

INTRODUCTION

As in the previous two volumes of Polish-Jewish Studies, the subject of Polish-Jewish relations appears in this third volume. This time, most of the texts deal with the period of the German occupation. German anti-Jewish policy, the Holocaust and its consequences – these are issues that continue to absorb many researchers around the world. The texts collected in this volume are included in four sections: Studies, Sources, Reviews/Polemics and Chronicle. The Polish and English versions differ slightly from each other. Two articles previously published in Polish have been included in the English volume.

The Studies section opens with Michał Przybylak's article, "Following a Polish Trail. Poland's Military Cooperation with the Movement of Revisionist Zionists Before World War Two." The author presents a little-known storyline in the history of Polish-Jewish relations concerning Polish material and training aid given to the Revisionist Zionist movement, which took the form, for example, of training in the Kocierska Pass and exercises in Trochenbrod, organised for Jews by the State Office of Physical Education and Military Training. Pre-war military cooperation and the experience gained proved invaluable in the post-war Jewish struggle for their own state in Palestine.

Wojciech Wichert's article "The Political and Administrative System of the General Governorate in 1939–1945" introduces to the occupation theme. The author draws attention to the place of the General Governorate in German plans for the Polish lands and describes the structure and competences of the German administration in the General Governorate, including that of Governor General Hans Frank and the policy of exploitation and extermination of the conquered population. Another text deals with the destruction of Jewish identity and culture by the Germans during the Second World War. In his sketch "The Autumn of Burning Synagogues. One of the Consequences of Germany's Invasion of Poland in 1939", Grzegorz Berendt draws attention to the fate of Jewish places of worship in occupied Polish territory. The core of Nazi hatred of the Jews and, consequently, anti-Jewish violence was, as this researcher states, "hostility to their religion and, consequently, to the institutions that were its carriers," i.e. synagogues and houses of prayer. The historian complements this correct argument with another equally important statement that only the destruction of the Polish state enabled the Germans to eliminate Jewish material culture physically. According to Berendt's findings, between 15 and 30 per cent of synagogues were burnt down between September and November 1939. In addition, about 25 per cent of the buildings were demolished without first being burnt. In total, more than 50 per cent of the buildings were destroyed, mostly between 1939 and 1941.

The issue of the participation of collaborators with the Germans in the extermination of Jews in the former Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Poland is the subject of articles by Tomasz Gonet, "The Participation of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police (*Ukrainische Hilfspolizei*) in the Extermination of Jews in the Municipality of Łysiec in Stanyslaviv County in 1941–1943," and by Wojciech Hanus "Activity of the *Volksdeutsche* Władysław Seredyński and his Son Roman in Light of the Surviving Files from a Criminal Case Tried under the August Decree. A Contribution to the History of the German Occupation of the Lubaczów Land." Tomasz Gonet's research shows that "the participation of Ukrainian policemen in the various phases of the extermination of the local Jewish community was significant." Based on available archival material, the author meticulously describes the involvement of Ukrainian Auxiliary Police officers in the Holocaust and the scale of the tasks they carried out. Wojciech Hanus takes up a similar theme in

a case study from Lubaczów. He mainly describes the attempts to bring the two *Volksdeutsche* (Seredyński father and son) to justice and their trial.

The historical analysis of Jewish recollections of the Holocaust, undertaken in the second volume of *Polish-Jewish Studies*, is referred to in this volume by Roman Gieroń in his article “The Story of Rudolf Grossfeld’s Rescue During the German Occupation. A Reconstruction Attempt.” The researcher, investigating Grossfeld’s fate and confronting it with the available sources, concludes that his wartime story often raises significant doubts about the objectivity of the reported facts.

Maciej Korcuć’s article “The Real Price of Helping Jews under German Terror. A Few Family Histories from the Environs of Cracow” reflects on the horror of the German occupation. It discusses the hiding of the Kołatacz family by Poles near Cracow. The author discusses the legal conditions imposed by the German authorities and demonstrates how they played a decisive role in Polish-Jewish relations. Korcuć describes his research position as follows: “This is not a text about Polish-Jewish or Jewish-Polish relations. It is a story about the fate of the citizens of the Republic of Poland subjected by the German occupier to a policy of terror and racial segregation. About the fate of people subjected to totalitarian enslavement. About the attempted survival and heroism of entire families during the inhumane practices of the German terror apparatus. It is a story about ordinary inhabitants of villages near Cracow who became criminals according to the Reich’s imposed laws.”

The subject of post-war Polish-Jewish relations is reflected in Jakub Tyszkiewicz’s sketch “The Pogrom in Kielce as Reported by Opinion-Making US Newspapers in 1946 (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times*).” By reading the three American newspapers mentioned in the title, the author was able to conclude that “the events, especially those that happened in the first days after the pogrom, were reported from the point of view of the communist authorities in Poland.” Primate August Hlond’s speech was also vividly discussed.

Dominik Flisiak’s text “Attempt at a Political Biography of Shlomo Nahum Perla. The Activity of Revisionist Zionists in the First Years of Post-War Poland” it’s the penultimate article in the Studies section. Against the background of the activities of the Zionist movement, the author presents the figure of Shlomo Perla – one of the most important activists of the Zionist right in Poland. This section concludes

with a text by Magdalena Semczyszyn, dealing with the actions of the security apparatus directed against the Jewish community after the war.

This volume also includes three documents subjected to scholarly study, preceded by extensive introductions outlining the historical background. Tomasz Domański publishes sentences from two criminal cases before the Regional Court in Kielce from the period of the German occupation. The defendants in these trials were Jews. In the text “Jews in Criminal Cases Before the Regional Court in Kielce Between 1939 and 1941 – Contribution to Polish-Jewish Relations During the German Occupation,” which introduces the documents, Tomasz Domański proves that examples of anti-Jewish tendencies were rare to find in the case law of the Regional Court in Kielce (known as the ‘Polish’ court). Most often, the court analysed individual cases on their merits and with objectivity.

Alicja Gontarek continues her discussion of aid activities for Jews provided by Polish diplomats. In this volume, she presents two documents (“Letter from the Polish envoy in Athens, Władysław Günther, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the evacuation of the Polish colony in Greece, dated 27 May 1941” and “List of names of Polish passport holders at the disposal of the Department for Foreigners of the Greek police,” seized by the German secret service in 1943). Both refer to the diplomatic activities of Władysław Günter-Schwarzburg, the Polish envoy in Athens during the Second World War. The text published by Damian Sitkiewicz, “The Testimony of Elżbieta Kowner vel Wanda Bieńkowska on the Activities of Emilia Dyna and Elżbieta Gajewska – A Source for the History of Poles Who Were Saving Jews” takes us to the occupied Polish territory – to Mińsk Mazowiecki. In the wave of post-war settlements of those suspected of collaborating with the Germans, a Jewish woman, Elżbieta Kowner vel Wanda Bieńkowska, stood up for two accused female officials of the *Polnische Kriminalpolizei* in 1945 and gave an extensive account, detailing the help she and others received from these two Polish women.

The Reviews/Polemics section contains Tomasz Domański’s reply to the polemics by authors and editors of *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* with his review of this book “Correcting the Picture.” Wojciech Wichert, in turn, undertakes a discussion of the important work by Bogdan Musiał *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...* [Who will come to help a Jew...]. The reviewer refers in

detail to the most important issue raised by the author, namely the German policy of criminalising aid to Jews. The starting point is the Order of 15 October 1941, first stipulating the death penalty for giving shelter to Jews and then, after amendments, the death penalty for any assistance.

The Reviews/Polemics section of *Polish-Jewish Studies* concludes with Roman Gieroń's text "Reflections on the Margins of an Exhibition about German Anthropological Research on Jewish Families in Tarnów in 1942." It discusses the exhibition *The Cold Eye. Final Pictures of Jewish Families from the Tarnów ghetto* (*Der Kalte Blick. Letzte Bilder jüdischer Familien aus dem Ghetto von Tarnów*), presented at the Berlin Museum Topography of Terror (*Topographie des Terrors*). Gieroń analyses the substance of the exhibition and the exhibition catalogue as well as the accompanying publication by Margit Berner *Letzte Bilder...* Although the reviewer appreciates the exhibition for its museum and educational value, he draws attention to specific shortcomings and mistakes of its authors in presenting certain aspects of Poland's occupation history.

The Chronicle section, which ends this volume, contains Maciej Korcuć's report on the exhumation and funeral of the Książek family – Polish victims murdered by the Germans for helping Jews.

Tomasz Domański

Alicja Gontarek