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THE STORY OF RUDOLF GROSSFELD'S RESCUE DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION. A RECONSTRUCTION ATTEMPT

Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem, has collected Holocaust survivor testimonies since the 1950s. Initially, their archives collected written testimonies; they began collecting audio testimonies over the years.¹ Among the several thousand archival units stored in the O.3 group of archival material, we find a testimony by Rudolf (aka Reuven) Grossfeld submitted to the Institute in 1995. It is an audio testimony that he gave in Hebrew. In the description of this archival unit on the Yad Vashem website, we read that the author talked about his pre-war life in Nowa Góra near Krzeszowice,²

¹ A. Skibińska, *Źródła do badań nad zagładą Żydów na okupowanych ziemiach polskich. Przewodnik archiwalno-bibliograficzny* (Warsaw, 2007), p. 155.

² Nowa Góra – a village located over 30 km northwest of Cracow, in the Cracow-Czestochowa Upland. As part of the occupation's administrative division, it was in the municipality of Kressendorf (Krzeszowice) in the Kreishauptmannschaft Krakau (Cracow County office). According to German data from 1943, this county covered an area of 2891 square kilometres and had about 416,000 inhabitants (144 persons per square kilometre). It lay within the boundaries of the Cracow District. See *Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis für das Generalgouvernement auf Grund der Summarischen Bevölkerungsaufnahme am 1. März 1943* (Krakau, 1943), p. IX. There were 973 inhabitants in Nowa Góra in March 1943 (*ibid.*, p. 23). The local county administration was headed from October

the period of the occupation, his post-war life in Poland and his emigration to Israel. It is particularly interesting that the testimony also includes information about working at “the headquarters of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, AK) underground for about two and a half years.” Hence, we are dealing here with a unique testimony.³ This is not the only reason why this story deserves a detailed analysis.

Rudolf Grossfeld was over seventy years old when he recounted events that were already far in the past. It was not uncommon for him not to remember the exact dates or give them incorrectly. In his testimony, he did not mention by name or surname anyone who had helped him, thanks to whom he had survived in hiding until the end of the war.⁴

Reading Grossfeld’s testimony, we see that it consists of individual images of the past that are most firmly fixed in his memory, from which he attempts to create a story. Hence, the subject of this article is an attempt to reconstruct the story of Rudolf Grossfeld’s survival during the German occupation based on his memoirs and other available material. This will help to demonstrate what knowledge the analysed survivor testimony conveys and whether it is objective.

The history of Nowa Góra and the surrounding area during the Second World War has not lived to see extensive literature about it.⁵ Publications deal mainly with armed struggle and martyrdom.⁶ The subject of the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish

1939 to 4 February 1942 by Dr Egon Höller, and from 1 June 1942 to 1944 by Albert Schaar. M. Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutsche Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen – Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte* (Göttingen, 2009), pp. 444–445.

³ J.D. Zimmerman, “The Polish Underground Home Army (AK) and the Jews: What Postwar Jewish Testimonies and Wartime Documents Reveal,” *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 34/1 (2020), pp. 194–220. According to Zimmerman, Jewish testimonies in which we find information about help given to Jews by the Home Army are in the minority (*ibid.*, pp. 214–215).

⁴ Many thanks to Dr Ewa Węgrzyn, who translated Rudolf Grossfeld’s testimony from Hebrew into Polish.

⁵ See, i.a. A. Fujarski, *Kronika miasta Krzeszowic 1939–1945* (Krzeszowice, 1993); J. Pęcowski, *Powiat chrzanowski pod okupacją niemiecką w latach 1939–1945*, ed. H. Czarnik *et al.* (Chrzanów, 2014); F. Ciura, *Gminy Alwernia i Babice pod okupacją hitlerowskich Niemiec 1939–1945* (Cracow, 2014); T. Fałęcki, I. Sroka, “Chrzanów w latach okupacji 1939–1945,” in *Chrzanów. Studia z dziejów miasta*, vol. 2: *Chrzanów współczesny*, part 1 (Chrzanów, 1999), pp. 9–108; B. Rzepecki, *Nowa Góra. Miasto zapomniane* (Nowa Góra, 2020); *idem*, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego* (Nowa Góra, 2020).

⁶ *Armia Krajowa i Szare Szeregi obwodu Krzeszowice. Praca zbiorowa grupy byłych członków Szarych Szeregów „Gęstwina-Miasteczko,”* ed. by T. Gawel and T. Świecimski (Cracow, 2004); *Ruch*

relations appears in them peripherally. Undoubtedly, there is also a lack of studies devoted to the history of the Jewish population in the area.⁷ This is why the article is based on archival material.

The primary sources for learning about the topic of our research include the already mentioned testimony of Rudolf Grossfeld held in the Yad Vashem Archives,⁸ as well as the memoirs of Janina Moskal – the daughter of those who helped Grossfeld.⁹ In both testimonies, the witnesses – both being of an advanced age – recounted the events dating back several decades ago. It is important to emphasise the very late stage at which these sources were produced. Documents from church archives, materials and questionnaires from the legacy of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, other witness testimonies and court records concerning criminal, inheritance and declaration of death cases were also of great importance for the research. They enabled partial verification and completion of the information contained in the testimonies of Janina Moskal and Rudolf Grossfeld.

oporu 1939–1945 Krzeszowice–Zabierzów w dokumentach, ed. W. Skołub (Krzeszowice, 2010); *Ludzie obwołu AK Krzeszowice Z-44*, part 1, ed. by T. Gaweł and K. Klocek (Cracow, 2002); J. Domagała, “Wspomnienia okupacyjne powstańca śląskiego,” *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Stowarzyszenie Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej) 5 (2002), pp. 72–80. For more, see S. Piwowarski, *Okręg Krakowski Służby Zwycięstwu Polski – Związku Walki Zbrojnej – Armii Krajowej. Wybrane zagadnienia organizacyjne, personalne i bojowe* (Cracow, 1994).

⁷ Partial information about the fate of Jews in the area is provided by the following publications: E. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* (Rzeszow, 2014); D. Swałtek, “Listy Gusty Erlich,” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 5 (2009), pp. 446–454. One can also consult studies on the history of the Jews of (pre-war) Chrzanów County. See Z. Razowski, *Na cztery światła strony. Losy Żydów chrzanowskich podczas Holokaustu* (Chrzanow, 2017); A. Namysło, “Społeczność żydowska Chrzanowa i jej losy w okresie II wojny światowej,” in *Żyli wśród nas. Chrzanowscy Żydzi*, ed. M. Szymaszkiewicz (Chrzanów, 2016), pp. 243–298; and books of Jewish memory: *Chrzanów. The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Shtetl*, ed. M. Bochner (New York, 1989).

⁸ Yad Vashem Archives (hereinafter YVA), 0.3, 8602, Testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁹ We have two testimonies given by Janina Moskal née Kot, daughter of Stanisław and Agata. The first is a 16-page handwritten memoirs of *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, written down in September 2018 in Florida, USA (in the author’s collection). The second is an audio-video recording of an interview with Janina Moskal made by the Institute of National Remembrance research staff member Rafał Pękała (interviewer) and Konrad Starczewski (cameraman) in the presence of Jan and Marcin Mamoń. The interview was conducted on 3 September 2019 in the house at Czerna no. 77, where Jews were said to have been hidden during the war. The recording’s call number in the Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN) is N1387; it is also available online: <https://opowiedziane.ipn.gov.pl/ahm/notacje/24703,Moskal-Janina.html> (accessed 1 December 2021).

The Interwar Period

Rudolf Grossfeld's testimony begins with a description of his childhood in Nowa Góra and his family situation during the interwar period. Grossfeld came from a small family and was the first-born son (we know that he also had a brother who was five years younger). He was born in 1923. In his own words, his family numbered about "50–60 members, including uncles, grandmothers, grandfathers."¹⁰ His grandfather on his father's side was "a pious (orthodox) Jew" and studied the Talmud, while Rudolf's father was his opposite – "he was not religious." Grossfeld recounted: "his father was in Russia during the First World War and was taken prisoner by the Russians. There he was inculcated with communist ideas and was therefore opposed to religion. That was the reason why our relationship with my grandfather weakened. Grandfather resented us for not being religious."¹¹

"I grew up with non-Jewish neighbours and colleagues, I was far from Judaism. I imbibed the spirit of freedom and grew up in an atmosphere of Catholic neighbours. I had a beautiful command of the Polish language, which I learned at school in the gymnasium,"¹² Rudolf recalled and referred to his school years at St Jacek's Gymnasium in Cracow. This, however, could not be confirmed. In the surviving reports of the management of the Second State Gymnasium of St Jacek's in Cracow, the lists of pupils for the school years 1934/1935, 1935/1936 and 1936/1937 do not include Rudolf Grossfeld.¹³ However, it should not be excluded that he attended this gymnasium for the following two years.¹⁴

The author of the testimony stated that his family maintained very good relations with Poles, "we did not suffer from anti-Semitism or other anti-Jewish

¹⁰ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji II Państwowego Gimnazjum im. św. Jacka w Krakowie za rok szkolny 1934/5, 1935/6 i 1936/7* (Cracow, 1937), <http://pbc.up.krakow.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=2721&from=pubindex&dirids=130&lp=2> (accessed 2 December 2021).

¹⁴ In the Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie (National Archives in Cracow, hereinafter ANK), where the legacy of the St Jacek's Gymnasium is kept, the class catalogues for 1937/1938 and 1938/1939 have not survived. For information on this school, see A. Bielak, "Państwowe Gimnazjum i Liceum im. św. Jacka w Krakowie (1857–1950)," *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 90/4 (1980), pp. 566–579; M. Stinia, "Rozwój krakowskich gimnazjów państwowych w latach 1867–1918," in *Problemy cywilizacyjnego rozwoju Białorusi, Polski, Rosji i Ukrainy od końca XVIII do XXI wieku*, ed. by P. Franaszek and A.N. Nieczuchrin (Cracow, 2007), pp. 272–274.

displays.”¹⁵ Among his colleagues were many Poles who did not have a Jewish background: “They often were guests at our Jewish home. We hosted them, they hosted us.”¹⁶ From the testimony, we learn that the Grossfeld family ran a large shop in Nowa Góra – “it was such a delicatessen. We had exotic fruit from the East there, we enjoyed a good material status.”¹⁷ The address register of businesses in Poland in 1930 does not record the existence of such a shop, but says that a certain ‘Grossfeld S.’ sold baked bread in Nowa Góra.¹⁸

According to Rudolf, they were an assimilated family: “In our family, we didn’t wear traditional Jewish clothes, so we didn’t feel like aliens, we felt like Poles.”¹⁹ Comparing these recollections with other Jewish testimonies, it must be said that this was a rare case.²⁰ Crucial for assessing the nature and changes in relations between Poles and Jews in the interwar period – as Tomasz Gąsowski wrote – was the category of social distance. Both communities were separated by barriers consisting of a sense of mutual alienation, different customs, a system of values or style of life.²¹ Polish-Jewish relations were significantly affected by economic rivalry and religious dissimilarity. It should be added, however, that the interwar period was also a time of increased assimilation of a specific group of Jews.²² This may also have been the case for Rudolf Grossfeld’s immediate family.

According to the testimony of another resident of Nowa Góra, who was brought up in an Orthodox Jewish family, Bernard Feiler, “10 Jewish families

¹⁵ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Księga adresowa Polski (wraz z W.M. Gdańskiem) dla handlu, przemysłu, rzemiosł i rolnictwa* (Warsaw, 1930), p. 444.

¹⁹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, Testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

²⁰ A conversation with Shoshan Adler, Maria and Lea Weinfeld, Ryszard Aleksandrowicz, Henryk Bleicher, Józef Bosak, Arie Brauner, Maria Fraenkel, Marcel Goldman, Natan Gross, Leopold Wasserman, Amalia Hofszeter, Erna Holländer, Emanuel Melzer, Zvi Nathan, and Gustawa Stendig: A.D. Pordes, I. Grin, *Ich miasto. Wspomnienia Izraelczyków, przedwojennych mieszkańców Krakowa* (Warsaw, 2004), pp. 19, 53, 69, 71, 85–86, 122–123, 137, 140–141, 152–153, 160–161, 199, 212, 227–228, 254, 261, 267–268, 285–286.

²¹ T. Gąsowski, “Sytuacja ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w przededniu II wojny światowej,” in *Kościół, Żydzi, jezuici. Wokół pomocy Żydom w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. M. Wenklar (Cracow, 2021), pp. 37–38.

²² A. Landau-Czajka, *Syn będzie Lech... Asymilacja Żydów w Polsce międzywojennej* (Warsaw, 2006), p. 437.

lived in this village between the two world wars.”²³ Asked if he was confronted with anti-Semitism at the time, Feiler confirmed: “we were verbally insulted. Nothing else, we fought back.”²⁴ Unfortunately, he did not specify what this “fight” consisted of.

The Beginning of the German Occupation

During the German-Polish war in September 1939, the Grossfelds – like many other families – escaped the approaching war front (in a rented car) and headed east.²⁵ The outbreak of the war led to the migration of the population. In the first days of September, refugees from the western Polish lands appeared in the Lesser Poland region, and spoke of the crimes the encroaching German troops committed. At the time of the Rosh ha-Shanah (New Year) holiday – falling in 1939 in mid-September – the Grossfelds arrived in Tarnow.²⁶ There they found shelter with an unknown Jewish family. After some time, they returned to Nowa Góra.²⁷ Faced with the Soviet Union’s invasion of the eastern lands of the Second Republic and the advance of the German army, many refugees made a similar decision.²⁸

Very quickly, the authorities of the General Governorate (German: Generalgouvernement, Polish: Generalne Gubernatorstwo, GG) began introducing legal acts that eliminated Jews from their social and economic life, robbed them of their property, restricted their freedom and isolated them from society. Later in the testimony, Grossfeld described German anti-Jewish actions and the change in the attitude of parts of the local community: “Now, during the war, when I passed my fellow non-Jews on the street, they turned away from me. Some Polish neighbours said with cynicism: ‘Your end is coming.’”²⁹ His family planned to flee to the Soviet Union; however, this plan was ultimately not realised.

²³ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereinafter USHMM), RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980. Many thanks to Maciej Kaproń for his help with this report.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

²⁶ It should also not be ruled out that Grossfeld’s family arrived here earlier. The German army occupied Tarnow on 7 September 1939.

²⁷ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

²⁸ Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 81–82.

²⁹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

One of the first anti-Jewish regulations was the one concerning forced labour for Jews in the GG, introduced on 16 October 1939. The following year, the Germans began setting up workshops and forced labour camps for the Jewish population.³⁰ Rudolf Grossfeld reported: “In June or July 1941 [sic!], I was the only one in my family taken to the labour camp in Płaszów. I was 19 years old at the time, and my father, mother and younger brother stayed home in the countryside. I worked in Płaszów in terrible conditions.”³¹ It should be noted that the decision to build the camp in Płaszów (*Zwangsarbeitslager Plaszow des SS- und Polizeiführers im Distrikt Krakau*, ZAL Plaszow) was made a year later – probably in October 1942. The author of the memoirs was mistaken (perhaps he linked the date of the camp’s establishment with the year of the creation of the Cracow ghetto).³² He could also have been placed in one of the forced labour camps for Jews, the so-called Julags (Judenlager) established in Cracow by the Germans from 1942 onwards, especially as he took note in his testimony of the establishment of the Julag I – initially called also “Arbeitslager Plaszow”: “We were already in 1941 [sic!] and then things started to happen,” Grossfeld recalled, “Camps were established. Two such camps were set up in our area: one in Płaszów and the other, Julag I, next to Płaszów [...] We worked on the construction of the railway tracks. We were building the railway line from Cracow to Lvov. We worked under terror. Any disobedience was severely punished with beatings. We were guarded by Ukrainian guards. The logistics were handled by the Germans, and the physical guarding of us by the Ukrainians.”³³

Grossfeld stated that he was taken away in “June or July.” The abovementioned Julag I was established in the spring of 1942 on the initiative of the German railway management, which built housing barracks and the necessary facilities. It was located close to Wielicka Street, opposite the main entrance to the later Płaszów camp on Jerozolimska Street. The prisoners brought to the Julags built a railway

³⁰ M. Grądzka-Rejak, A. Namysło, *Relacje polsko-żydowskie w okresie II wojny światowej. Kontekst i uwarunkowania* in *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, ed. by M. Grądzka-Rejak and A. Namysło (Warsaw, 2019), pp. 15–16.

³¹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

³² The Cracow Ghetto was established by an order of the governor of the Cracow District, Otto Wächter, on 3 March 1941.

³³ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

bridge over the Vistula, embankments, viaducts, roads and laid tracks. Initially, the guards in the jugs were railway security officers (Bahnschutzpolizei), among whom were also Ukrainians – mentioned by Grossfeld.³⁴

Rudolf's parents and brother escaped from Nowa Góra after a while and hid in the forests near the villages of Czubrowice and Raclawice.

Unfortunately, at night the Germans surrounded the forests and the village of Raclawice. Poles reported to the Germans that there were Jews in the village of Raclawice hiding with other Poles for money. They also caught my parents, Grossfeld recounted. They sent my father to Płaszów. And the Germans transported my mother and my younger brother to the town of Skala. I know about all this from my father, with whom I met in the Płaszów camp. When I met my father in the camp, I told him that I was going to join the Home Army. My father said: "Yes do it, join the AK, you have little chance of surviving here anyway." I don't know exactly what happened to my father during the war. All I know is that he escaped from his place of work in Płaszów and reached Skala on foot. On the other hand, I was waiting for the AK to let me know that I was to escape from Płaszów. At that time, the Germans took all the Jews from Skala. They loaded them onto trucks and took them to Cracow to the Płaszów railway station. I was working by the railway tracks, and suddenly I see a train with cattle cars without windows. Everyone is shouting and suddenly – this is unbelievable – I hear someone shouting: "Rudek" (because that's what I was called). I look and see my father's face in such a small window of the train. My father threw a piece of paper through this opening, this piece of paper I still keep at home today. It said: "Dear son, me, your mother and your brother are in the car of this train. We do not know where we are going. They tell us we are going to a labour camp in eastern Poland. Supposedly to Pińsk. Such are the rumours. But I don't know that. Be well. I hope we will meet again." He wrote it in Polish, I have kept this letter until today.³⁵ I managed to get this letter, to read it, because my German foreman was a relatively humane man and didn't watch us so much while we

³⁴ For more, see R. Kotarba, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie 1942–1945* (Warsaw–Cracow, 2009); *idem*, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie 1942–1945. Przewodnik historyczny* (Cracow, 2014).

³⁵ The letter was not found during the research.

were working [...]. As far as my parents are concerned, I suppose they died at Majdanek. Unfortunately, I have no proof of this.³⁶

Did Rudolf's parents really die in the Majdanek camp?

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Grossfeld family lived in Nowa Góra. During the German occupation, the village belonged to the Cracow District. During Operation Reinhardt, most of the Jews from this district were deported to the Bełżec extermination camp. A few transports were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and these were mainly from labour camps or the so-called residual ghettos in 1943. During the deportation operation itself, people deemed unfit for further travel were murdered at the assembly point or in the nearby forests.³⁷

In the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, we find information that Eliezer (Leon) Grossfeld³⁸ and Yokheved Grossfeld³⁹ (née Shtraus) died in 1943 in the Majdanek camp. These entries were based on information provided by Rudolf Grossfeld.⁴⁰ On the other hand, according to the court records from the 1940s, his parents had died the year before in the Cracow District. In the index of records of the Municipal Court in Cracow, held in the National Archives in Cracow, a dossier was found of the case concerning the declaration of the death of members of Rudolf Grossfeld's family.⁴¹ From the decision of the Municipal Court in Cracow on 31 May 1946, it appears that Rudolf Grossfeld's father and mother died in 1942 during the resettlement from Skala.⁴² The Grossfelds were

³⁶ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

³⁷ Some of those able to work were taken to labour camps. Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 349–350.

³⁸ Leon vel Eliezer vel Lejzer Grossfeld vel Grosfeld.

³⁹ Yokheved vel Jacheta vel Jeti vel Chawa vel Ewa Grossfeld vel Grosfeld née Strauss.

⁴⁰ On the basis of Grossfeld's testimony, short biographies of 15 people, members of his family, were drawn up and later included in the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names. There one can find information about the date, place and circumstances of their death. Digital copies of these documents are available on the website of the Yad Vashem Archives: https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en&advancedSearch=true&sln_value=Grossfeld&sln_type=synonyms&sfn_value=Reuven&sfn_type=synonyms (accessed 4 December 2019).

⁴¹ ANK, 29/I3Zg, 432/46, Records concerning the declaration of death of Jacheta vel Ewa Grosfeld née Strauss.

⁴² Eliezer (Leon) Grossfeld was said to have been murdered by German police in August. The court, in its decision, adopted 31 August 1942 as the day of his death. ANK, I3Zg, 432/46, Decision of

supposed to have arrived there from Cracow. The court established this based on the testimony of Barbara Horowitz and Mozes Gewelb. Why did Rudolf Grossfeld give a different place of his parents' death several decades later? We do not know the answer to this question. The declaration of death procedure was initiated at his request, so he must have known the testimonies of the witnesses and the court ruling. Presumably, he needed it for the inheritance proceedings of his parents and relatives.⁴³

Escape to Nowa Góra

In the conversation at the camp mentioned above Rudolf reportedly told his father that he wanted to join the Home Army. He recalled his contacts with the underground as follows:

At that time, the Polish underground, such as the Home Army, began to form. They were quite nationalistic in their attitude, but they were looking for people to join them, including Jews. They were mainly looking for people who spoke good German. Home Army envoys made their way to the Płaszów camp and made inquiries among the Jews as to whether they could join the Home Army, provided, of course, that they knew German. This rumour reached me too. The AK delegates came to me and told me that they were looking for someone who spoke German. After what I had seen happening in the camp, and how the Germans and Ukrainians treated Jews, I decided that joining the AK gave me some chance. I knew they would take me from Płaszów to a concentration camp one day. And that's why I joined the Home Army. In joining the Home Army, I saw my salvation, my chance of survival. I had nothing to lose by join-

the Municipal Court in Cracow concerning the declaration of death of Helena Strauss née Schichtler and Leon Grossfeld, Cracow, 31 May 1946, p. 5. Yokheved Grossfeld, on the other hand, was said to have been killed in September. The court adopted 30 September 1942 as the date of her death. In court records, she appears as Jacheta vel Ewa Grossfeld née Strauss, daughter of Eliakim and Breina. *Ibid.*, Decision of the Municipal Court in Cracow concerning the declaration of death of Abraham Strauss, Ozjasz Strauss, Regina Strauss, Jacheta vel Ewa Grossfeld née Strauss, Anna Juckerowa née Strauss, Sala Strauss, Cracow, 31 May 1946, p. 7.

⁴³ ANK, 29/446/19182, Petition of Rudolf Stanisław Grossfeld to commence probate proceedings for the late Helena Strauss née Schichtler [...], Cracow, 3 June 1946, p. 5. On 1 February 1939, his parents bought from Izaak and Eстера Dunkelblum half of the property located at 11 Celn Street in Cracow. ANK, 29/446/19182, Notarial deed, Cracow, 1 February 1939, n.p.

ing the Home Army. I knew that my chances of surviving the war were very low in percentage terms.⁴⁴

In the next part of the testimony, we learn about his escape from the camp:

Two days before Christmas [1942], I received information from the AK: "It won't be long now." I was given a piece of paper with the name of the Catholic priest I was to go to after escaping from the Płaszów camp. I am looking at it and it says: "Nowa Góra," which is the place where I was born. The Home Army envoy told me to go to the rectory of the church located in Nowa Góra [...]. It was Christmas Eve, an hour or so after two o'clock. And suddenly, we hear singing in Ukrainian. They were drunk. When the Ukrainians were drunk, a Polish army officer, who was Jewish, and who was in touch with the Home Army, having been a prisoner in Płaszów, came to me and said: "Now is the time, get up. Dress warmly and come with me." I was in Płaszów from June 1941 to December 1941.⁴⁵ Luckily for us, everyone was drunk, and we were able to get out. A few people escaped that evening. The Germans were in their houses because it was Christmas Eve after all. We cut the wire running around the Płaszów camp. We crawled on the ground and everyone ran in their own direction. To this day, I have not met anyone of those who escaped then. I knew no one of those who escaped. It was all AK conspiracy.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, other sources could not verify this story – we only have Grossfeld's testimony. As stated earlier, it is not possible that the author of the testimony was in the ZAL Plasow for the entire period mentioned. However, it is difficult to assess the credibility of his testimony regarding his contacts with the AK and his escape, presented here in a rather sensational form.

Grossfeld went on to talk about his wandering and his attempts to get through to his hometown. He mentioned, for example, the help he was given:

⁴⁴ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁴⁵ The actual dates were probably June to December 1942.

⁴⁶ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

I knocked on the window. I asked the lady who looked out of the window: "Please open the door for me." She opened the door. She was a widow. She gave me warm food, gave me some milk, potatoes. She quickly understood who I was and said: "May God take care of you. But I can't help you." She immediately knew that I was Jewish. She gave me a loaf of bread. She crossed herself over me and said: "May Jesus, Mary and all the saints have you in their care. But go away." So I went away.⁴⁷

After some time, the Jewish fugitive reached Nowa Góra. He established contact with people who would lead him to one of the so-called AK hideouts. Grossfeld reported:

The church in Nowa Góra stood near the forest. About 100 m from the big church, there was still a chapel. So at night, I went into this chapel and immediately fell asleep from exhaustion. Suddenly two people came to me. The men had their faces covered. They put a blindfold over my eyes and took me away from there [...]. They led me somewhere; it took about half an hour to get there. Finally, when we arrived, they took the blindfold off my eyes and said: "You are in one of the AK hideouts. You will sit here and then receive orders on what to do." And they went away. I stayed in the bunker where they took me. It was a big bunker. It stood next to a barn with about 20 cows in it. The Home Army underground had built this structure. You went into it through a small opening in this barn's wall. The bunker had a bed, furniture, a transmitter station, a communication device, and two dogs. The dogs would come up to me, and I would stroke them. I was alone in the bunker. I was afraid to go anywhere.⁴⁸

In subsequent excerpts from the testimony, Grossfeld recounted:

Suddenly one woman came and said to me: "Come here." The bunker had one more entrance, and this Polish woman said to me: "Get undressed." I took off all my dirty clothes, and she shaved my head. She put all my clothes in a bag

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

and brought me new clothes. She also brought me warm food. And I fell asleep. I have no idea how long I slept. The next day the same woman came. She said: “soon, you will have a visit from the commander-in-chief of the AK in our area.”⁴⁹

This person was a priest from Nowa Góra whom Grossfeld knew still from the interwar period:⁵⁰

He came to see me in the bunker. When I saw him, I felt that I had a chance, that I would survive the war after all. When the priest saw me, he said: “You know, there are no coincidences in life. It is destiny that we met.” He was delighted when he saw me. “Since you are here, I want to help you survive the war. But, unfortunately, you must let yourself be baptised and convert to Catholicism. The moment you get baptised, you become one of us.”⁵¹

According to Grossfeld, a “ceremony was organised for him inside the bunker. About fifty members of the AK were present. I had a godfather. I learned the catechism quickly; I even learned the Gospels by heart. The priest gave me the name Stanisław at the baptism and the surname Wielkopolański instead of Grossfeld. After the baptism, they gave me a big celebration. I was dressed in white, and they poured holy water on me. I had to cross myself.”⁵²

At this stage of the research, it has not been possible to establish whether such a large bunker existed on the site mentioned or not. However, the witness seems to have missed the truth. Would fifty conspirators have participated in a baptism organised in the “middle of a bunker” during the German occupation? Due to the high risk of exposure, this was unlikely. The baptismal register of the Roman Catholic Pentecostal Parish in Nowa Góra records that Rudolf Grossfeld was baptised only on 30 March 1945⁵³. However, it should not be ruled out that the baptism

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: “The priest from the village of Nowa Góra was a friend of ours. Before the war, the priest often came to our house because he liked the Jewish-style fish made according to my mother’s recipe.”

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Archiwum Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej pw. Zesłania Ducha Świętego [Archives of the Roman Catholic Pentecostal Parish] in Nowa Góra, The Baptismal Register, vol. 10, p. 75, no. 4, Certificate

occurred during the occupation, but the official entry was made later. It is worth recalling that on 10 October 1942, the Germans issued a ban on administering the sacrament of baptism to Jews, with severe penalties for doing so. Consequently, as of that date, it was only done in secret.⁵⁴

The Priest

Who was the priest described in the testimony? “He studied medicine. As his mother asked him to, he suspended his studies to become a priest. He suspended medicine and instead studied theology and philosophy. He knew Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. This priest taught me Hebrew. I know Hebrew precisely because of this priest [...]. This priest was very fond of Nietzsche’s philosophy. He believed that a Jew should not convert to Catholicism, among other things, because it is difficult for a Jew to understand the phenomenon of the Trinity.”⁵⁵ He was probably Father Franciszek Mirek,⁵⁶ the parish priest in Nowa Góra from 1932 to 1946. In 1929, he defended a doctoral dissertation in philosophy (specialisation: sociology) entitled “Ludwik Gumplowicz’s Sociological System,” written under the supervision of Florian Znaniecki. In 1930, he obtained his habilitation based on the dissertation “Sociological method. A contribution based on a critical analysis of Tardé’s and Durkheim’s methods.” He then taught sociology at the University of Poznan in the

of Holy Baptism of Rudolf Stanisław Grossfeld, Nowa Góra, 2005, n.p. The entered date and place of birth: 16 February 1923, Nowa Góra. Also another date of Rudolf Grossfeld’s birth appears in the sources: 12 June 1923. See ANK, 29/446/19182, Copy of a notarial deed of 12 July 2002, Tychy, 12 April 2006, n.p. The baptism witnesses were Anna Wójcik and Stanisław Kot. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019, <https://opowiedziane.ipn.gov.pl/ahm/notacje/24703,Moskal-Janina.html> (accessed 1 December 2021).

⁵⁴ See M. Grądzka-Rejak, “Zapewniają, że szukają tylko Boga i swego zbawienia.” Konwersje wśród Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie w latach 1939–1942,” in *Kościół, Żydzi, jezuici*, p. 107; T. Domański, “Konwersje Żydów na katolicyzm w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie na przykładzie diecezji kieleckiej,” *Polish-Jewish Studies* 2 (2021), pp. 211–212.

⁵⁵ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁵⁶ Nowhere has the information that he “studied medicine” been confirmed. Father Franciszek Mirek was born on 20 June 1893 at Naprawa. After completing primary school, he continued his education at St Anne’s Gymnasium. He graduated from it with distinction in 1912. That same year he entered the Cracow Theological Seminary and began studying at the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University. He completed his theological studies in 1916, but received his certificate of completion of studies on 8 January 1921, and his master’s degree in theology in 1931 at the University of Warsaw. See J. Kościelniak, “Odpowiedzialność w życiu społecznym jako fundament budowania wspólnoty w ujęciu księdza Franciszka Mirka (1893–1970),” *Studia Socialia Cracoviensia* 2/11 (2014), p. 179.

early 1930s. Between 1933 and 1937, he taught at the School of Political Science at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University. He was undoubtedly a highly educated person who fits the picture of a priest presented by Rudolf Grossfeld.⁵⁷

From 1946, Father Franciszek Mirek was the administrator of St Joseph's parish in Cracow. In 1949, he was arrested by the communist authorities⁵⁸ and falsely accused of collaborating with the Germans during the war when he was the parish priest in Nowa Góra. He remained in prison until 5 May 1951.⁵⁹ Some studies state that his release from prison resulted from a guarantee given by Jews who had benefitted from his help during the occupation (or had been hidden by him).⁶⁰ However, it has not been possible to confirm this information – there is no information about this in the documentation of Father Mirek's case.

Grossfeld, on the other hand, describes in his testimony the post-war help given to the 'priest', but the narrative is entirely different (more sensational). After the war, Grossfeld – according to him – was arrested as a former Home Army soldier but was released thanks to the intervention of an unknown 'colonel' of Jewish origin.⁶¹

⁵⁷ P. Borowiec, "Ks. Franciszek Mirek (1893–1970)," in *Jubileuszowa księga nauk politycznych*, ed. A. Zięba (Cracow, 2015), pp. 309–317; M. Pabich, T. Peciakowski, *Ks. Franciszek Mirek (1893–1970)*, www.kul.pl/ks-franciszek-mirek,art_81065.html (accessed 30 March 2021); J. Kościelniak, "Odpowiedzialność w życiu społecznym," pp. 179–180.

⁵⁸ Oddziałowe Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie (Branch Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Cracow, hereinafter AIPN Kr), 07/2694, vol. 2, Decision of the investigating officer of the WUBP in Cracow to detain Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 9 December 1949, p. 73; *ibid.*, Decision of the military district prosecutor on the provisional arrest of Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 10 December 1949, p. 75. The arrest order was issued by the Military Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Cracow, but as the case did not fall within the competence of a military court, it was transferred to the Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Appeal in Cracow.

⁵⁹ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Order for the release of Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 5 May 1951, p. 185.

⁶⁰ Borowiec, "Ks. Franciszek Mirek," p. 310; Rzepecki, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego*, p. 104.

⁶¹ "When the Russians came, the bunker was demolished and I went to live in the priest's room. And suddenly all the members of the Home Army disappeared. The Russians, on the other hand, were perfectly aware of who belonged to the underground and who belonged to the communist opposition, and they were slowly catching them all [...] They also got to me. The Russians threw me into prison. A Russian officer with the rank of colonel comes to me in prison once and says: 'You are a Jew'. I denied it, and the Russian said: 'Don't tell me fairy tales. You are a Jew'. I renounced my Jewishness because I wanted to be in solidarity with the AK. I had served them for four years, I felt like a member of the AK [...]. But the colonel replied: 'You'd better admit that you are Jewish, I'll be able to protect you and you'll get away with it'. He could, after all, very easily check if I was a Jew, all I had to do was drop my trousers. 'You idiot, said the colonel, after all I am a Jew too, I want to save your life'. Then I came to

All the others from the Home Army who were thrown into prison with me were killed by the Soviets. I was free. I wanted to help the priest, thanks to whom I was alive. The Russians were increasingly targeting this priest; they tried to seize and imprison him [...]. I reported to the Jewish community in Cracow. I told them everything that had happened to me. I asked them: "You must help me save this priest because he saved my life. I owe it to him." I said to the priest: "None of ours is alive anymore. The Russians will come for you too. You must run away quickly." The priest agreed. We disguised him as a woman. The Jewish community helped to disguise the priest as a woman. We convinced him, together with someone from the community, that he had to run away. We dressed him up in a nun's clothes. We smuggled him in a nun's clothes to one of the kibbutzim in Cracow. I belonged to the general Zionist kibbutz (Yitzhak Grünbaum's Ha-Cionim Ha-Klaim). This priest was with me in the kibbutz in Cracow for two months but disguised as a woman, no longer as a nun. He never went outside the kibbutz until Bricha came to the kibbutz,⁶² and we smuggled the priest after two months to Germany, to Munich. He later served as a priest in that city. He made it far in the Munich church hierarchy. We continued to keep in touch. Every year, I sent him crates of oranges from Israel. We were in constant contact, and we sent books. I even invited him to Israel. He came to Israel for a week in 1968, and I took him on a trip all over Israel. A tree was planted in Yad Vashem, named after him.⁶³ He liked it very much in Israel. We wrote to each other all the time until his death. He died at the age of 85. When I was in Germany, I visited his grave. Since I speak German, I asked the priest in whose church my priest served to show me where he was buried.⁶⁴

my senses, I admitted that he was right, that I was a Jew." YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

⁶² This Hebrew word, meaning "escape" or "sudden departure," was used to describe the mass movement of Jewish Holocaust survivors emigrating illegally to Palestine with the unofficial approval of the authorities, as well as the structures that organised this emigration. See B. Szaynok, "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski – 1945–1947," *Przegląd Polonijny* 2 (1995), pp. 31–46; N. Aleksion-Mędrzak, "Nielegalna emigracja Żydów z Polski w latach 1945–1947," part 2, *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 3 (1996), pp. 39, 42.

⁶³ No information was found in *The Righteous Among the Nations Database*, available on the Yad Vashem Centre's website, to confirm such a distinction honouring the priest.

⁶⁴ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

No documentation has been found to corroborate the story of the priest's escape. Franciszek Mirek died in Poland on 16 March 1970 and was buried in Łętownia.⁶⁵ Also, the two vicars (Fr Stanisław Wcisło and Fr Józef Piotrowski), who worked in the Nowa Góra parish during the occupation period, died in Poland several decades after the end of the war.⁶⁶

Grossfeld stated that the 'priest' helping him was an 'AK commander'. This sentence is also not confirmed by historical sources and studies.⁶⁷ It probably stemmed from Grossfeld's belief that Fr Mirek was influential in the local AK milieu. According to Michał Siwiec-Cielebon, the organiser and commander of the conspiracy in the area of Krzeszowice was Józef Ryłko, during the war of 1939, a company commander of the 12th infantry regiment.⁶⁸ Before him, the first structures were organised by Emanuel Leon Jakubiczka.

During the interrogations at the Voivodeship Office of Public Security (*Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*, WUBP) in Cracow in December 1949, Father Franciszek Mirek stated that in 1942 he had met Józef Ryłko, who then informed him of the existence of a "military organisation of the Home Army" on the parish premises and asked that "the rectory be used as a place for the organisational contacts taking place."⁶⁹ According to Fr Mirek, "At first, Ryłko was reluctant to say who was the organiser in our area, but finally, he mentioned the name of Lt. Col. Jakubiczka, who was unknown to me personally. At the same time, Ryłko told me that he had come to me for this purpose, to ask me, on behalf of Jakubiczka, to agree, if necessary, to hold a small meeting at the rectory in Nowa Góra."⁷⁰ The priest agreed. Then, at Ryłko's request, he had a conversation with the administra-

⁶⁵ Kościelniak, "Odpowiedzialność w życiu społecznym," p. 180.

⁶⁶ Father Stanisław Wcisło ministered in the parish of Nowa Góra from 1941 to 1943. He died on 27 October 1983 in a hospital in Bielsko-Biała, and was buried on 31 October 1983 at Hecznarowice. Father Józef Piotrowski worked at the parish in Nowa Góra from 1942 to 1947. He died on 21 February 1998. See Rzepecki, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego*, p. 111.

⁶⁷ Under canon law, a Catholic priest could not be a "commander" of the AK. He could, however, minister as a chaplain.

⁶⁸ M. Siwiec-Cielebon, "Pułk Piechoty Ziemi Wadowickiej. (Z dziejów tradycji i nazwy 12 pułku piechoty)," *Wadoviana. Przegląd historyczno-kulturalny* 6 (2001), pp. 63–64.

⁶⁹ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 30 December 1949, p. 44.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 10 December 1949, pp. 15–15v.

tor of the quarry in Miękinia, Rudolf Tegel, so that he “could supply explosives for the AK organisation.”⁷¹ Father Mirek testified that his contacts with the AK were limited to making the rectory available for meetings or exchanging documents.⁷² In 1945, he talked with Józef Ryłko about his disclosure: “Ryłko came to me as a liquidation commissioner and stated that the AK no longer existed and that everyone in Krzeszowice would be revealing themselves tomorrow. When I asked him whether I should also reveal myself, he answered that I was not a member of the Home Army and that I did not carry a gun, so I had no reason to reveal myself. Since then, all my contacts with the Home Army have been severed.”⁷³

The surviving sources show that Father Franciszek Mirek also helped other Jews.⁷⁴ According to the testimony of Zygmunt Noworyta, who looked after the Feiler child, in 1945, the child’s father, Bernard, told him that Fr Mirek had helped him while he was in hiding⁷⁵, and: “Fr Mirek, when we didn’t want to give the child back, he made us return it.”⁷⁶ Information about the help given to the Feiler family by the parish priest in Nowa Góra was also confirmed by Jan Gwizdała.⁷⁷

In Hiding

Grossfeld said little about his ‘service’ in the Home Army. He mentioned that he distributed the newsletter *Nasza Polska* (Our Poland).⁷⁸ Instead, he discussed his relations with other AK soldiers: “The attitude of the rest of the AK members towards me was like that towards a Catholic. I felt that I was a member of this big family. To my great surprise, no one denounced me.”⁷⁹ The following testimony is particularly

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 30 December 1949, pp. 44–45. This information was confirmed during his hearing by Rudolf Tegel. See *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Rudolf Fegel (Tegel), 13 December 1949, p. 22–22v.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 20 June 1949, p. 95v.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the suspect Father Franciszek Mirek, Cracow, 10 December 1949, p. 16.

⁷⁴ For more on this topic, see the last part of the article.

⁷⁵ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Zygmunt Noworyta, Krzeszowice, 26 June 1950, p. 102.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Jan Gwizdała, Krzeszowice, 26 June 1950, pp. 107–107v.

⁷⁸ During the research, it was impossible to determine whether such a periodical actually existed.

⁷⁹ YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

interesting: “From 1942 to 1945, I served in the AK. I was one of them. Thanks to them, I am alive. I felt a debt of gratitude to them. The truth is that in the Home Army I found my love, a Polish woman active in the underground. I wanted to marry her.”⁸⁰

In the last part of his testimony, Grossfeld recalled:

Everything was already ready for the wedding with my Polish girlfriend. But after the pogrom in Kielce, everything woke up in me; I started to understand that this was a severe problem. I still felt Jewish. I saw the hatred of Jews among the Poles. I saw what the reality was in communist Poland. And I asked myself if I would be able to live in such a country as a Catholic. I told the whole truth to my girlfriend about how I felt about Poles and about Poland. I said that I wanted to go to Israel. She replied that she wanted to go with me. However, I advised her against going to Israel. I said that I loved her, but she was still young and should not risk her life by going to a foreign country. We even went to her father and told him everything. And we parted with heartache. After parting with my girlfriend from AK, I joined a kibbutz in Cracow.⁸¹

As mentioned in the introduction, Grossfeld did not give any names of the people who helped him. Who were the soldiers he described to whom he “felt a debt of gratitude”? Who was his “Polish girlfriend”? The story of Rudolf Grossfeld’s rescue is completed in the testimony of Janina Moskal (née Kot). According to her, during the German occupation, this young man was hidden on the farm belonging to her parents, Stanisław and Agata Kot, in Czerna⁸² no. 77.

It should be stressed that Janina Moskal did not directly witness the help her parents gave to Jews. She was born on 6 June 1944. Her whole narrative about the period of occupation and aid is based exclusively on her conversations with her mother, Agata Kot,⁸³ conducted a few years after the end of the Second World

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² In March 1943, Czerna was a village of 1,279 inhabitants. *Amiliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichniss*, p. 23.

⁸³ According to Janina Moskal, her mother Agata Kot was born on 26 January 1905, and at the age of nineteen married Stanisław, eight years her senior. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

War. The author of the testimony emphasises that she did not discuss the subject of hiding Jews with her father: “I never discussed this subject with my father; usually with my mother, and only one-on-one.”⁸⁴ Let us add, however, that the fact of Grossfeld’s hiding at the Kot family farm is also confirmed in the questionnaires of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.⁸⁵ In one of the documents found there, we read: “1) Citizen Kot Stanisław – farmer, born 28 April 1897, residing at Czerna no. 77, p[ocz]ta (post town) Czerna, kept Grosfeld Rudolf, aged 20, and Herzig Pelagia, aged 19, at his home from 1942 until liberation, providing them with accommodation and food free of charge and protecting them from being handed over to the Nazi oppressors. After liberation, the citizens of Jewish origin mentioned above left for Cracow and then for Palestine.”⁸⁶

The contemporary route between the Pentecostal church in Nowa Góra (which Grossfeld reached after escaping from the camp) and the Kot family’s house is more than two kilometres long, so the passage between these sites could have taken the “half an hour” mentioned in Grossfeld’s testimony. Moreover, we know that Janina Moskal’s father, Stanisław Kot “Jarzáb,” was a soldier of the Home Army, a corporal, serving in a communications platoon in the sub-units of the so-called “Krzeszowice grouping” of the Home Army. Thus, he could have had “some kind of a communication device” – which Grossfeld mentioned years later in his testimony given to Yad Vashem.

Based on the interview with Janina Moskal and her memoirs, we can only answer a few questions about the circumstances of the help given to the Jewish population by the Kot couple in Czerna. When asked when the first Jews came to the farm, Agata Kot’s daughter said that in 1940 or 1941. She estimated that “30 to 40 people” were hiding in their home at various periods.⁸⁷ According to a 2018 testimony, “some people would leave, and others would come, but there

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ After the end of the Second World War, the Main Commission conducted surveys twice. In 1968, the questionnaires addressed to the field administrations also contained a question about the help given to Jews by Poles and the repressions used by the occupier.

⁸⁶ AIPN, 2448/431, vol. 1, The GKBZHWP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, pp. 365–365v.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

were never more than ten people [at any one time].”⁸⁸ Jews hid in the house’s attic, cellar,⁸⁹ and barn.⁹⁰ Most were kept temporarily. They entered a ‘special tunnel’ or fled into the grain in moments of danger.⁹¹ Agata Kot prepared and brought food to them.⁹² Stanisław Kot arranged for identity documents and baptismal certificates. We read in the memoirs: “He also had a deal with the parish priest in Nowa Góra parish, who would give Catholic baptisms with a document confirming the act.”⁹³ The parish priest at the Pentecostal parish in Nowa Góra from 1932 was – as we already know – Father Franciszek Mirek. Let us add that, according to Bronisław Rzepecki, during the occupation period Stanisław Kot was a member of the church council in this parish.⁹⁴ Thus, Janina Moskal’s testimony of her father’s collaboration with the ‘parish priest’ seems credible and may explain how Grossfeld found shelter on the Kots’ farm. Perhaps Grossfeld remembered the ‘special tunnel’ she referred to as the ‘bunker’.

According to Janina Moskal’s testimony, her father was the village leader during the occupation (this has not been confirmed; it seems that he could have been a sub-leader or become a leader towards the end of the war – witness Jan Maciejowski testified before the court during the post-war criminal proceedings that he was “the leader in the village of Czerna during the occupation”).⁹⁵ Mother Agata was in charge of the farm. Jan Wójcik – Agata’s sister’s son – and Agata’s father, Ludwik Kłeczek, also lived in the house.⁹⁶ Agata Kot’s sister Anna and her

⁸⁸ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 6.

⁸⁹ Janina Moskal only testified about hiding in the basement in her written memoirs (*ibid.*). During the interview she said that the Jews were mainly hidden in the attic and in the stable.

⁹⁰ House no. 77 in Czerna consisted of two rooms, a hallway, a granary, a pantry, an attic and a cellar. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² “Mum baked a lot of bread daily; there was milk, eggs, flour, potatoes and fruit. When there was a shortage of flour (usually before the harvest), mum would go to Golenice, where there was a bakery, and you could buy bread. She carried this bread in a bundle on her back.” Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ See Rzepecki, *Historia kościoła nowogórskiego*.

⁹⁵ AIPN Kr, 502/1034, Minutes of the main hearing before the District Court of Cracow, 30 October 1947, p. 61v–62. Also the entries in the chronicle of the Monastery of the Discalced Carmelites in Czerna confirm this information. See J.M. Marszalska, *Odnowa i trwanie. Klasztor Karmelitów Bosych w Czernej w latach 1900–1945* (Warsaw, 2020), pp. 168–169.

⁹⁶ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 1; AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

husband Romuald Wójcik, as well as – according to Janina Moskal – “perhaps” neighbours, also knew about the hiding of the Jews.⁹⁷ We do not know to what extent other household members and relatives were involved in helping the Jews. Did they accept it? What was their attitude towards the Jews in hiding?

In her memoirs, Janina Moskal recounted the atmosphere of fear surrounding the hiding of Jewish fugitives. She described the dangers to which her parents were exposed and testified that, while carrying bread, Agata Kot was beaten by a “German patrol.”⁹⁸ “One day at the end of 1944, Dad received a message that the Gestapo knew about the Jews hiding in Czerna and planned to send patrols to inspect the houses in the village. Fortunately, that did not happen.”⁹⁹

Considering the analysed sources, it must be concluded that we know little about Agata and Stanisław Kot’s motivations.¹⁰⁰ Was the help selfless? Did the Jewish fugitives pay for the food, the shelter, and the documents they were provided with? We do not know if the Kot couple took other forms of remuneration. We do not know the identity of most of the people hiding with them. Janina Moskal recalled: “three people stayed with us until the end of the war, two young girls named Sala and Pesia and a young boy named Rudolf.”¹⁰¹ The man’s name was Grossfeld. “My mother very often talked about this Rudek, who, at the age of 19, escaped during the manhunt in Krzeszowice [sic!] when the Gestapo took away his parents and his 13-year-old brother.”¹⁰² Let us recall that based on source searches, it was also possible to determine the surname of “Pesia.” It was Pelagia Herzig (b. 1924?), who was one year younger than Grossfeld. After the Second World War ended, she probably migrated to Israel.¹⁰³

Janina Moskal wrote on one page of her memoirs: “I learned then about my parents’ cooperation with the underground – when our house became a life-

⁹⁷ AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

⁹⁸ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ “Mum felt sorry for these people,” said Janina Moskal. AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹⁰¹ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 7. “Sala, she lived here probably – I don’t know – eight [months] or even up to a year. And there was a person that mum called Pesia, and she stayed probably only five months. And then there was Rudolf, who was here for a longer period, I think, three years, until 1945.” AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal.

¹⁰² Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 7.

¹⁰³ AIPN, 2448/431, The GKBZHWP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, pp. 365–365v.

belt for the drowning.”¹⁰⁴ During an interview given on 3 September 2019, she stated: “my dad had an acquaintance, his name was Jan Maciejowski, he was the previous village leader, and they had contacts through him, I think, but I don’t know what organisation it was.”¹⁰⁵ As written before, Stanisław Kot ¹⁰⁶ “Jarząb” was a soldier of the Home Army,¹⁰⁷ a corporal; he served in the communication platoon¹⁰⁸ in the so-called “Krzyszowice grouping.”¹⁰⁹ After the end of the war, on 13 October 1945, he revealed himself and was registered as a former Home Army soldier.¹¹⁰

It seems that he had already been involved in underground work since 1940. In the memoirs of Władysław Ryński, alias “Don Pedro,”¹¹¹ we read:

On 8 January 1940, I started working as a labourer in the quarries in Miękinia [...]. In February 1940, I met the so-called “qualified worker” Mr Kot (whose name was probably Józef [sic!]), a lance corporal in the Polish Army, who lived in Czerna (on the left side of the road from Father Siemaszko’s plant, in the direction of the water mill). He enjoyed the authority of the workers and willingly discussed the war with them, his patriotism and his attitudes to the Germans. I agreed with Mr Kot and supported his arguments, so a closer acquaintance was made. When he learned from me that I had taken part in defence of Lvov in

¹⁰⁴ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹⁰⁶ Stanisław Kot, name of father: Florian, name and maiden surname of mother: Maria Razmus, date of birth: 27 April 1897. AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow; Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe Wojskowego Biura Historycznego (Central Military Archives of the Military Historical Bureau, hereinafter CAW), 1777/90/728, p. 165. Janina Moskal gave 1898 as the year of his birth. See AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹⁰⁷ According to the registration and verification list of the Liquidation Commission for the affairs of the former Home Army Southern District, Cracow County, Krzyszowice District, kept at the CAW (IX.3.34.47), he joined the Home Army in February 1943 (quoted in http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=956 (accessed 2 October 2020)).

¹⁰⁸ http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=190 (accessed 3 February 2020).

¹⁰⁹ http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=190 (accessed 3 February 2020).

¹¹⁰ AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow.

¹¹¹ Henryk (Stanisław) Władysław Ryński “Don Pedro,” born on 9 June 1922 in Krzyszowice, son of Władysław and Tekla née Gleń. Revealed himself on 6 October 1945 as a soldier of the Home Army. AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs in Cracow.

September 1939 – in the early spring of 1940 (it was still snowmelt), he invited me to a meeting in Czerna on a Sunday at noon. After the meeting, he invited me to his house. Apart from his wife, two men in civilian clothes were there (of military behaviour) aged about 30–40. Mr Kot introduced me to them, and they gave their nicknames and military ranks (as far as I can recall, one was a lieutenant and the other a captain) and added that the officers were interested in the defence and surrender of Lvov in September 1939. At the outset, I learned from these officers that they belonged to the secret military organisation called the Union of Armed Struggle [...]. They asked me if I wanted to join the Union of Armed Struggle. Pleasantly surprised, I naturally agreed. [...] A meeting was arranged with me for the following Sunday, during which I and others were trained to organise intelligence and carry out various forms of diversion and sabotage. The liaison officer between the abovementioned officers and me was temporarily Mr Kot (I do not recall his pseudonym) [...].¹¹²

It seems that the author of the memoirs made contact with Stanisław Kot. The searches did not reveal another Home Army soldier of that name with the rank of a corporal living in the village of Czerna. In the testimonies analysed, Janina Moskal mentioned that her father worked in the quarries in Miękinia,¹¹³ and it was there that Ryński met his future “liaison officer.”

There are, however, difficulties in establishing the details of the “dad’s acquaintance” mentioned by Janina Moskal, namely Jan Maciejowski. He may have been Jan Maciejowski, born on 11 September 1896 in Nowa Góra, the son of Piotr and Małgorzata née Dury. Before the Second World War outbreak, he held the post of the mayor in Nowa Góra; during the occupation, probably from March 1940, he was involved in underground activity – he was an ensign with the pseudonym of “Siekiera,” the commander of the 3rd company.¹¹⁴ After the war, he lived in Nowa

¹¹² *Armia Krajowa i Szare Szeregi*, pp. 174–176.

¹¹³ AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹¹⁴ AIPN Kr, 0120/1, Subject card file of the Civic Militia’s Voivodeship Headquarters in Cracow, quoted in: http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=2562 (accessed 29 November 2019). See also AIPN Kr, 010/9296, Summary of material concerning Jan Maciejowski, obtained by investigation, intelligence and agents’ operations, Chrzanów, 4 July 1955, p. 6; B. Rzepecki, *Rody nowogórskie*, Nowa Góra 2020, pp. 194–196.

Góra at number 127. He belonged to the Polish People's Party and was under investigation conducted by the PUBP in Chrzanow.¹¹⁵

However, it seems more likely that this is Jan Maciejowski, born in 1901, the son of Jakub and Anna, who testified in court as a witness during the post-war criminal proceedings that he was the head of the village of Czerna.¹¹⁶ He lived in Czerna at number 92.¹¹⁷ Let us add that, according to the questionnaires of the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*, GKBZHWP), he also helped the Jewish population: "Citizen Maciejowski Jan – a Polish State Railways traffic officer – born 9 May 1901, residing at Czerna no. 92, post town Czerna, kept at his home from 15 June 1941 to 1 July 1941, and then, in the house of the St Zyta Association, from 2 August 1941 until liberation, a Jewish woman, Olga Szczepańska, aged 25, with her daughter, Janina Szczepańska, aged 3, providing them with free food and supplying them with the so-called Kennkarte obtained from Polish sources. After liberation, the two Jewish women left for Cracow to join their surviving family residing at 9a Grabowski Street. Then they left for France."¹¹⁸ According to the memoirs compiled by Władysław Bazarnik, alias "Zosik," help to the Jewish women living on the so-called Aryan side under an assumed name, Olga (mother) and Janina (daughter) Szczepański,¹¹⁹ was provided by the Maciejowski mentioned

¹¹⁵ AIPN Kr, 010/9296, Notice, Chrzanow, 6 March 1952, p. 3; *ibid.*, Analysis of a registered case for observation codenamed "Wójt" concerning Jan Maciejowski, Chrzanow, 1 April 1958, p. 7.

¹¹⁶ AIPN Kr, 502/1034, Minutes of the main hearing before the District Court in Cracow, 30 October 1947, p. 61v–62.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Indictment of Agata Kowalska, Cracow, 30 April 1947, p. 33v.

¹¹⁸ AIPN, 2448/431, vol. 1, The GKBZHWP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, pp. 365–365v.

¹¹⁹ The website *armiarajowakrzeszowice* reads: "Szczepańska Olga – the mother, and Szczepańska Janina – the daughter, were in hiding from 1939 to 1945 in Czatkowice Górne in the house no. 161, at Mr Stanisław Pawłowski's, with the knowledge of the village leader Żbik Franciszek, the baker Płaczek Piotr, who helped them to survive, saving their lives. Szczepańska Olga – was the wife of a Cracow-based lawyer called Lachs, who disappeared in Lvov in September 1939. Szczepańska Olga and her daughter Janina, born in 1938, left Cracow after the Germans entered, taking refuge in Czerna at the home of, among others, the village leader Maciejowski. As a result of the related dangers, she is moved to Czatkowice Górne. In the meantime, her daughter Janina is baptised at the church in Krzeszowice, obtaining a birth certificate under the name of Szczepańska Janina. Between 1943 and 1944, the fear of danger forced Olga Szczepańska and her daughter to leave Czatkowice. She sought refuge in Cracow, finding no favour or help. Distraught and heartbroken, she met Stanisław Płaczek, a son of Piotr the baker, on the street in Cracow. Riskily evading German patrols and inspections, he brought them back to Czatkowice to the home of Mr Stanisław Pawłowski, supporting them with food. After

above, as well as Stanisław Płaczek “Granit,”¹²⁰ Piotr Płaczek, Stanisław Pawłowski (Czatkowice, house no. 161), Zofia Stachowska and Franciszek Żbik (the village leader of Czatkowice).¹²¹

According to Janina Moskal, other Jewish refugees were also hidden in the nearby Nowa Góra. In her memoirs, we find the following: “His [Rudolf Grossfeld’s] uncle Berek, his mother’s brother, also survived. They were sent home to us, but there was only room for Rudek, and Berek found a place with friends in Nowa Góra.”¹²² Janina Moskal did not give the name ‘Berek’ in her testimony. However, we know that he was Bernard Feiler, hiding in Nowa Góra – together with his wife Bela (Bailla, Lola) Feiler, née Klinger, his brother Chaim (Henryk) Feiler with his wife Sala, née Grosman, and her brother Isaak (Ichak Szaja) Grosman – at the Chucherko family (Zofia and Stefan and their children Eugeniusz, Henryk and Leopold).¹²³ Szaja Grosman probably died in December 1944.¹²⁴ The others survived the period of the German occupation.¹²⁵ In hiding, the Feiler family had

the expulsion of the Germans in 1945, Szczepańska Olga and her daughter moved to Cracow. When she could not find her husband after the end of the war, she and her daughter left for France to look for his family, as that was where he came from. They settled down in Paris. She often remembered the people of Czatkowice with gratitude. Before she died in 1990, she obliged her daughter Janina to visit their whereabouts, their shelter during the war, and to find and thank the people who gave them shelter and saved them from death at the hands of the Germans,” http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=3582 (accessed 6 October 2020). See also *List Janiny Cohen*, handwritten, http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=3582 (accessed 6 October 2020). According to the information on this website, Janina visited Poland in the early 1990s.

¹²⁰ Stanisław Płaczek “Granit,” born on 30 January 1921 in Czatkowice, son of Piotr and Wiktoria née Masłowska. AIPN Kr, 080/1, The so-called card file of destroyed records of the Voivodeship Office of Internal Affairs.

¹²¹ Unfortunately, despite the requests directed to the present owner of the typescript of the memoirs compiled by Władysław Bazarnik, it has been impossible to obtain the original of this source and to verify it, http://armiakrajowakrzyszowice.eles.pl/?page_id=3582 (accessed 23 January 2020).

¹²² Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, pp. 7–8.

¹²³ AIPN, 392/426, Letter from Eugeniusz Chucherko to the Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Poland, based in Warsaw, Cracow, 6 April 1984, pp. 3–4. A description of the help given can also be found in the questionnaire of the GKBZHwP. See AIPN, 2448/431, vol. 1, The GKBZHwP questionnaires collected in 1968–1972, Cracow Voivodeship – VII. Chrzanów County, Krzeszowice, 2 November 1968, p. 373. It is worth noting the significant differences in the spelling of the names of those rescued that appear in the sources.

¹²⁴ During the searches, the records of the court proceedings for the declaration of his death could not be found. See also D. Libionka, “Powiat miechowski,” in *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, vol. 2, ed. by B. Engelking and J. Grabowski (Warsaw, 2018), p. 117.

¹²⁵ The Chucherko family was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal in 1983: mother Zofia Chucherko née Mazur (1897–1978), father Stefan Chucherko (1900–1970), sons Eugeniusz

a baby, which Father Franciszek Mirek helped to hide in the house of Zygmunt Noworyta (apparently, he placed the baby in a small box or basket and took it to the farm of a childless couple in Miękinia).¹²⁶ The Noworyta family looked after the child for several months until the German occupation ended. Then (probably not without resistance), Zygmunt Noworyta returned the child to his parents.¹²⁷

According to Janina Moskal, 'Berek' was Grossfeld's mother's brother.¹²⁸ During the searches, it was not possible to confirm their relationship. However, it should not be ruled out. Berek and Rudolf came from the same village. They probably knew each other. After the Kielce pogrom, Bernard Feiler, his wife and his son left Poland in late July and early August 1946. That same year they reached France. In 1951, they arrived in Sydney, Australia, on the Italian ship "Soliente."¹²⁹

Conclusions

In the last part of the 1995 testimony, the Holocaust survivor Rudolf Grossfeld described his trip to Israel: "with a priest who was taken by Bricha from a kibbutz in Cracow [*sic!*],¹³⁰ I fled to Germany. We crossed borders with Czechoslovakia, Germany, France,¹³¹ and Israel. There I met my Jewish wife from Lvov. She survived the war in a convent in Lvov. We have been married since 1947. We have one

(b. 1924), Henryk (b. 1927), and Leopold (b. 26 June 1931). See *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holocaustu. Polska*, vol. 1, ed. by I. Gutman, S. Bender, and S. Krakowski (Cracow, 2009), p. 96. It is worth mentioning that Józef Kaczmarczyk, Helena Stypulczak, Józef Górecki, and Zofia Górecka-Krzyszowiak, among others, were also honoured for helping the Jewish population in Czerna and the surrounding villages. *Ibid.*, p. 269, 702, 198.

¹²⁶ See: <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/my-father-tried-to-kill-me-to-save-our-family-from-hitler/news-story/589b9484f75a7e9184db8a4420ef2c76> (accessed 6 December 2021).

¹²⁷ AIPN Kr, 07/2694, vol. 1, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Zygmunt Noworyta, Krzeszowice, 26 June 1950, pp. 102–102v.

¹²⁸ Bernard Feiler, born on 5 August 1911 in Nowa Góra. USHMM, RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980. Rudolf Grossfeld's mother, Yokheved Grosfeld, née Shtraus, was born in Krzeszowice in 1895. Her parents' names were Eliakim Shtraus and Breina Grinbaum. YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld; <https://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=5627622&kind=1>, accessed on 5 December 2019. In his testimony, Rudolf Grossfeld said: "My whole family perished. I didn't find anyone after the war. I know that I have a distant relative, an uncle, who lives in the USA." YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld. Perhaps he was referring to Bernard Feiler, who lived in Australia.

¹²⁹ USHMM, RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980.

¹³⁰ As written above, in the light of the available sources, the information about the priest's escape does not seem credible.

¹³¹ USHMM, RG-50.617.0017, The testimony of Bernard Feiler, 17 March 1980.

daughter and a grandson and a granddaughter.¹³² In Israel, Grossfeld worked as an official at the Ministry of Education. He died in 2019. The funeral took place at the Neve Jam kibbutz (north of Israel, next to Haifa).¹³³ According to Janina Moskal's testimony, more than half a century earlier, before leaving Poland, Rudolf Grossfeld still visited Agata Kot.¹³⁴

The story of Rudolf Grossfeld's rescue shows the involvement of the rural population, Home Army soldiers and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in saving Jews. This case illustrates how complicated is the research on Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation, including issues of individual help. Yet, despite acquiring a few sources, many questions concerning the relationship between those who helped and those who were hidden remain unanswered.

Rudolf Grossfeld's testimony, analysed in the article submitted in the 1990s, is somewhat chaotic and of little documentary value on its own. Why does his story contain so many moments passed over in silence? Did the author of the testimony conceal certain information? Janina Moskal reported in her memoirs that when she was twelve years old, her mother told her that she and her brother Leopold were the biological children of Rudolf Grossfeld.¹³⁵ So was the AK girl described by the survivor, with whom he fell in love, Agata Kot? Did the relationship with her influence the content of the testimony Grossfeld gave?

It is also impossible not to draw attention to the reliability of some of the information given in the testimony. Did Grossfeld really – as he claimed – “serve” in the AK? It should not be ruled out that one of the Home Army men could have hidden him. Furthermore, did the fact that Stanisław Kot was a soldier of the Polish Underground State influence his giving aid to Jews? Did the underground organisation support him in this case? We can only conjecture that some of the

¹³² YVA, 0.3, 8602, The testimony of Rudolf (vel Reuven) Grossfeld.

¹³³ This information is available online in his obituary. See www.facebook.com/misholeyhaim/posts/1427935194016164/, accessed on 31 January 2022. My thanks to Dr Ewa Węgrzyn for this tip.

¹³⁴ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 8; AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019.

¹³⁵ Moskal, *Wspomnienia z Domu na Wzgórzu*, p. 11; AIPN, N1387, The testimony of Janina Moskal, 3 September 2019. According to the passport file, Leopold Kot was born on 1 January 1946. AIPN Kr, 37/120404, Passport file's EAKR call number: Kot Leopold, son of Stanisław. However, Małgorzata Kot said during a meeting with the author of this article on 19 September 2019 that her father was in fact born earlier, probably in autumn 1945.

people mentioned in this material who were involved in helping Jews may have been in contact with each other and supported each other in some form. This was probably the case with Father Franciszek Mirek and Stanisław Kot.

On the basis of available archival documentation, it has been possible to confirm that Stanisław Kot rescued at least two people of Jewish origin: Rudolf Grossfeld and Pelagia Herzig. Nevertheless, this does not mean that more people did not benefit from his help. It is worth adding that the Kot family were not awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medals. Why did the survivors not disclose that they had been helped? Who else tried to hide in the area? What was the later fate of these people? What were the attitudes of the local community towards Jewish fugitives and those who helped them? Perhaps searches in foreign archives and new witness testimonies could help to answer some of these questions.¹³⁶

In conclusion, reconstructing the story of Rudolf Grossfeld's rescue can contribute to further research into the process of post-war documentation of Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation.

¹³⁶No testimonies or diaries of Rudolf Grossfeld, Bernard Feiler or Olga Szczepańska (Lachs) were found in the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute.

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SUMMARY

This article reconstructs Rudolf Grossfeld's survivor story during the German occupation. The aim was to learn what knowledge is conveyed by the survivor's testimony, being the primary source used for the analysis, and to what extent it is objective. The analyses of the source can contribute to research into the process of post-war documentation of Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation.

KEYWORDS

Aid to Jews • Holocaust • Home Army • Catholic Church