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GERMAN CRIMES COMMITTED ON POLES WHO  
HELPED JEWS – REFLECTIONS ON SEBASTIAN  
PIĄTKOWSKI'S MONOGRAPH „*W PŁOMIENIACH ZAŚ  
CIĄGLE ODZYWAŁY SIĘ JĘKI...*”. NIEMIECKIE ZBRODNIE NA  
NIOŚĄCYCH POMOC ŻYDOM POLAKACH Z CIEPIELOWA  
I OKOLIC (1942–1943) (“AND AMIDST THE FLAMES, MOANS  
COULD STILL BE HEARD...” GERMAN CRIMES AGAINST POLES  
WHO HELPED JEWS IN CIEPIELÓW AND ITS VICINITY,  
1942–1943)<sup>1</sup>, WARSAW: INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL  
REMEMBRANCE, 2025, 215 PP.

In 2025, the Institute of National Remembrance Publishing House released a 215-page monograph by Sebastian Piątkowski titled „*W płomieniach zaś ciągle odzywały się jęki...*”. *Niemieckie zbrodnie na niosących pomoc Żydom Polakach z Ciepelowa i okolic (1942–1943)* (“And Amidst the Flames, Moans Could Still

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Be Heard...” German Crimes Against Poles Who Helped Jews in Ciepiałów and the Surrounding Area its Vicinity, 1942–1943).<sup>2</sup> The book was reviewed by two historians: Dr. hab. Grzegorz Berendt, Professor at the University of Gdańsk, and Dr. hab. Jerzy Gapys, Professor at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce. The author, a staff member of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), is a respected scholar specialising in the German occupation of Poland and the experiences of the Jewish population during World War II. His body of work includes several monographs, notably on the German prison in Radom,<sup>3</sup> life in Radom during the war,<sup>4</sup> and the everyday realities of Poles living in the territory of the General Governorate.<sup>5</sup> What is particularly important in the context of his latest publication is that the author has also written a monumental seven-volume source edition entitled *Relacje o pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945* (Testimonies on Aid Provided to Jews by Poles, 1939–1945).<sup>6</sup>

The book under review focuses on the tragic events that unfolded in a section of the occupied Radom District within the General Governorate. Between early December 1942 and mid-March 1943, in the area of the Kreis Starachowice, German forces conducted a brutal pacification operation targeting so-called “bandits” – a term they used not only for individuals possessing weapons, but also for Jews in hiding and those who offered them assistance. The atrocities were carried out by German military police officers from the notorious 1st Motorised SS Police Battalion, led by Major Ernst Schwieger.<sup>7</sup> Approximately 300 individuals – Jews,

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<sup>2</sup> S. Piątkowski, „W płomieniach zaś ciągle odzywały się jęki...”. *Niemieckie zbrodnie na niosących pomoc Żydom Polakach z Ciepiałowa i okolic (1942–1943)*, Warsaw, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> S. Piątkowski, *Więzienie niemieckie w Radomiu w latach 1939–1945*, Lublin, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> S. Piątkowski, *Radom w latach wojny i okupacji niemieckiej (1939–1945)*, Lublin–Warsaw, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> S. Piątkowski, *Życie codzienne Polaków w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w świetle ogłoszeń drobnych polskojęzycznej prasy niemieckiej*, Warsaw, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> *Relacje o pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945*, vol. 1: *Dystrykt warszawski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*; vol. 2: *Dystrykt krakowski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*; vol. 3: *Dystrykt lubelski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*; vol. 4: *Dystrykt radomski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*; vol. 5: *Dystrykt Galicja Generalnego Gubernatorstwa i Wołyń*; vol. 6: *Białostoczczyzna, Nowogródzczyzna, Polesie, Wileńszczyzna*; vol. 7: *Trzecia Rzesza i ziemie polskie do niej wcielone*, selec. and ed. S. Piątkowski, Lublin–Warsaw, 2018–2023.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on this subject, see among others M. Seydler, *Ermöglichungsverhältnisse. Die Kooperation von NS-Sondereinheiten im Holocaust am Beispiel des I./SS-Gendarmerie-Bataillons (mot.)*, Weilerswist, 2023; R. Drabik, “Udział I Zmotoryzowanego Batalionu Żandarmerii SS w pacyfikacji ludności w dystrykcie lubelskim,” in *Wieś polska podczas II wojny światowej. Po pacyfikacji – losy i pamięć*, ed. M. Jedynak, Kielce–Białystok, 2025; R. Drabik, “Udział I Zmotoryzowanego Batalionu Żandarmerii w wysiedleniach na Zamojszczyźnie,” *Archiwariusz Zamojski* 21 (2023), pp. 179–191.

Poles, Roma, and Soviet prisoners of war – were brutally killed. Victims were shot, burned alive, or beaten to death. While some cases suggest that those targeted may have had ties to communist groups or the resistance movement, the primary and overriding reason for these atrocities was their role in sheltering Jews.

The study under review is structured into an introduction, eight chapters, a bibliography, and a list of abbreviations. Chapter One outlines the administrative framework of German authorities in the Radom District. Chapter Two examines the district's role as a site of German extermination policies before December 1942. Chapter Three focuses on the Kreis Starachowice during the occupation, detailing both the county's infrastructure and the local population, and highlighting the setting of the atrocities explored in the book. Chapter Four dwells on the origins of the atrocities committed against Poles from Ciepeliów and the surrounding villages who aided Jews. Chapter Five introduces the perpetrators – military policemen stationed in Lipsko and Ciepeliów – and examines the circumstances of their operations. Chapter Six, titled “Pasma zbrodni” (A Series of Crimes), comprises eleven subchapters detailing specific acts of brutality carried out by German forces in the Kreis Starachowice, including in Ciepeliów Stary, Rekówka, Świesielice, Boiska-Kolonia, Tymienica Stara, Okole, Marcule, Lubień, Boiska, Słuszczyn, and Zajączków. The penultimate chapter lists other crimes committed in this area and discusses the fate of the perpetrators. The final chapter contains a traditional conclusion, in which the author summarises the information presented so far. He wrote:

Between 6 December 1942 and approximately 15 March 1943, German forces conducted a pacification operation in parts of the Kreis Starachowice, including the municipalities of Chotcza, Ciepeliów, Iłża, Lipsko, and Solec nad Wisłą – though the violence extended beyond these areas. The operation aimed at the physical extermination of the so-called “bandits,” a term the Germans applied not only to armed resisters but also to Jews in hiding and the Polish farmers who aided them. Even decades later, the scale of the bloodshed remains deeply disturbing. Archival records indicate that nearly 300 individuals of various nationalities were murdered over the course of just a few autumn and winter months. In addition to executions carried out in forests, fields, and along roadsides, the region witnessed approximately twenty such operations marked by

systematic brutality: the targeted killing of entire families, widespread looting, the burning of homesteads, and the prohibition of burying victims in Catholic cemeteries. In at least ten documented cases, Poles were executed for sheltering Jews – either those hiding on farms or among the so-called “people from the forest” (pp. 195–197).

The number of Poles who died for helping Jews in the ten cases mentioned above was, according to Sebastian Piątkowski’s calculations, over 70 people, including men, women, and children (p. 198).

Upon finishing the book, it becomes difficult to disagree with the author’s assertion that the brutal consequences of the pacification operation are both horrifying and profoundly disheartening. This reaction stems not only from the sheer number of victims, but also from the chilling consistency in the way the German perpetrators carried out their operations. The methods employed were disturbingly uniform, and the testimonies of individual atrocities committed against Polish farmers and their families follow a grimly familiar pattern. Sebastian Piątkowski’s examination of these events highlights a broader framework of extrajudicial repression, closely tied to the persecution of Jews and those who dared to assist them.

The anti-Jewish policy implemented by the German occupiers can be understood as unfolding in four distinct phases: exploitation, discrimination, stigmatisation, and isolation. These stages were reinforced by a series of regulations introduced within the General Governorate under the authority of General Governor Hans Frank. For instance, the regulation of 26 October 1939 mandating forced labour for Jews exemplified the exploitative phase; the regulation banning ritual slaughter reflected discriminatory intent; and the regulation issued on 23 November 1939 requiring Jews to wear armbands marked with the Star of David served as a tool of stigmatisation.<sup>8</sup> Central to our topic are the Residence Restriction Regulations enacted within the General Governorate. Three such regulations were issued: the first on 13 September 1940, the second on 29 April 1941, and the third on 15 October 1941. The following discussion will focus on the third regulation,

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<sup>8</sup> A. Bartnicka and K. Graczyk, “In the Majesty of the Law? Jewish Residents of Warsaw in the Face of German Occupation Ordinances and Activities of Sondergericht Warschau – Part I–II,” *Miscellanea Historico-Juridica* 1 (23) (2024), pp. 478–497, 517–544.

placing particular emphasis on the significance of Article 4b, which is especially relevant to the issue at hand and which reads as follows:

(1) Jews who leave their designated quarter without authorisation are liable to the death penalty. Anyone who knowingly hides Jews shall be subject to the same penalty.

(2) Inciters and helpers shall be punished in the same way as the perpetrator, an attempted act shall be punished as an accomplished act. In milder cases, heavy imprisonment or prison may be adjudicated.

(3) Sentencing shall be carried out by the Special Courts.

It is necessary to quote the provision *in extenso* due to an error found in the reviewed book (p. 42). The author wrote: “On 15 October 1941, Governor Hans Frank issued a regulation for the entire General Governorate stating that any Jew who left the ghetto without permission would be punished by death. Any Pole who provided him with a hiding place would be subject to the same penalty.” The author’s restrictive interpretation of the punishment for those who provided shelter is problematic, as the relevant provision was not limited to Poles. In fact, the legislation enacted by the General Governorate extended its scope to any individual who knowingly offered shelter to a Jew who had left the designated residential quarter (ghetto), regardless of the offender’s nationality. Thus, such acts could have been committed – and prosecuted – by Poles, Ukrainians, or Germans alike. To avoid empty words, I will refer to case law from the special courts, which clearly demonstrates that these provisions were enforced on this broader context. One instance illustrating the enforcement of this provision concerning a Pole is the verdict delivered on 2 June 1943 by the Special Court in Piotrków. Jan Góralczyk, a resident of the colony of Ryłsk Duży in the Regnów Municipality, was sentenced to death for sheltering a Jew in his barn for at least fourteen days. Additionally, when interrogated by the police regarding the presence of Jews, he deliberately provided false information.<sup>9</sup> For the same act, in February 1944, the Special Court

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<sup>9</sup> *Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi* [State Archives in Łódź], *Prokuratura przy Sądzie Specjalnym w Piotrkowie* [Prosecutor’s Office at the Special Court in Piotrków], 5298, Urteil gegen Jan Góralczyk vom 02.06.1943, p. 80.

in Stanisławów sentenced Leopold Zahler, a Ukrainian, who had given shelter to his Jewish wife for one night.<sup>10</sup> An example of a German being convicted is the sentence issued against Alois Huber by the Special Court in Cracow in July 1944.<sup>11</sup> Theoretically, even another Jew (such as one who had previously left the ghetto legally) could have committed the aforementioned act. It would not be controversial to state that, in practice, it was Poles who most often bore criminal responsibility for sheltering Jews, but this does not alter the fact that the provision did not apply only to Poles.

The preceding remarks pertain to the process of judicial repression, specifically the enforcement of the Third General Governorate (GG) Residence Restriction Regulation and the legal proceedings conducted by German special courts (*Sondergerichte*).<sup>12</sup> In this context, I must point out an inaccuracy: on pages 26–27, the author appears to have mixed up special courts with summary courts. The author wrote:

Special Courts (*Sondergerichte*), which operated from their headquarters in Radom, with additional divisions in Częstochowa, Kielce, and Piotrków Trybunalski, were also endowed with sweeping powers. These courts were authorised to impose the harshest penalties –including death – for a range of offences. These included failure to meet imposed quotas, evasion of forced labour in the construction service, transmission of venereal disease to a German, and, in the case of Jewish individuals, leaving the ghetto or failing to wear the armband with the Star of David. The true character and purpose of these courts are starkly illustrated in the post-war testimony of Fritz Liphardt, one of their full-time “judges”: “If an arrested person appeared before a summary court, they were either sentenced to death or acquitted. In cases of acquittal, the person in ques-

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<sup>10</sup> *Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie* (Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereinafter AIPN) *Główna Komisja* (Chief Commission, GK), 94/8641, Urteil in der Strafsache gegen Leopold Zahler vom 26.02.1944, pp. 6–7.

<sup>11</sup> K. Graczyk, “„Stołeczny” Sondergericht. Niemiecki Sąd Specjalny w Krakowie (Sondergericht Krakau) 1939–1945,” *Folia Historica Cracoviensia* 1 (30) (2024), pp. 7, 38, 79.

<sup>12</sup> For more on the analysis of the jurisprudence of the GG Special Courts based on the Third GG Residence Restriction Regulation, see K. Graczyk, *Niemieckie sądy specjalne w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*, Warsaw, 2025, pp. 265–313.

tion was usually sent to a concentration camp. Hundreds of death sentences were passed.”

The quoted passage raises two objections. Firstly, failure to wear the armband with the Star of David (an offence that was indeed within the jurisdiction of the Special Courts of the General Governorate) could not be punished by death (initially it was punishable by imprisonment, then by imprisonment and a fine, or one of these penalties)<sup>13</sup> and I am not aware of any such sentence (which does not mean that failing to wear the armband could not be a punishable offence, occurring alongside acts punishable by death). Secondly, while Liphardt’s statement is valuable when considered alongside other sources referring to summary courts, it does not pertain to the Special Courts of the General Governorate, but rather to summary courts. Given the scope of this review, I will refrain from a detailed comparison. I will simply note that although their jurisdictions partially overlapped – for instance, cases not requiring the death penalty could be transferred from a summary court to a Special Court of the General Governorate – their institutional subordination, judicial composition, and standards of evidentiary procedure differed significantly. A further key distinction lies in the fact that acts of resistance were prosecuted before summary courts, not Special Courts.

The reviewed work would benefit from providing historical context on the distinction between judicial and extrajudicial forms of repression that developed in response to offences such as leaving the ghetto or sheltering Jews. This distinction is not currently evident to the reader. Initially, punitive measures were carried out through judicial channels, but these did not disappear when extrajudicial methods emerged. The latter, lacking formal legal procedures, proved more expedient for the German occupiers, aligning more closely with their objectives and facilitating a higher number of executions. According to the author’s findings, the implementation of extrajudicial measures was enabled by the so-called *Schießbefehl* – an order issued to the German police and military police to shoot any Jew found outside

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<sup>13</sup> Rozporządzenie o oznaczeniu żydów i żydówek w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie z dnia 23 listopada 1939 r., *Dziennik Rozporządzeń Generalnego Gubernatora dla Okupowanych Polskich Obszarów* (hereinafter DzRGGGOPO) 1939, no. 8, p. 61; Drugie rozporządzenie o oznaczeniu żydów i żydówek w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie z dnia 19 lutego 1940 r., DzRGGGOPO 1940, no. 15, p. 79.

the ghetto,<sup>14</sup> and later extended to include any Pole who provided shelter to them. Based on the current state of knowledge, one might venture to argue that the route of repression was linked to the type of terrain in which “punishable” acts of aid took place. Residents of cities and towns were clearly more likely to be brought before the special court of the General Governorate, while rural residents were practically deprived of this possibility, although there are, of course, cases that defied this statement.

In my view, the issue outlined above serves as a clear illustration of Ernst Fraenkel’s theory of the dual state, formulated in relation to the political structure of the Third Reich. Fraenkel identified two distinct spheres: the normative state and the prerogative state.<sup>15</sup> Put simply, the normative state encompassed formal procedures and administrative and judicial institutions functioning within the framework of established legal norms. In contrast, the prerogative state – often referred to as the “SS state” – was governed by directives rooted in political will, such as the Führer’s orders, arbitrary commands, or the use of brute force. When these insights are applied to the context of the General Governorate, it becomes evident that judicial and extrajudicial forms of repression were often employed simultaneously in comparable situations. When the Ulma family was murdered in Markowa on 24 March 1944, proceedings had been underway for about two weeks against Stanisława Kornecka for hiding a Jew in Sanok. On 19 April 1944, the woman was sentenced to death by the Special Court in Rzeszów, which was later commuted to one year in prison.<sup>16</sup> Under the totalitarian system of the Third Reich, which was also occupying Polish territory, individuals had no influence on the type of repression applied to them. This was determined by factors beyond their control.

Sebastian Piątkowski argues in his book that the *Schießbefehl* was indeed carried out. Equally significant, however, is the evidence emerging from the testimony of

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<sup>14</sup> *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–1945*, vol. 9: *Polen: Generalgouvernement August 1941–1945*, ed. K.P. Friedrich, München, 2014, p. 132; B. Musiał, *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...*, Poznań, 2019, pp. 94–95.

<sup>15</sup> E. Fraenkel, *The Dual State. A Contribution to the Theory of Dictatorship*, Oxford, 2017; M. Mączyński, *Organizacyjno-prawne aspekty funkcjonowania administracji bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego dla zajętych obszarów polskich w latach 1939–1945. Ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Krakowa jako stolicy Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, Cracow, 2012, pp. 442–446.

<sup>16</sup> K. Graczyk, “Z działalności Sądu Specjalnego w Rzeszowie (Sondergericht Reichshof) podczas II wojny światowej,” *Acta Iuridica Resoviensia* 4 (2024), p. 52.

gendarme Alfons Himmel and the recurring pattern of German crimes, which indicates that in the Radom District, a *Schießbefehl* specifically targeted Poles who sheltered Jews.

The author wrote:

The motorised military police unit [...] had special authorisation from the SS- und Polizeiführer in Radom, Dr. Böttcher, to kill Jews and Poles on the spot without trial. I recall that whenever Jews were brought to our station, we always sent them to the motorised military police, who usually killed them,” Himmel recounted after the war (p. 108).

A consistent pattern emerges in the accounts of these crimes: Polish farms whose owners had helped Jews were surrounded and thoroughly searched. Regardless of whether any signs of Jewish presence – such as religious books – were discovered, all inhabitants were executed, sometimes even burned alive. The killings included not only adults but also children, with instances of the youngest being spared occurring only in sporadic cases (pp. 150–151). The perpetrators not only took their victims’ lives but, after seizing all items of value, set the house ablaze and prohibited burial in a Catholic cemetery. There is no doubt that such acts of brutality by the Germans were intended to instil fear and discourage any attempts to aid Jews. A poignant feature of each crime’s account in the book is the inclusion of personal details – names, birth dates, and ages of the victims – at the end of each entry. This information resonates deeply with the reader, reinforcing the human cost of these atrocities.

The question arises whether a similar order concerning the shooting of Poles who provided shelter to Jews was also issued in other districts of the General Governorate or whether it was issued at the central level. In my opinion, research into this issue should be presented as a research proposal. The recently analysed and publicised case of the Ulma family from Markowa in the Cracow District lends credence to this thesis.<sup>17</sup> The lesser-known case of the Siniarski family from

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<sup>17</sup> M. Szpytma, *The Righteous and the Merciful*, Warsaw, 2023; M. Szpytma, *Sprawiedliwi i ich świat w fotografii Józefa Ulmy*, Warsaw, 2023.

Lutkówka in the Grodzisk Mazowiecki County would also indicate that such an order was issued in the Warsaw District. The files of the investigation conducted in the 1970s by the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Warsaw show that in March 1944, the military police from Mszczonów executed Stanisław Siniarski, his wife Marianna, their three children (fourteen-year-old Marian, eight-year-old Irena, and six-year-old Edward), and two Jews they were hiding.<sup>18</sup> A similar *modus operandi* in the Lublin District is confirmed by the case of Zuzanna Brzezińska and her son Czesław, who were suspected of hiding Jews. The woman was shot dead by the Germans, while her son was wounded and miraculously survived.<sup>19</sup> Another similar case was the shooting on 29 December 1942 in the village of Majdan Nowy in the Biłgoraj County of, among others, Jan Gniduła, Katarzyna Kowal, and her son Józef.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, within certain areas of the Galicia District (notably the pre-war Stanisławów Voivodeship), Poles who helped Jews faced execution, though this penalty did not extend to children.<sup>21</sup>

The implementation of extrajudicial repression had tragic consequences for many human lives. The executions carried out by the German military police were conducted without any legal procedures, regardless of the German criminal law introduced at the beginning of the occupation. If the provisions of the General Governorate legislation had been applied to the Ulma and Siniarski families, as well as to many other families mentioned in Sebastian Piątkowski's book, adults (for example, Józef and Wiktoria Ulma, Stanisław and Marianna Siniarski) would have been brought before the Special Courts for knowingly sheltering Jews. Under no circumstances would this apply to children; however, as their age did not allow them to be held criminally liable under the provisions of the German Criminal

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<sup>18</sup> AIPN, 392/1382, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Zygmunt Zgórzak at the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Warsaw, 4 July 1972, pp. 6–8; *ibid.*, Minutes of the interrogation of the witness Bronisław Zgórzak at the District Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes in Warsaw, 23 November 1972, pp. 13–21.

<sup>19</sup> A. Gontarek, „„Synu, jako możesz, to uciekaj, bo ja już nie mogę”. Śmierć Zuzanny Brzezińskiej za dożywianie Żyda w Gutanowie na północnej Lubelszczyźnie,” in *Polacy ratujący Żydów w dystrykcie lubelskim 1939–1944. Oblicza pomocy*, eds. R. Drabik and A. Gontarek, Lublin–Warsaw, 2024, pp. 245–247.

<sup>20</sup> R. Drabik, „„Chcieliśmy pomóc Żydom prześladowanym przez Niemców”. Egzekucje na mieszkańcach Majdanu Nowego w Kreis Biłgoraj za pomoc ludności żydowskiej,” in *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, pp. 251–253.

<sup>21</sup> See T. Gonet, *Pomoc Żydom na terenie przedwojennego województwa stanisławowskiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1941–1944*, Katowice–Warsaw, 2025, pp. 526–566.

Code, which was applied in the General Governorate by authorities subordinate to the Main Department of Justice in the General Governorate. These comments also apply to police regulations issued by the Higher SS and Police Commander in the General Governorate, such as the Police Regulation of 28 October 1942 on the Establishment of Jewish Residential Quarters in the Districts of Warsaw and Lublin. These legal acts did not contain an independent criminal norm, and the special courts of the General Government refused to apply them. This was the case, for example, with the Special Court in Lublin (judgment of July 1943).<sup>22</sup> The Main Department of Justice in the General Governorate, which formulated critical comments on the judgment issued by the Special Court in Rzeszów, took the same position.<sup>23</sup> This judgement referred to the Police Regulation of 10 November 1942 on the Establishment of Jewish Residential Quarters in the Districts of Radom, Cracow, and Galicia, which was criticised because the police regulation did not contain an independent criminal norm and therefore should not have been referred to either in the indictment or in the judgment.<sup>24</sup> In other words, changes to the scope of criminal liability introduced through police regulations – such as criminalising the act of “feeding” a Jew – were not legally binding on the Special Courts of the General Governorate.

Judicial repression would therefore have had the effect of at least sparing the lives of the youngest victims.<sup>25</sup> However, there is no doubt that the *Schießbefehl* was issued with the intention of bypassing the judicial process, which was not as effective in deterring crime and was associated with certain difficulties and delays (court dates, the need for detention, court hearings).

It is saddening that most of the perpetrators described in the book – apart from those who died in battle – lived to see the end of the war and were then able to lead peaceful lives in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Sebastian Piątkowski mentions only two exceptions – Anton Krüger and

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<sup>22</sup> Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 137/301, Urteil des Sondergerichts in Lublin gegen Jan Kukielka, Michal Hubka und Kasimierz Dorosz vom 28.08.1943, pp. 32–39.

<sup>23</sup> *Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie* (The State Archives in Rzeszów), *Sąd Specjalny Niemiecki w Rzeszowie* (The German Special Court in Rzeszów), 404, Urteil in der Strafsache gegen Stanisława Kornecka vom 19.04.1944, pp. 27–29.

<sup>24</sup> K. Graczyk, *Niemieckie sądy specjalne*, pp. 282–283.

<sup>25</sup> See B. Musiał, *Kto dopomoże*, p. 143.

Himmel mentioned above. Krüger, who was a gamekeeper and supervisor of Polish foresters, cooperated closely with the police, initiated pacifications, participated in murders and arson attacks on buildings. In July 1943, he was shot by a Home Army liquidation group. In 1949, the District Court in Radom sentenced Himmel to the death penalty, which was carried out (pp. 192–193). The stark imbalance between the vast number of victims and the few perpetrators held accountable is deeply unsettling. In 1944, as part of Operation “1005,” the Germans undertook systematic efforts to erase evidence of their atrocities by dismantling mass graves and incinerating exhumed bodies. These calculated operations were intended to obstruct any future attempts at exhumation, victim identification, or the establishment of the true scale of the crimes (p. 194).

The reviewed book is a compendium on German crimes against Poles who helped Jews in the Radom District and, more broadly, in rural Poland. The publication’s major strengths include its concise, accessible form, narrative style, and length, which does not discourage readers from engaging with it. It can be recommended to those who wish to explore the issue of German crimes in occupied Poland from 1939 to 1945 in greater depth.

The publication serves as both a memorial to the dozens of individuals brutally killed by motorised German military police for aiding Jews, and a tribute to the victims – an aspect that unquestionably reflects the author’s commendable intent.