity, 1946), translated as *The Tragic End of Our Gliniany*, Internet: <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/gliniany1/Gliniany1.html>> (“The few Jews of Gliniany who saved their lives were hiding in the woods near Zeniow [Żeniów]. The Polish peasants of that village supplied their food.”); Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Poland (with a historical survey of the Jew as fighter and soldier in the Diaspora)* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), pp.450–53 (Dzwonica, Huta Pieniacka, Huta Werchobuska near Złoczów); Shlomo Blond, et al., eds., *Memorial Book of Tłumacz: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Community* (Tel Aviv: Tłumacz Societies in Israel and the U.S.A., 1976), column clxxiv (Horyhlady or Horyglady near Tłumacz, and Wojciechówka near Skalat); Alicia Appleman-Jurman, *Alicia: My Story* (New York: Bantam, 1988), pp.149, 157 (Horyhlady or Horyglady near Tłumacz, and Wojciechówka near Buczac); Etunia Bauer Katz, *Our Tomorrows Never Came* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), pp.98–99 (Matuszówka near Buczac); Elżbieta Isakiewicz, *Harmonica: Jews Relate How Poles Saved Them from the Holocaust* (Warsaw: Polska Agencja Informacyjna, 2001), pp.106–108 (Dźwinogród near Buczac); Yehuda Bauer, “Buczacz and Krzemieniec: The Story of Two Towns During the Holocaust,” in *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 33 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority, 2005), p.298 (Nowosiółka Koropiecka near Buczac); David Ravid (Shmukler), ed., *The Cieszanow Memorial book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2006), pp.190–91

(Wojciechówka near Buczacz); account of Rose (Raisel) Metzack, posted at <http://voices.iit.edu/frames.asp?path+Interviews/&page=meltz&ext=_t.html> (Hucisko Olejskie near Złoczów—"It is a Polish village ... The gentiles were also very kind. We were there. We slept in barns. We slept here a day, here a day, here a night."); Hersch Altman, *One the Fields of Loneliness* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors' Memors Project, 2006), 139ff. (the Polish village of Hucisko near Brzeżany, a Home Army base). Spontaneous assistance was much more frequent than is often assumed, as illustrated by the following examples. In October 1942, after the liquidation of the ghetto in Zdobunów, the Germans and Ukrainian militiamen combed the town to locate any signs of survivors: "[Fritz] Germ would point to a certain house, always one occupied by Polish citizens, and the guards would crash through the door or a window, emerging with a family and the Jews whom they had hidden. The fate was the same for the rescuers as it was for the Jews. This occurred at four or five different homes." See Douglas K. Huneke, *The Moses of Rovno: The Stirring Story of Fritz Graebe, a German Christian Who Risked His Life to Lead Hundreds of Jews to Safety During the Holocaust* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985), p.84. Irene Gut Opdyke, a Polish rescuer recalled: "There was a priest in Janówka [near Tarnopol]. He knew about the Jews' escape—many of the Polish people knew about it. ... Many people brought food and other things—not right to the forest, but to the edge—from the village. The priest could not say directly 'help the Jews,' but he would say in church, 'not one of you should take the blood of your brother.' ... During the next couple of weeks there were posters on every street corner saying, 'This is a Jew-free town, and if any one should help an escaped Jew, the sentence is death.'" See Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers, eds., *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), pp.47–48. The warning soon became a terrifying reality when the town square in Tarnopol "was choked with a milling, bewildered crowd. SS men abruptly pushed me into the middle of the square, just as they had the others, with a command not to leave. A scaffold had been erected in the center of the square, and what appeared to be two separate families were slowly escorted through the crowd to the block. A Polish couple, holding two small children, were brought up first, followed by a Jewish couple with one child, all three wearing the yellow Star of David. Both groups were lined up in front of dangling nooses. They were going to hang the children as well! Why didn't somebody do something? What could be done? Finally, their 'crimes' were announced—the Polish family had been caught harboring the Jewish family! Thus we were forced to witness the punishment for helping or befriending a Jew." See Irene Gut Opdyke with Jeffrey M. Elliot, *Into the Flames: The Life Story of a Righteous Gentile* (San Bernardino, California: The Borgo Press, 1992), p.139. Public executions of Poles who had helped Jews became commonplace in an effort to instill fear into the population. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, Entry 482 (Stryj). About twenty residents of Berecz, in Volhynia, were killed during a pacification of that Polish settlement by Ukrainian police in November 1942 for assisting Jews who had escaped from the ghetto in Powursk (Powórski). See Władysław Siemaszko and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia, 1939–1945* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), vol. 1, p.363. In Huta Werchobuska or Werchobudzka (near Złoczów) and Huta Pieniacka (near Brody), the Polish villagers were simply annihilated and their homes and farmsteads burned down in German pacifications (the primary perpetrators were the SS Galizien forces) brought on in part by long-standing assistance provided to Jews. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, pp.154–55; Tsvi Weigler, "Two Polish Villages Razed for Extending Help to Jews," *Yad Washem Bulletin*, no. 1 (April 1957): pp.19–20; Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, pp.450–53; *Na Rubieży* (Wrocław), no. 10 (1994): pp.10–11 (Huta Werchodudzka); *Na Rubieży*, no. 12 (1995): pp.7–20 (Huta Pieniacka); *Na Rubieży*, no. 54 (2001): pp.18–29. Feiweil Auerbach, a Jew from Sasów, made the following deposition shortly after the war: "There were 30 of us [Jews] in the forest. We hid in Huta Werchobuska and Huta Pieniacka. The Polish inhabitants of those villages helped us. The peasants were very poor and were themselves hungry but they shared with us their last bits of food. We stayed there from July 1943 until March 1944. Thanks to them we are alive. When there were manhunts, the village reeve warned us. Once 500 Germans encircled the forest, but since they were afraid to enter deep into the forest they set their dogs on us. We were saved because our Polish friends warned us of the impending danger. Because of a denunciation [by the Ukrainian police] all of the villagers of Huta Pieniacka and Huta Werchobuska were killed. Some of them were burned alive in a barn. The village was burned to the ground." Auerbach's account can be found in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (document no. 1200). In Polesie (Polesia), a largely Belorussian area, Kopel Kolpanitzky describes the helpfulness of the

residents of Zahorie [Zahorze], a small village of Polish Catholics three kilometers from Łachwa, which the Germans later burned to the ground. See Kopel Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced To Life: The Story of a Survivor of the Łachwah Ghetto* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), pp.89–96. Shulamit Zabinska, a teenage girl who was sheltered by Poles in the Wilno countryside, recalled that many Poles brought food to the ghetto, “otherwise everyone would have starved to death. It was dangerous, and people were shot for this.” After escaping from the ghetto she was taken in by Weronika (“Wercia”) Stankiewicz and her mother, passing as Wercia’s niece. Although the villagers knew she was Jewish no one betrayed her. See Irene Tomaszewski and Teczka Werbowksi, *Zegota: The Rescue of Jews in Wartime Poland* (Montreal: Price-Patterson, 1994), pp.117–18; and the revised edition *Żegota: The Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland, 1942–1945* (Montreal: Price-Paterson, 1999), p.110. Similarly, Estera Bielicka was taken in by the Myślicki family in Matejkany where she lived openly. Although the villagers knew about her Jewish origin, no one betrayed her. See Wiktor Noskowski, “Czy Yaffa Eliach przeprosi Polaków?” *Myśl Polska* (Warsaw), July 20–27, 1997. The neighbours of a Polish family in Białozoryszki near Wilno were aware that that family was sheltering a Jewish boy. See Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part One, pp.104–109. Pola Wawer, a doctor from Wilno, recalled the help she and her parents received from all of the inhabitants in the hamlet of Zameczek who consisted of the families of five cousins. See Pola Wawer, *Poza gettem i obozem* (Warsaw: Volumen, 1993), p.71. Another Jew from the Wilno region recalled the assistance he and his father received from the villagers of Powiłańce on a number of occasions: “The village was composed of some forty houses strung out side by side on a single street. Each house was inhabited by Poles, but my father knew many of them and had done favours for them in the past. At each house, we knocked and explained our plight. Only a few turned us down ... Very soon our wagon was filled with butter and eggs and flour and fresh vegetables, and my father and I wept at their kindness and at the realization that we had been reduced to beggars. The people of Powielancy were so generous ... Now we sent out a food gathering group each evening to beg in the neighbouring villages where most of the people felt kindly toward us. One of the villages in this area was Powielancy whose people had filled our cart with food when father and I had come from the Radun [Raduń] ghetto. They helped us again most willingly for they sympathized with our plight.” See Leon Kahn (as told to Marjorie Morris), *No Time To Mourn: A True Story of a Jewish Partisan Fighter* (Vancouver: Laurelton Press, 1978), pp.55, 124. Meir Stoler, who escaped the German massacre of Jews in Raduń on May 10, 1942, managed to reach the tiny Polish hamlet of Mizhantz [Mieżańce], where the villagers took him in and gave him food. See Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), p.19. The village of Mieżańce is mentioned in other accounts as friendly to the Jews. See the testimony of Benjamin Rogowski, March 14, 1965, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/2820. Murray Berger of Wsielub near Nowogródek attests to receiving extensive help from numerous villagers from December 1941, when he left the ghetto, until he joined up with the Bielski unit the following year. (His account is in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives.) Sarah Fishkin of Rubieżewicze left a diary attesting to repeated acts of kindness by villagers in that area. See Anna Eilenberg-Eibeshitz, *Remember! A Collection of Testimonies* (Haifa: H. Eibeshitz Institute for Holocaust Studies, 1999), pp.285–306. The Krepski family of Helenów near Stołpce sheltered Shimon Kantorowicz for two years. Even though almost the entire village was aware of this, no one betrayed them. Information from Yad Vashem, case no. 5844. In Poznań, in Western Poland, a stronghold of the National Democratic (Endek) Party, relations with the Jews imprisoned in the Stadion labour camp in 1941–1943 were amicable. Samuel Bronowski, who appeared as a witness in the trial of Arthur Greiser, Gauleiter of the so-called Wartheland, made the following deposition before the Supreme National Tribunal: “The only help possible was aid in kind by supplying food. In the camp we received 200 grams of bread and one litre of turnip soup per day. Obviously, those who had no help from outside were bound to die within a short time. A committee was formed in Poznań for the collection of food. This was no easy matter since everything was rationed under the food coupon system. Many a time, we received bigger parcels which reached us secretly at the construction sites where we worked and met the Polish people. Parcels were also thrown into the camp by night. It is not easy to describe the attitude of the civilian population outside the camp—to say that it was friendly, would be too little. There was marked compassion. There has not been a single case in Poznań of a Pole who would betray a Jew escaping the camp. There has not been a single case on the construction site of a foreman striking a Jew without immediate reaction on the part of the Polish co-workers. Those Jews who survived did so only thanks to the help from the Polish population of Poznań.” Maks Moszkowicz, another inmate of the Stadion labour camp, stated in his

deposition for Yad Vashem: “I wish to stress that the behaviour of the Polish population in Poznań towards us, the Jewish prisoners, was very friendly and when our labour battalions were coming out of the camp, people—mostly women—waited for us in the street in order to throw us food in spite of severe interdictions and punishment.” See Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, p.225. People readily recognizable as Jews who spoke poor Polish were able to survive in the Western Polish countryside, without being betrayed: “[Alexander] said that he had gone through the war with a false identity. It sounds like a joke with his Yiddish accented Polish, with his looks. ‘I presented myself as a Lithuanian, I had no papers, I had no money, but I was young and strong. ... I escaped westward, to the Poznan [Poznań] region where Jews were hardly known. I worked in the village, at the farm of somebody ... He didn’t pay me anything. ... What matters is that he fed me, gave me some rags to wear, and I lived like a king.’” See Ephraim F. Sten, *1111 Days In My Life Plus Four* (Takoma Park, Maryland: Dryad Press, in association with the University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), pp.66–67. A Jewish woman from Butrimonys (Butrymańce) recalled the widespread assistance of the local Polish minority in interwar Lithuanian territories: “Parankova [Parankowa] became known among us unfortunate Jews as a Polish hamlet where nobody would hand you over to the murderers; ‘to me Parankova is truly the Jerusalem of Lithuania’.” See Rivka Lozansky Bogomolnaya, *Wartime Experiences in Lithuania* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), p.75. See also *If I Forget The...: The Destruction of the Shtetl Butrimantz. Testimony by Riva Lozansky and Other Witnesses* (Washington, DC: Remembrance Books, 1998), passim; and the testimony of Sarah Epstein (Sara Epshteyn) in Joshua Rubenstein and Ilya Altman, *The Unkown Black Book: The Holocaust in the German-Occupied Soviet Territories* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008), p.297 (villages near Stakliškės or Stokliszki).

Recognition and (In)Gratitude

Szymon Datner, long-time director of Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute:

*"In my research I have found only one case of help being refused [by nuns]. No other sector was so ready to help those persecuted by the Germans, including the Jews; this attitude, which was unanimous and widespread, deserves recognition and respect."*¹⁰⁵

Yehuda Bauer, Israeli historian:

*"Nor was the Catholic clergy any help at all. With some very honorable exceptions, the clergy by and large not only echoed the antisemitic sentiments, but led them. ... Against the background of church antisemitism in an overwhelmingly Catholic country, the action of the Uniate archbishop of Lwów [Lwów], Count Andreas Szeptycki, who ordered his clergy to save Jews despite his antisemitic views, stands out. So do the actions of the Ursuline sisters, and other individual monastic houses and occasional village priests."*¹⁰⁶

Jews rescued by Poles:

*"I do not accuse anyone that did not hide or help a Jew. We cannot demand from others to sacrifice their lives. One has no right to demand such risks."*¹⁰⁷

*"Everyone who states the view that helping Jews was during those times a reality, a duty and nothing more should think long and hard how he himself would behave in that situation. I admit that that I am not sure that I could summon up enough courage in the conditions of raging Nazi terror."*¹⁰⁸

*One Polish Jew who often asked this question of Jewish survivors recalled: "The answer was always the same and it is mine too. I do not know if I would have endangered my life to save a Christian."*¹⁰⁹

*"I am not at all sure that I would give a bowl of food to a Pole if it could mean death for me and my daughter," a Jewish woman admitted candidly.*¹¹⁰

*"Today, with the perspective of time, I am full of admiration for the courage and dedication ... of all those Poles who in those times, day in, day out, put their lives on the line. I do not know if we Jews, in the face of the tragedy of another nation, would be equally capable of this kind of sacrifice."*¹¹¹

*"And what right did I have to condemn them? Why should they risk themselves and their families for a Jewish boy they didn't know? Would I have behaved any differently? I knew the answer to that, too. I wouldn't have lifted a finger. Everyone was equally intimidated."*¹¹²

*"I'm not surprised people didn't want to hide Jews. Everyone was afraid, who would risk his family's lives? You can accuse the ones who kept a Jew, exploited him financially, and later gave him away or killed him. They're murderers. But you absolutely can't blame an average Pole, I don't know if anyone would be more decent, if any Jew would be more decent."*¹¹³

"When I later traveled in the world and Jews would talk to me about how badly Poles behaved with respect to Jews, that they didn't hide them, I always had this answer: 'All right, they could have done more. But I wonder how many

¹⁰⁵ Szymon Datner, "Wydział ochrony człowieka," *Znak* (Kraków), no. 347 (1983), p.1607.

¹⁰⁶ Yehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), pp.57, 59–60.

¹⁰⁷ Pola Stein cited in Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.129.

¹⁰⁸ Hanna Wehr, *Ze wspomnień* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2001).

¹⁰⁹ Cited in Marc Hillel, *Le massacre des survivants: En Pologne après l'holocauste (1945–1947)* (Paris: Plon, 1985), p.99.

¹¹⁰ Cited in Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), p.249.

¹¹¹ Janka Altman cited in Marek Arczyński and Wiesław Balcerak, *Kryptonim "Żegota": Z dziejów pomocy Żydom w Polsce 1939–1945*, 2nd edition (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983), p.264.

¹¹² Roman Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), p.194.

¹¹³ Henryk Prajs, January 2005, Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>> (Biographies).

could one find among you, the Jews, who would hide a Polish family knowing that not only you, but your children, your whole family, would get shot were you found out? ' After that there was always silence and nobody said anything more. "114

"To tell the truth, I don't know whether today ... there are many Jews who would do the same for another nation. We were another nation ... "115

"One must pay tribute to those Poles who lost their lives rescuing Jews. Moreover, one cannot blame those who did not rescue Jews. We should not forget that one cannot demand heroism from ordinary, average people. True there are times and causes that demand heroism, but only certain individuals can aspire to that. One cannot harbour ill-feelings towards or have grounds for complaining about someone for not attaining that level. "116

Other survivors:

"Now you see why we hate the Polacks,' one survivor concluded her account, in which she presented many instances of Poles' help. There was no word about hating the Germans. "117

"The Wanderers were among the luckiest Jewish families in town. Both parents and the girls survived the war. They were hidden successively by several Polish families. After the war, the Wanderers emigrated to America. I sent the Wanderer sisters information about the Regulas, one of the Polish families in whose house on the outskirts of Brzeżany they had hid after the Judenrein roundup. I hoped that they would start the procedure of granting them the Righteous Gentiles award, but nothing came of it. ... When I called Rena, the older one, and asked whether a young Polish historian, a colleague of mine who was doing research in New York, could interview her for my project on Brzeżany, her reaction was curt and clear: 'I hate all Polacks.' ... Rena advised me not to present the Poles in too favorable a way 'for the sake of our martyrs. "118

Ephraim Sten (Sternschuss), one of more than forty Jews rescued by a number of Polish families in the village of Jełechowice:

"They (the Poles) had no objection to the job being perpetrated by the Germans ... That is why the overwhelming majority did not lift a finger to help. ... Poland was the perfect center for the Jewish liquidation. "119

Menachem Begin, former Israeli Prime Minister:

"What concerns the Jews, the Poles have been collaborating with the Germans. ... only at most one hundred people have been helping Jews. ... Polish priests did not save even one Jewish life. "120

Elie Wiesel, author and Nobel Prize winner:

"We had so many enemies! ... the Poles betrayed them. True, here and there a 'good' citizen was found whose cooperation could be bought [sic] with Jewish money. But how many good-hearted, upright Poles were to be found at the time in Poland? Very few. "121

¹¹⁴ Ewa S. (Stapp), September 2005, Internet: <<http://www.centropa.org>> (Biographies).

¹¹⁵ Testimony of Bencjon Drutin in Marzena Baum-Gruszowska and Dominika Majuk, eds., *Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi wśród narodów świata. Relacje historii mówionej w działaniach edukacyjnych* (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN," 2009), p.58.

¹¹⁶ Henryk Bryskier, *Żydzi pod swastyką czyli getto w Warszawie w XX wieku* (Warsaw: Aspra-Jr, 2006), p.231.

¹¹⁷ Cited in Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p.245.

¹¹⁸ Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1918–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p.22.

¹¹⁹ Ephraim F. Sten, *1111 Days In My Life Plus Four* (Takoma Park, Maryland: Dryad Press, in association with the University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), pp.31–32. Yet the author records, at p.75, a raid on the village of Jełechowice where several Polish families were sheltering more than 40 Jews (including him): "Today was some panic because last night Hryc informed us about the police arriving ... looking for Jews. ... there were area combings, the Wehrmacht arrived, as well as the foresters and police, and they went from house to house, from forest to forest, because Jews were hiding in the environs."

¹²⁰ Said on Dutch television in 1979. Cited in Stewart Stevens, *The Poles* (St. James's Place, London: Collins/Harvill, 1982), p.317. Stevens, a Jew, described this outburst as "a disgraceful statement in which Begin disgraced himself and dishonored his own people."

¹²¹ Introduction to Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), pp.3–4.

Yitzhak Arad (Rudnicki), former partisan and historian:

*"It was a period in which the morality of the Church was tested. The clergy should have voiced their objections to the murders and extended help to the victims, despite risks to themselves. An outcry on their part would not have changed the Germans' annihilation policies ..."*¹²²

Meir Lau, Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel, who survived the war in hiding:

*"The Gentiles ... are interested in one thing only: to see the Jews devastated. ... Take such a big country as Poland before World War II. The Jews made it fruitful and turned it into a blooming country, with a flourishing economy, industry and agriculture. And look at it now, after WWII, after 3.5 million Jews abandoned her. It is an island of destruction, a country failing in all areas, in its economy, its industry, and socially as well. Nevertheless, a great many Poles cooperated with the Nazis in the annihilation, G-d forbid, of the Jewish people. The six largest extermination camps were located on Polish territory. They knew that with the loss of the Jews they would suffer dearly. But it did not deter them, for this is the nature of anti-Semitism—to destroy the Jewish nation, instead of benefiting from them."*¹²³

Rabbi Joseph Polak, director of the Florence and Chafetz Hillel House at Boston University:

*"While Poland boasts the largest number of righteous Gentiles who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, it has still not fully embraced the moral challenge of why it did so little to save so many others."*¹²⁴

Rabbi Charles Grysman of Vaughan, Ontario, child of a Holocaust survivor:

*"True, there were indeed thousands of Righteous Gentiles ... But there were also many Poles who ... watched passively while Jews were disenfranchised, humiliated, abused and confined to ghettos or simply were able to turn their heads away as entire Jewish populations were deported from towns and villages to labour and death camps."*¹²⁵

Rabbi Abraham D. Feffer of Toronto, a Holocaust survivor from Drobin:

*"Yet many fortunate survivors from my own shtetl, remember well and with great fondness and admiration the help of the brave Christian farmers who lived in nearby villages where we worked on cold winter days. (In Poland, hiding a Jew, or feeding him was punishable by death, usually hanging). We remember how these men and women, at great peril, opened their poor "chatkis" [cottages] to share with us warm soup, bread and potatoes."*¹²⁶

Cantor Matus Radzivilover, formerly of Warsaw, who survived the war in hiding:

*"I never had the tendency to be a nationalist. I am positively devoted to my Jewish brethren and I am proud of my heritage, but I also loved the country of my birth, Poland. I loved my neighbors, the Poles I grew up with and lived with in love and peace. I never accused them of failing to help us because they were in great danger themselves. Hundreds of thousands of them were killed or deported to concentration camps. They paid their price under Nazism, too. Hitler's intentions were to exterminate the Poles after he was done with the Jews."*¹²⁷

Hanna Szper Cohen, a native of Lublin, who was rescued by unknown Poles on several occasions:

*"To this day I say—since Jews have bad feelings about Poles—I assert that we who survived, a small percentage though it be, none of us would have survived if in some moment he did not get help, usually without ulterior motives, from some Pole. It was impossible to survive otherwise."*¹²⁸

Szymon Datner, former director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and Holocaust survivor:

¹²² Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), 449–50.

¹²³ An adaptation of a Dvar Torah on Arutz 7. Cited in *The Jewish Press*, Brooklyn, August 13, 1993.

¹²⁴ Joseph Polak, "The Silence lifts on Poland's Jews," *The Boston Globe*, July 28, 2007.

¹²⁵ Rabbi Abraham D. Feffer, *My Shtetl Drobin: A Saga of a Survivor* (Toronto: n.p., 1990), p.22.

¹²⁶ Rabbi Charles Grysman, "Not All Poles Were Innocent," *The National Post*, May 16, 2008.

¹²⁷ Matus Radzivilover, *Now or Never: A Time For Survival* (New York: Frederick Fell, 1979), p.82.

¹²⁸ Julian Cohen, *Escape from Belzec: Saved By a Pair of Heels*, Internet: <<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/belzec/belzecescape.html>>.

"The Second World War is a period that I have been dealing with for several decades, and I obstinately maintain that one must be very careful in passing judgment. ...

... the Holocaust was such a specific, though unimaginable, crime. But it cannot be charged against the Poles. It was German work and it was carried out by German hands. The Polish police were employed in a very marginal way, in what I would call keeping order. I must state with all decisiveness that more than 90% of that terrifying, murderous work was carried out by the Germans, with no Polish participation whatsoever. ...

... Every form of aid was forbidden under pain of death for oneself and one's whole family.

To us today the choice seems altogether clear. And yet I was shocked not long ago by a girl I know, a Jew. She is a person my age, someone I value highly for her honesty and courage. And she told me, "I am not at all sure I would give a bowl of food to a Pole if it could mean death for me and my daughter."

It was a truly satanic moral trial that Poles were subjected to. I do not know if anyone else would have emerged victorious from it. ...

On the other hand, to speak concretely of the attitude of Poles toward Jews: the majority of Poles behaved passively, but that can be explained by the terror and also by the fact that Poles, too, were being systematically murdered on a mass scale by the Germans."¹²⁹

Raul Hilberg, preeminent Holocaust historian:

"Overall, the general Polish population is not mentioned in German documents in respect of its participation as harassing Jews and helping the Germans. To the contrary; many German reports indicate that Poles felt anxiety for their own safety after the Jews disappeared. There are some German documents that mention some Poles, notably Polish police, railroad-workers and low-level employees in German offices but there was no Polish central authority collaborating with the Germans, as we find in e.g. Norway and its Quisling government or France and its Vichy regime. This was never the case in Poland.

As was the case in many European countries, there were also Polish individuals that played extortion games with Jews, but then there were also Poles that helped Jews under risk of facing death penalty from the German occupants. Both categories were relatively small in comparison to the general population, albeit one must take into consideration that most survivors made it through the war by Polish help and protection. A friend of mine, Bronia Klebanski, who is Jewish but lived on the 'Aryan' side of society and was an active member of the Jewish underground in the Bialystok [Białystok] area, once told me a story of how she at a time took the train during the war, and was suddenly pointed out by a little girl who yelled 'Jew!'. All the Polish passengers sat quietly, and nobody said anything to instigate further interest. This account is a small example of the general practice of non-collaboration among the Poles during the war.

... In Ukraine, contrary to Poland, where the Germans built secluded death camps, Jews were often massacred on the spot. The Nazi death camps in occupied Poland such as Treblinka, Belzec [Bełżec], Sobibor [Sobibór] and Chelmno [Chełmno] were all hidden to the public."¹³⁰

Israel Gutman, historian at Yad Vashem, editor-in-chief of *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, and Warsaw ghetto fighter:

"This feeling of identification of Poles from all social spheres and their anti-German solidarity is a previously unheard of historical achievement and one of Europe's greatest under Nazi occupation. I should like to make two things clear here. First, all accusations against the Poles that they were responsible for what is referred to as the 'Final Solution' are not even worth mentioning. Secondly, there is no validity at all in the contention that ... Polish attitudes were the reason for the siting of the death camps in Poland.

Poland was a completely occupied country. There was a difference in the kind of 'occupation' countries underwent in Europe. Each country experienced a different occupation and almost all had a certain amount of autonomy, limited and defined in various ways. This autonomy did not exist in Poland. No one asked the Poles how one should treat the Jews."¹³¹

"Only in Poland did the Germans impose such draconian punishments (i.e., death) for helping Jews. Yet despite that, Poles constitute the largest number of "Righteous." To a great extent, it is the "Righteous" who have changed the Israelis' perception of Poland. That is what influenced me. I too, at first, accepted these negative stereotypes as truth. Collaborators, blackmailers, neighbours who wouldn't help. That's what was said in all articles, in books. But when Yad Vashem published its Encyclopedia of the Righteous – I was the editor – I was forced to examine this

¹²⁹ Interview with Szymon Datner in Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), pp.247–50.

¹³⁰ Interview with Professor Raul Hilberg, June 20, 2005, available on line at <http://www.maxveritas.com/pb/wp_1add70b0.html?0.611384753320024>.

¹³¹ *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* (Oxford: Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies), volume 2 (1987), p.341.

again through the stories told by Jews who were saved. I don't change my opinions readily, but these testimonies brought about a diametrical change in opinion. ... Gradually, they (i.e. Israelis) are learning about this. It enables them to see Poles as real people, made of flesh and blood. The same as Jews. In the archives of Yad Vashem I found testimonies of such deeds, deeds that I myself would not be able to do. And that disturbs my peace. It was a trial, a test of one's humanity. Would we pass this test if placed in that situation? All of us – both Jews and Poles – we are only human. We are not saints. Yes, there were blackmailers in Poland. There were also heroes. People like (Irena) Sendlerowa, of whom you may be very proud.”¹³²

Unfortunately, the pathology of anti-polonism runs deep. In a spiteful parody of a “Passion play” titled “Rebbe,” Artists For Israel International have, contrary to the documented historical record, recast Polish priests as the instigators of the death of a rabbi—a Jesus figure—in the Warsaw ghetto. (Internet: <<http://www.afii.org/rebbe.txt>>.)

At this point the invasion of Poland by the Nazis begins and a series of short scenes with ominous and sad music depict the occupation of the city and the sealing off of the Jewish Quarter which now becomes the Warsaw Ghetto. Now the Nazis lock the Jewish Quarter and force the Czerniakow character to come to them and cut a deal to get the key, which he does by appointing Yehudah as the head of the Jewish police who will co-operate with the Polish police and the German occupation authorities.

The last maamar (Chassidic version of Last Supper Yn 13-17 OJBC) of Rebbe (who is now wearing a Star of David armband, as are the rest of Rebbe's talmidim) comes as a reply to Shimon the Zealot. Shimon the Zealot speaks in the upper room to all the Rebbe's talmidim disciples) in an impassioned manner about the boxcars leading to a death camp and the need for underground resistance fighters. When the other Shimon (Kefa or Peter) vows his part in protecting the Rebbe (Yn 13:37 OJBC), Rebbe goes to the window and looks out. With a revelatory flutter-cut Rebbe sees the tarnegol (rooster) in the wooden crate cage in the back of the passing truck, and Rebbe announces prophetically the coming betrayal. Yehudah, wearing his Chassidic garb, departs into the Warsaw night.

In the next scene Shimon Kefa and Rebbe pass the security point where Yehudah is able to flag them through, checking their passes, which are “work permits” allowing them to leave the Jewish Ghetto. Yehudah gives Rebbe a kiss on the cheek. The Polish police at the checkpoint see this and look at each other knowingly. Shimon Kefa accompanies Rebbe to a Cathedral and waits outside while Rebbe goes up to the door to knock.

Inside the Cathedral, a Catholic S.S. officer is leaving the confessional booth where he has been confessing to Father Kayafenski. Father Nikodimski follows him out and ushers Rebbe into the vestibule of the Roman Catholic church to have a meeting with Father Kayafenski. Since it is Pesach season, Father Nikodimski hopes that the senior priest will use his ecumenical influence with a Catholic S.S. officer to have the food rations increased for the Jewish people in the Ghetto. Father Nikodimski leaves Rebbe alone in the vestibule with Father Kayafenski.

In this scene between Rebbe and Father Kayafenski, Rebbe is invited to enter the sanctuary, but he refuses because of the tzelamim (idols, images, any physical object or statue worshiped as deity). The scene that unfolds is similar in some respects to the Grand Inquisitor scene in the Brothers Karamazov. Finally, Father Kayafenski becomes angry and exits the vestibule, going outside through the front door. Rebbe begins to tear down the tzelamim, using a tall white metal candelabrum to shatter the images including that of a San Gennaro statue with the money fastened all over it). Then the Catholic S.S. Officer and Father Kayafenski burst into the sanctuary with other soldiers and police and Rebbe is bound and taken out of the Catholic church.

On the steps outside a Nazi soldier seizes Shimon Kefa, shouting, “You were with him!” Shimon Kefa curses Rebbe, and just then a truck goes by with a tarnegol (rooster) in the wooden crate cage in the back of the passing truck. Then Kefa stares at Rebbe in shock and remorse.

At the railroad terminal, in front of several empty boxcars, the Nazi soldiers cut Rebbe's payos with their bayonets and beat him up, shouting, “You killed our G-d, we kill you.” They force Rebbe to put on a striped Holocaust death camp prison uniform, then take him to the top of a gallows, then pierce his wrists and feet with their bayonets and put him on a gallows with two other Jews in stripped Holocaust death camp prison uniforms where they leave him hanging in the middle. As a shot of Warsaw reveals the horrific evil going on throughout the city, the body of Rebbe is tossed in the boxcar with the other two Jews. We see the boxcar slowly going into the dusk of the approaching night toward the death camps.

Then, in their death camp uniforms, the talmidim (minus Yehudah as in Yn chp 21 OJBC) awaken in a boat near the shore in Lake Galilee to find themselves amazingly no longer in the Polish ghetto but now in modern Eretz Yisroel (previewed in the wedding vision earlier). The talmidim have a sense of the presence of the Moshiach. As they see Rebbe in his kaftan with his Star of David armband, standing on the seashore, they follow his instructions and throw out their net. The fish we saw at the beginning are seen again, symbolizing the world-wide fishing expedition (fishing for lost unredeemed men) of Moshiach's Kehillah. For the camera pulls up from the fish in the giant net in an aerial shot which becomes a satellite shot of Israel and then a space station shot of the whole world as the music swells.

¹³² “Poles Can Be Very Proud of Sendlerowa,” Israel Gutman interviewed by Piotr Zychowicz, *Rzeczpospolita* (Warsaw), May 13, 2008.