



Illustration: Natalia Kulka

Homecoming

A case study

Bartłomiej Krupa

Abstract: The study concerns the homecoming story of a Jewish Holocaust survivor, Szlomo Himelfarb, who returned to his home town of Solec-upon-Vistula, and his murder by local policemen. It is based on the material of so-called *sierpniówki* [testimonies given in 1944–1946 before summary courts for the prosecution “of fascist crimes against the civilian population and traitors of the Polish Nation”]. In conclusion, the author points to other cases of murders committed immediately after the war in Iłża (Starachowice) District.

Keywords: Jews; Holocaust; Jewish property

To the homecomer home shows
– at least in the beginning – an unaccustomed face.
He believes himself to be in a strange country, a stranger among strangers
Alfred Schütz (Schütz, 1945, p. 369)

In memory of Szlomo Himelfarb

For several years, I have been examining the fate of Jews in the district of Starachowice during the Nazi occupation.¹ The area, located on the border between Mazowsze

¹ This text is part of a book being written on this topic. Originally, it was supposed to be included in a multi-authored publication, *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without end.

(Mazovia) and Małopolska (Lesser Poland) and called *powiat łżecki* (District of Łża)² in the interwar period, was part of the Kielce Province before the war.³ Today we might say that this nondescript, average district is in central Poland, but before the war it was western Poland. According to the 1931 census (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1938, p. 86), it encompassed 23 municipalities (including two urban municipalities, Wierzbnik and Łża), with a total population of 159,718. As on April 1, 1939 the district area was 1,835 sq. km, which translated into a population density of 88 people per sq. km. It was one of the less densely populated districts in the Kielce Province (where the average density was 120 people per sq. km), although it was still far behind some districts in the Lublin Province, with population densities of a mere 68 (Biłgoraj District) or even 61 people per sq. km (Radzyń [Podlaski] District), not to mention some eastern provinces (e.g. Polesie Region with its average population density of 31 people per sq. km).⁴

Before the war, the District of Łża was a typical rural area, populated primarily by people with little education; out of 113,778 residents aged ten or over, at least 43,115 were illiterate (nearly 38%), making it the area with the highest illiteracy rate in the entire province (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1938, p. 72). One factor contributing to this low level of education was the fact that only nine elementary (seven-year) schools operated in the District of Łża in 1926.⁵ A Roman Catholic religious affiliation prevailed among the residents.⁶ In the 1931 census, out of the entire population of 159,718, only 11,377 declared the Jewish faith (including 4,230 urban and 7,147 rural residents) (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1938, p. 32); this accounted for just over 7% of total population, below the average in Kielce Province (the latter amounting to over 10%, compared to just below 10% for Poland as a whole).⁷ 9,961 residents declared “the Jewish language” (Yiddish) to

Fate of Jews in selected districts of occupied Poland] (Grabowski & Engelking, 2018; in press at the time of writing this article), a product of the research grant *Jewish survival strategies in occupied Poland 1939-1945. Studies of selected counties*, which was conducted for many years by the Polish Center for Holocaust Research. On account of certain methodological differences in approaching this subject and the extensive size of my contribution, it is going to be published as a separate book.

- 2 In January 1942, the Germans issued an official prohibition on the use of the name *powiat łżecki*. Additionally, the locality of Wierzbnik was no longer a distinct legal entity and was included into Starachowice (see Młynarczyk, 2007, p. 71). In my text I use interchangeably the name “the District of Łża” and the name used in German documents (as the seat of local German authorities), i.e. “the District of Starachowice.”
- 3 By virtue of the Interim Law (Ustawa Tymczasowa) of August 2, 1919, five provinces were established on the territory of the former Kingdom of Poland, with seats in: Warszawa, Łódź, Kielce, Lublin and Białystok (see Swajdo, 2005, p. 42).
- 4 Statistics concerning population density after: *Mały rocznik statystyczny GUS* (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1939).
- 5 The schools were located in Solec-upon-Vistula (Solec nad Wisłą), Sienna, Lipsk, Ciepiałów, Tartów, Łża, Skarżysko, Wąchock and Wierzbnik (see Winiarczyk, 2002, p. 84).
- 6 A valuable description of the property of the Church in the early 20th century is offered in the extensive *Dekanat łżecki* by Rev. Jan Wiśniewski. Published in the series *Monumenta Dioecesis Sandomiriensis*, the book features excerpts from medieval and modern documents (ones related to foundations, economy, as well as letters, conferrals and so on) and a detailed account of the history and inventory of the twenty-five parochial and filial churches in the district (see Wiśniewski, 1909–1911).
- 7 According, in turn, to the 1921 census, 7.5% of the inhabitants of the district were Jews, making it 16th among the districts with the lowest proportion of Jews in the population across the entire former Congress Kingdom of Poland (see Wasiutyński, 1930, p. 13). This number clearly shrank in the early 20th century. In 1921, there were fewer Jews in the district (10,242) than in 1897 (11,512), when they made up 10.4% of the population. Wasiutyński explains this by the faster growth of the Christian population and Jewish migration abroad for economic reasons (Wasiutyński, 1930, p. 17). Additionally, Jews tended to gather in bigger cities, which the District of Łża did not have, although Wierzbnik did note a distinct growth in its Jewish population (135 Jews in the mid-19th century and 2,159 in 1921, accounting for 39.5% of the town's population). The Jewish population in Łża peaked towards

be their native tongue and 839 spoke Hebrew (amounting altogether to 10,800 persons), which constitutes 7% of the number of Polish speakers (148,225 residents) (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1938, p. 35). This domination was thus even more clear in linguistic terms. There were practically no other religious or linguistic minorities in the district.⁸

By choosing effective survival strategies and, most often, due to extraordinary luck and exceptional coincidences, around 1,000 (almost 9%) of the roughly 11,500 Jews who lived in the district in 1939 managed to survive the war. The greatest paradox is that the vast majority owed survival to... the Germans. The survivors were those sent to work camps, mainly in Starachowice. Those who fled the camps (like Roman Frister⁹) quickly found out that it was much more difficult to survive outside. Only a few dozen people in the district survived in hiding and amongst partisan troops. Their problems, however, did not cease after the liberation. This brief study presents the history of one of the survivors, Szlomo Himelfarb, also known as Jankiel and Chaim.

Szlomo Himelfarb returns to Solec

We do not know precisely how Szlomo Himelfarb made it through the occupation.¹⁰ What we do know is that he came from a well-to-do family who owned a townhouse in the market square of Solec-upon-Vistula, and that on Saturday of August 18, 1945 he returned “in tattered clothes and carrying a bundle on his back” (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Wrzochal Stanisław, May 10, 1951) to his house, where Jan Grącki (Grądzki or Groński) was now living. This is how Jan Małkowski from Solec remembered Himelfarb’s homecoming:

one day the news spread among the residents of Solec that a Jew who used to live in our town had returned. Many people ran to the market square to take a look at him, so I went along. I saw him: a middle-aged man with a beard, in a yarmulke and a grey coat, with two suitcases in his hands. They said he was going home. When he arrived, he stopped, put the suitcases on the ground, took the hat off and stood there bareheaded. At one point he raised his hand to his eyes – he was probably wiping away tears. He stood and watched, but he did not enter the house (The account of Jan Małkowski from Solec, as cited in Barański, 2009, p. 113).

the end of the 19th century (2,069 in 1897, accounting for 48% of the population); this number dropped later on (1,545 or 33.9%) (see Wasiutyński, 1930, p. 32).

8 572 people declared their native tongue to be German (under 0.4%), 46 people Ukrainian, 38 Russian, and a few individual respondents indicated other languages. This roughly corresponded to the respective numbers of Protestant and Orthodox believers in the district (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1938, pp. 32, 35). A colony of settlers in the village of Gozdawa n. Sienno was a significant center for the German population.

9 Roman Frister described his ordeal in memoirs entitled *Autoportret z blizną* [Self-portrait with a scar] (Frister, 1996).

10 Władysław Garbarczyk recalls in his testimony that Himelfarb “arrived from Ostrowiec because he had been displaced from Solec during the occupation and was hiding somewhere until the liberation” (IPN Ki 013/118, Witness interrogation report, May 18, 1951).

A certain Alfreda née Grącka (or Grądzka) and Marian Kosowski were having a wedding party in the house in question at that time. We can learn of the tragic fate of Himelfarb from the files of the investigation against Władysław Garbarczyk. The report from the interrogation of witness Stefan Prokop (born December 21, 1899) of January 20, 1950, written down by Marian Mroczek, an investigator of the District Public Security Office (PUBP) in Starachowice, reads as follows:

In 1946 (I do not remember the exact date) a citizen of Jewish extraction arrived in Solec, who was from Solec and possessed a house in Solec. Having arrived, he went to Pawelec Tomasz, residing in Solec, Tylna St., with whom he had a social relationship; he left his belongings which he had brought with him with Pawelec and went to his own house, where a shoemaker by the name of Kosowski lived, who was hosting his daughter's wedding party on that day. As the owner of the house, this Jewboy [Żydek] was kindly welcomed by Kosowski and invited to sit at the table. After one hour the Solec police [milicja] entered the wedding party and took him to the police station, where he was detained. In the evening, the policemen took this citizen to Pawelec, with whom he had left his belongings, and then he was detained again. At 10 o'clock in the evening, they took him to the pasture and shot him dead. I was an eyewitness to this event. The station commander in Solec was Garbasz [actually Garbarczyk] Władysław. At present, he lives in Solec, at Rynek St., and works for a meat cooperative. One policeman that took part in the above-mentioned murder was Wrzochal, I do not know his first name, currently living in Pietraska Kępa, municipality of Pietrawicz, district of Puławy. I do not know the name of the other policemen (IPN Ki 013/118, Investigation file in the case against Władysław Garbarczyk, son of Władysław, born August 7, 1917, and other suspects in the murder of a Polish citizen of Jewish nationality, perpetrated on August 19, 1945, l. 1).

The witness goes on to elaborate his account:

When the policemen were taking this Jewboy down the street, I was passing by and, seeing that the police were taking him to the gate, I approached him to have a conversation with him because I knew him well. The policemen did not let me talk to him, however, and took him to the station [...]. At 10 o'clock in the evening, the policemen, Wrzochal and the other one whose name I do not know, took the Jew to the street, 200 meters away from the station and shot him. This event was seen by me and three other persons whose names I do not know because it was dark and I could not see their faces, and I can only state that they were my neighbors, Loksarski [?], residing in Solec, at Zamkowa St., and his wife. When the policemen were taking the Jew out of custody, I was walking back from Kosowski's wedding party and I became interested in where they were taking him; I can confirm that he did not have on his person the belongings which he took from Pawelec to the station. Having been taken from the station, this Jew walked 200 meters and sat down refusing to walk further, and begging that they spare his life. The policemen wanted to take him further away, to the pasture, but the citizen did not want to walk on; that being so, Wrzochal, whose first name I do not remember, a policeman from the Solec station, currently living in Piotrowska Kępa, municipality of Pietrawicz, district of Puławy, took 2 shots with his K.B.K. gun, killing the Jew on the spot; the other policeman whose name I do not know stood by saying nothing. This fact can be confirmed by Loksarski [?] whose first name I do not know, living in Solec, at Zamkowa St. Having killed this Jew, the two policemen took him by the hands and threw him onto the pasture by the river, then they went to the station. The citizen lay there

for a period of 4 months [...]. After four months, when the river swelled, water carried the corpse of the Jew 100 meters away from the place where he lay before, and when the water in the river went down, crows ate the body, which can be confirmed by the above-mentioned witnesses. The station commander was Garbasz [actually Garbarczyk] Władysław who now lives in Solec, at Rynek St., and works for a meat cooperative (IPN Ki 013/118, Investigation file in the case against Władysław Garbarczyk, son of Władysław, born August 7, 1917, and other suspects in the murder of a Polish citizen of Jewish nationality, perpetrated on August 19, 1945, l. 1).¹¹

As we examine the files, we become familiar with further shocking details of this case. For instance Anna Kędzierska (born July 13, 1904), who was interrogated on February 9, 1950, says:

After the 1945 harvest (I do not remember the exact date), across the corridor from where I lived, namely in Solec in Rynek St., a neighbor's daughter, Grączek [actually Grącka or Grądzka] Alfreda got married. The parents of the maiden Grączek [actually Grącka or Grądzka] Alfreda lived in an post-Jewish [*pożydowski*] house, but I do not know that owner's name. At the wedding party a Polish citizen of Jewish nationality turned up who knows from where, whose name I do not know. At that time I was passing by the window of the house where the wedding party was, and people were saying there was a Jew at the wedding, so out of curiosity I stopped by the window to see him, what he looked like. There were more women standing at that window and looking at the wedding party and I stood with them. I spent some fifteen minutes at this window and when I was standing there I saw the former station commander of police [*milicja obywatelska*, MO] in Solec, who went by the name of Garbarczyk, along with the Jew and another militiaman whose name I do not know leave the party (IPN Ki 013/118, Witness interrogation report, February 9, 1950, Starachowice, Kędzierska Anna, born July 13, 1904 in Solec).

Kędzierska adds that people said later on that the Jew had been killed. What is particularly striking in her account is her "curiosity." The presence of a living Jew coming back to his house after the war becomes a local attraction, an event so incredible that the residents of Solec stop by at the window to look at the survivor like an exotic animal.

Perpetrators

It was not until March 1950 that the District Executive Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) in Starachowice agreed that the murder of "a Polish citizen of Jewish nationality" in August 1945 (not in 1946 as testified by Prokop) should be investigated (IPN Ki 013/118, Letter to the PUBP in Starachowice of March 13, 1950). The ex-commander of the police station in Solec, at the time a salesman at a store run by the peasant self-help association, Władysław Garbarczyk, admitted:

¹¹ The case files include an extensive three-page account including details such as that the event took place in the summer of 1946 [actually it was the summer of 1945] and that the Jew in question knew Tomasz Pawelec well before the war because "both of them were shoemakers."

As an ex-commander of the police [MO] station in Solec, I am aware of the fact that the former officer from my station, Michalec Władysław residing in Maruszów in the municipality of Lipsko [...] and Wrzochal Stanisław, residing in Kaliszany in the municipality of Kamień, district of Puławy, in collusion with a then thug from Solec, Śpiewak Aleksander, who is now somewhere in the Recovered Lands, in 1945, I do not remember the exact date, it was in summer as far as I can remember, killed in Solec a Jew whose name I do not know (IPN Ki 013/118, Garbarczyk's report of October 26, 1950).

It soon transpired that Garbarczyk was implicated in many more criminal cases, for instance the drowning in the Vistula of Wacław Dwojak from Sadkowice in the summer of 1945 (IPN Ki 013/118, Letter of the District MO Commander in Starachowice to the Head of the PUBP in Starachowice of November 4, 1950),¹² the murder of Mieczysław Lichocki (born September 7, 1923) at the police station in Solec (IPN Ki 013/118, Application by Marianna Lichocka (mother of the murdered Mieczysław) to the UB in Starachowice of March 29, 1951), and numerous robberies during the occupation.¹³ At that time, Władysław Michalec, a resident of Pyrzyce, was already incarcerated in Stargard Szczeciński for theft (IPN Ki 013/118, Report submitted by the PUBP Pyrzyce to the PUBP Starachowice on February 19, 1951 and Prisoner transfer request sent by the PUBP in Starachowice to the District Attorney in Starachowice of March 27, 1951), so a decision to detain Wrzochal and Garbarczyk was issued (IPN Ki 013/118, Detention decisions of March 15, 1951, Starachowice – Wrzochal Stanisław and Garbarczyk Władysław). Another significant factor in initiating the proceedings was the fact that, although they were both members of the Communist Party (PZPR), it was indicated in their profiles that “all people involved in this crime have already been dismissed from the MO” (IPN Ki 013/118, Description of the case involving the below-named, Starachowice, October 11, 1950). This leaves open the question of whether the murder case would have been investigated so eagerly had it involved people still holding public positions.¹⁴

The three of them, Garbarczyk, Michalec and Wrzochal, had elementary education. The ex-commander (born August 7, 1917) completed four years of school in Pawłowice. He then took seasonal jobs, and in 1939 he was conscripted to serve in the First Sapper Regiment in Modlin. At the beginning of the war he came back from the Bug region

12 Cf. also Report by Antoni Dwojak (brother of Wacław) to the Department of Security (UB) in Starachowice of March 23, 1951: “I do not remember the exact date on which in Sadkowice, at 12 o'clock at night, Garbarz [actually Garbarczyk] Władysław came with his gang (one cannot describe them any other way) and took my brother from home to lead them to Tarłów. They took him and killed him, no one knows what happened to him to this day.”

13 “During the German rule, when he transported the Jews across the Vistula, he would reach the Pietraski Cemetery, draw the gun and take from them the bundles they were carrying” (IPN Ki 013/118, Anonymous letter to the secretary of the Communist Party from 1951).

14 A separate study would be required to discuss the attitude of the emerging communist authorities to antisemitism in their own ranks. I will only note here that officials operating at the regional level frequently had a complicated or shady past. Jan Tomasz Gross, in *Neighbors*, in the chapter entitled *Social support for Stalinism*, formulated a similar hypothesis: “the natural allies of the Communist Party, on the local level, were people who had been compromised during the German occupation [...] in addition to drawing from such a principled and idealistic pool of supporters, twentieth-century totalitarianisms always used manpower of a different sort. Among their most valuable operatives and confidants there were always people devoid of all principles” (Gross, 2001, pp. 164–165). My previous experience with the documentation concerning the district I am interested in shows that this hypothesis is most likely justified, but further research would be required to confirm it.

and stayed with his parents in Kępa Piotrowska, where he found a job building the embankments of the Vistula. In winter 1942, he joined the People's Guard (GL) and in the beginning of the following year he fought in the partisan unit commanded by "Cień" ["Shadow"]. After the liberation, he returned to his home lands with an ex-commander of district MO in Starachowice, Władysław Równik, and took command of the Solec station. He held the office of commander for two years until 1947, when he was dismissed "due to illness," as he claimed (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Garbarczyk Władysław, March 15, 1951, Solec).

Władysław Michalec (born December 15, 1922) also completed four years of elementary school in Maruszowa. Until the beginning of the war he worked at his family farm of roughly 7 hectares in area. In 1943, he joined the partisan unit of the GL, commanded by "Brzoza" ("Birch") and later by "Wrzos" ("Heather" – Wacław Młynek). He worked for the MO in Solec from January until October 1945, when he left "because the father was ill" (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Michalec Władysław, April 1, 1951). He later lived in Ziębice and Pyrzyce, where he was arrested for theft in 1950.

Finally, there was Stanisław Wrzochal (born August 20, 1925), who completed five years of elementary school in Zęborzyn, in the district of Starachowice. Before the war, he lived in Kępa Piotrowicka and worked alongside his father for a mill owner by the name of Lamerit (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Wrzochal Stanisław, May 10, 1951). During the occupation, he was member of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR, the cell in Barciejowice, in the district of Puławy), and took odd jobs. He recalls the following: "When the front came, I was resettled to Maruszów in the municipality of Lipsko; this was around the time when my wife was killed by a shell. When I came back home after the resettlement, I found everything completely destroyed. Encouraged by Garbarczyk Władysław, I joined the ranks of the MO" (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Wrzochal Stanisław, May 10, 1951). Wrzochal admitted that although he was sent by Garbarczyk to the MO school in Kielce, he never reported for duty there and left for Gdańsk instead; and joined the MO again in Pruszcz Gdański.

Investigation

None of these men admitted to the murder of shoemaker Himelfarb. Garbarczyk completely denied his complicity in the murder and blamed Wrzochal, Michalec and a certain Śpiewak. The ex-commander supposedly learned about the whole event from other policemen in the fall of 1945. Asked why he had not held his subordinates responsible, he replied:

because I was afraid for my own life, not to get killed; for I thought that if they had committed such a crime, they must have had connections with a gang [...]. I would like to supplement my testimony with the fact that in order to get rid of Wrzochal and Michalec I wanted

to send them to school, for which they left the station, but they both deserted instead of going to the school (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Garbarczyk Władysław, March 15, 1951, Solec).

Allegedly, the main bellwether was Aleksander Śpiewak. After the war, Śpiewak was a member of the Freedom and Independence (WiN, an underground anti-communist organization), carried a gun and “once shot at the deputy station commander, Jóźwik Franciszek, through the said station’s window” (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Garbarczyk Władysław on March 15, 1951, Solec). Władysław Michalec testified that, in 1945, Śpiewak lived in the market square (where his mother had a pub), and that he had undoubtedly taken part in an attack on the police station in Solec in 1945 (IPN Ki 013/118, Witness interrogation report, Władysław Michalec, September 20, 1952). Nevertheless, Garbarczyk and Śpiewak were good friends who drank vodka together on a regular basis “at the restaurant of Śpiewakowa (Aleksander’s mother) [...] all day and all night long” (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Michalec Władysław, April 1, 1951). At the same time, as the interrogated Michalec adds bitterly, he and the deputy commander, Franciszek Jóźwik, had to defend the station against the gang’s attack.¹⁵ In his later testimony, Michalec says that the Jew was killed by Wrzochal “with a series from an MP 44 [machine gun]” when they reached a gorge leading to the ruins of the castle (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Michalec Władysław, June 26, 1951). Wrzochal, in turn, claimed that on that “Sunday in the evening” he came across the said Jew, who “was pushed around and yanked by several individuals from Solec whose names I do not remember” (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Wrzochal Stanisław, May 10, 1951) after he left the wedding party. Since he felt sorry for the Jew, Wrzochal invited him to the station and let him into the sleeping room. The next part of Wrzochal’s testimony needs to be quoted in its entirety:

In the street, I met the Station Commander Garbarczyk and notified him of a Jew whom I had brought from Kosowski’s wedding party and placed in the sleeping room. Garbarczyk did not manage to respond to my words because we were joined at this very moment by policeman Michalec Władysław and civilian Śpiewak Aleksander. Michalec turned to Commander Garbarczyk saying, “Commander, we will do this Jew in,” to which Garbarczyk responded by saying “do what you want as long as I do not have to worry.” Having been permitted by Garbarczyk to commit murder, Michalec and Śpiewak went to the Station, while I stayed with Garbarczyk in the street. After around 5 minutes I returned to the station and went to the sleeping room, where I found the bed of the Jew I had brought in empty. After around 15 minutes, policeman Michalec Władysław entered the sleeping room; one of his hands was covered with blood up to the elbow; he carried his service MP-i machine gun

15 The sources discussing the fight against the post-war underground, which was very active in that district that I am interested in, include the accounts of Tadeusz Zygadlewicz, *Walka z podziemiem zbrojnym na terenie powiatu Starachowice i Iłża w latach 1945–1946* [The fight against the militant underground in Starachowice and Iłża District 1945–1946] (IPN BU 2241/257, account no. 73) and Franciszek Świątek, *Wspomnienia kapitana z KWMO Kielce* [Recollections of a Kielce Province MO Headquarters captain] (IPN BU 2241/433). Zygadlewicz describes fights near Michałów (April 1945), a forester’s lodge in Sienno (spring 1946) and the story of the municipality of Krępa Kościelna and the police station in Lipsk, while Świątek writes about the story of the police station in Ciepielów. Both authors remark that after the initial quiet period the “gangs activated, beginning in April 1945 or so” (Świątek, p. 3). The nights were particularly dangerous.

on his back. He was with Śpiewak Aleksander, on whom I didn't see a gun. I asked Michalec what they had done with that Jew, and he replied that "we have killed him." When I pointed out to them that a murder had been committed, he told me not to talk but to come with them to hide the corpse. When at first I did not want to agree to that, Michalec threatened me by saying that I could tell on them and then they would do to me the same thing they did to the Jew. So threatened, not taking my service gun, I went with Michalec and Śpiewak to the crime scene located in the gorge near Solec which led towards a pasture by the Vistula River. Coming to the spot, I saw the individual of Jewish nationality whom I had met and brought to the station. He was lying face down with his chest shot through. Michalec ordered me to take this man by the legs and throw him into a water hole, and I replied that I would not manage. Then Śpiewak had the idea of putting the victim on my shoulders and so he and Michalec did, holding the corpse by the hands. Some 50 meters away from the murder site, there was a water hole; the three of us carried the corpse there and put him down beside it. Michalec took the dead man's shoes off, Śpiewak took off his clothes and we threw the corpse into the water in his underwear. I saw Śpiewak take the clothes and shoes home, after which I went back to the station and Michalec and Śpiewak stayed on the street. During breakfast on the following day I turned to Michalec saying that he and Śpiewak had made trouble; hearing that, Commander Garbarczyk told me to "shut my trap and say nothing." Since then, the murder has not been mentioned during my service at the station (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Wrzochal Stanisław, May 10, 1951).

It transpired during the confrontation of Wrzochal and Garbarczyk that they were distant relatives, but their complicity in the act was not determined (IPN Ki 013/118, Report from the confrontation of Stanisław Wrzochal and Władysław Garbarczyk on May 12, 1951).

Finally, Aleksander Śpiewak (born September 13, 1922 in Solec), owner of a butcher store, who after the war denied having a gun or belonging to any "prohibited organizations" (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Śpiewak Aleksander, April 16, 1946). In 1946, he testified:

I was in possession of a 7.65 mm gun which I deposited at the militia station in Solec in the fall of 1945, I do not remember the exact date. In December 1945, I was arrested by the District MO Headquarters in Starachowice on the charge that I had taken part in an attack on the MO Station in Solec in June 1945. After the investigation I was released because at the time of the attack I was away from home, as I was in the West. On April 14, I was apprehended for reasons I am not aware of, because I do not feel guilty of anything. Let me mention that I live in the building where the station in Solec is located, so, if I had perpetrated any offenses, the policemen from this station should have known (IPN Ki 013/118, Suspect interrogation report, Śpiewak Aleksander, April 16, 1946).

However, it follows from the testimony given by Śpiewak one year earlier that on June 3, 1945, he was recruited to the unit of "Kruk" ("Raven" – Józef Dziwiński), and in the woods near Solec he made an oath to faithfully serve his homeland, "destroy the enemy and fight for a democratic Poland" (IPN Ki 013/118, Aleksander Śpiewak's testimony of August 10, 1945). According to Śpiewak, the unit did not organize any lectures against the new government, the weapons were hidden in hideouts and he soon left and went

“to Germany to get clothes” (IPN Ki 013/118, Aleksander Śpiewak’s testimony of August 10, 1945). Śpiewak allegedly took part in the unit’s actions only once, “on June 2 [that is, one day prior to his alleged recruitment! – B.K.] in Papiernia.” It can be guessed from his rather chaotic testimony that by the mill in Papiernia, owned by a certain Magdzik, the troops of “Kruk” probably came across a rival gang “who were plundering [the mill], so it is unknown what they had plundered; we only took away meat, lard and sugar from them and they fled to the woods. We questioned the cart driver and he said that he was from Solecka Wola and that they had come to him in the evening, posing as policemen, and hired him as a carter” (IPN Ki 013/118, Aleksander Śpiewak’s testimony of August 10, 1945). In the investigation into Himelfarb’s killing, it was necessary to order a search for Śpiewak, since his address was unknown. His case was eventually considered separately (IPN Ki 013/118, Motion for preclusion from the case for a separate investigation, January 15, 1951). He was not detained until July 8, 1952, after the verdict had been passed on the other suspects (IPN Ki 013/118, Provisional arrest decision, July 18, 1952).

On the basis of witness testimonies, and in particular the account of Marian Kasprzycki, not retained in the case documentation, who

on that evening left the apartment of an acquaintance precisely at the moment when two policemen, for he only noticed that many, were walking from the market square towards the gorge bringing some individual, so he hid to see what would happen. When they entered the gorge he heard the words, “Commander, let me go, sir, I will go my way and you will go yours.” Kasprzycki guessed then that this must be the same citizen of Jewish nationality whom he, and many others, had seen in Solec that afternoon, and that one of the policemen was Commander Garbarczyk. When he heard the words, “Move forward, Jew,” he recognized the voice of convict Wrzochal. Shortly afterwards shots resounded which scared Kasprzycki, who fled. On the following day he saw the corpse of the same Himelfarb in the Krępianka Brook (IPN Ki 013/118, Verdict of the District Court in Kielce issued at local assizes in Radom, March 20, 1952),

an indictment was made against Wrzochal and Michalec for committing a crime under Art. 225.1 of the Criminal Code (IPN Ki 013/118, Indictment against Stanisław Wrzochal and Władysław Michalec), and an extension of the arrest of Władysław Garbarczyk, suspected of inciting murder, was requested (IPN Ki 013/118, Decision of provisional arrest of Władysław Garbarczyk, June 25, 1951).

Verdict

In the verdict passed on March 28, 1952, the Military District Court in Kielce ruled the following:

Wrzochal Stanisław, son of Antoni, Garbarczyk Władysław, son of Władysław, and Michalec Władysław, son of Władysław, are found guilty of colluding and taking the life of Himelfarb Szlojma, in Solec on August 19, 1945, while servicing as officers of the local MO Station;

[additionally, Wrzochal] left his position in order to permanently evade military duty (IPN Ki 013/118, Verdict of the District Court in Kielce issued at local assizes in Radom, March 20, 1952).

The reasons for the judgement read that

all the three convicted individuals, hateful of citizens of Jewish nationality and hoping to gain money or else valuables, since they saw Himelfarb's full rucksack, resolved to shoot him. [...] Although already in 1945 according to public knowledge it was universally claimed that the murder of Himelfarb was committed by "the Police [*Milicja*]," the convicted managed to divert attention and suspicion of committing this heinous crime away from themselves for a relatively long time (IPN Ki 013/118, Verdict of the District Court in Kielce issued at local assizes in Radom, March 20, 1952).

As a consequence

– Stanisław Wrzochal was sentenced to death and permanent loss of public rights and honorary civil rights on the basis of Article 225.1 of the Criminal Code; his sentence was subsequently changed to 15 years in prison (Art. 6.1.4 of Act on Amnesty of February 22, 1947), loss of rights for five years and forfeiture of property;

– Władysław Garbarczyk was sentenced to fifteen years in prison and loss of public rights for five years, the sentence was subsequently reduced by one-third to ten years;

– Władysław Michalec was sentenced to ten years in prison, which was subsequently reduced by one-third to six years and eight months in prison.

Wrzochal, along with his lawyer and the lawyers of Michalec and Garbarczyk, appealed this sentence, pointing to contradictions in witness testimonies; nevertheless, on April 25, 1952, the Supreme Military Court in Warsaw dismissed their motion, which it justified by saying that during the trial, "the line of defense of each of them was to demonstrate that he was merely a passive witness to the crime perpetrated by the other two convicts", and that "there is no doubt whatsoever about the guilt of the convicted" (IPN Ki 013/118, Decision of the Supreme Military Court of April 25, 1952).

Aleksander Śpiewak was tried separately, and I did not manage to find information about the verdict he was given. Yet the list of his further cases is impressive, as evidenced by the request for information submitted to Department VI of Bureau "C" of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs in Warsaw (IPN Ki 013/118, Request for information of Provincial MO Headquarters in Kielce submitted to Department VI of Bureau "C" of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs in Warsaw, June 4, 1970). As well as being tried for Himelfarb's murder under Art. 225.1 of the Criminal Code, he was convicted of theft and insult at least five times, and sentenced, in chronological order, to 10 months,¹⁶ one year,¹⁷ eight

16 By verdict of the Wrocław City Court of June 19, 1959, under Art. 1.1 of the decree of March 4, 1953, "Whoever steals, misappropriates, extorts or otherwise seizes public property, is subject to imprisonment for one to five years" (IPN Ki 013/118, Request for information of Provincial MO Headquarters in Kielce submitted to Department VI of Bureau "C" of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs in Warsaw, June 4, 1970).

17 KDMO Wrocław I, register no. 3386/56; for theft for one year (ibid.).

months,¹⁸ seven months¹⁹ and ten months.²⁰ He was also sought by the Lipsko District MO Station for failure to pay child support (Art. 201.2 of the Criminal Code).

* * *

What conclusions can be drawn from these events and the verdicts passed? Did the described case stem from “ordinary” antisemitism combined with the “simplest” profit motive? After all, this was mainly about the rucksack, which may be treated as a symbol of folk beliefs about and cultural imagery of the mythical Jewish gold. However, can one even speak about “ordinary” antisemitism after the Holocaust? Is this murder of a survivor coming home not a continuation of the *Endlösung*, or at least evidence that it was approved of? What does the long period (seven years!) between the crime and the prosecution and verdict show? Is it the inefficiency of the post-war administration, or maybe indifference of the local society? In reality, no one was interested in clarifying the case. A further disincentive to seek justice for the victim was the fact that his house was now inhabited by Poles, who certainly treated his homecoming as a threat to their newly acquired possessions.²¹

The murder of Szlomo Himelfarb is like a lens showing all the dangers that awaited survivors after the end of the war, at the time of “great fear,” as Maciej Zaremba named it.²² Yet in the case of the murderers, the fear was mainly an irrational anxiety that they might lose newly acquired goods, whereas in the case of victims, it was a fully justified fear for their own lives. The very return of the latter to their abandoned family homes was far from psychologically easy, as reconstructed by Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska and Alina Skibińska (Adamczyk-Garbowska, 2007; Skibińska, 2011), among others. In the case described here, however, we are dealing with an extremely dramatic event in which, as Andrzej Żbikowski put it, Polish neighbors “neither expected nor wanted the Jews to come home” (Żbikowski, 2011, p. 72). A pre-war neighbor of the residents of Solec-upon-Vistula was murdered in front of them, and even though his body was in plain view for a long time after the murder, seven years had to pass before the guilty parties were brought to justice.

Himelfarb’s death confirms the observations of various scholars that the key motivations for the post-war murders of Jews included plunder, unwillingness to give back stolen property and antisemitic operations by armed underground troops, rather than

18 Kamieniec Żąbkowicki Railroad MO Headquarters 1072/58 under Art. 132 of the Criminal Code, following the so-called Makarewicz’s Code (in force until 1969 and subsequently replaced with Andrejew’s Code) for insulting a public official – eight months in prison, suspended for four years (ibid.).

19 Lipsko MO Station, register no. 643/61; for theft (ibid.).

20 Wodzisław Śl[ąski] MO Station, under Art. 57.1 of the Criminal Code: “Whoever seizes movable property from another person, with the intention to appropriate it for their individual use, is subject to imprisonment for up to 5 years” (ibid.).

21 The matters of “post-Jewish” property (the very term, alongside that of “post-German” goods, has a special nature, as indicated by numerous scholars) are more extensively discussed in studies collected in *Klucze i kasa* (Grabowski & Libionka, 2014).

22 I am referring here to the title of the famous monograph by M. Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys* [Great fear. Poland 1944–1947. Popular reactions to crisis] (Zaremba, 2012).

political factors.²³ In his interesting doctoral dissertation entitled *Dom, którego nie ma* [The house that is not], Łukasz Krzyżanowski deems the following issues to be essential to understanding the everyday life of Jewish survivors from Radom: the violence to which they were exposed, rebuilding social bonds and attempts at reclaiming their property (Krzyżanowski, 2015).²⁴

However, the deep cultural foundations of these murders also have to be borne in mind, such as accusations of treason, the persistent belief in Jewish richness, and the peculiar sense of justice developed by the Poles. Taking riches away from Jews was probably viewed as compensation for the (imaginary!) wrongs suffered at their hands. That is why, in a time of anomy of political structures in which the cultural structures remained unchanged, no one stood up for the victims. All of this produced a genuinely explosive mix, amongst which it is impossible to indicate a single decisive trigger. All studies on this topic that have been published in Poland since the 1990s have tried to deal with this problem. Given the space limitations of this article, I can only mention these elements.

Other murders – Wąchock and Wierzbnik

The Kielce region (Kielecczyzna) has an exceptionally infamous record of murdering Holocaust survivors. From September 1944 until December 1946, nearly one-third of all post-war murders of Jews were committed there (even excluding the victims of the Kielce Pogrom) (Engel, 1998, pp. 66–67).

In the District of Iłża we know of at least several documented cases of murders of returning Jews. Several people were killed in assaults in Wąchock, which is located precisely on the opposite side of the district. We learned about them mainly from Efraim Wajnsztajn (born 1909) from Wąchock, a bookkeeper, who fled the camp in Starachowice to join partisan troops and wrote down his account in Yiddish in Łódź on June 4, 1945, shortly after the events.²⁵ Wajnsztajn writes:

After the occupation I came out of the woods with my cousin, Chaim Binsztok, and five companions. We lived in our family town of Wąchock. After three weeks, several Home Army soldiers came to us at night. [...] Binsztok and Kornwaser escaped when they noticed that the visitors were carrying guns. There were seven people left in the room. [...] They asked us where the others were. We lied that they had gone to fetch some water. [...] I noticed that there were many armed attackers around the house. [...] They demanded that the others

23 This is emphasized by the above-quoted Andrzej Żbikowski and, for instance, David Engel (Engel, 1998). Similar conclusions are drawn also by Adam Kopciowski (Kopciowski, 2007). Having analyzed 118 cases of post-war murders of Jews, Kopciowski determined that 80% of them were motivated by racism or robbery, and only 20% were underpinned by political motives.

24 I had access to the typescript, courtesy of the author.

25 AŻIH 301/215, Account of Efraim Wajnsztajn. Hyman Flancbaum also bore witness to his two comrades having been murdered in Wąchock after the liberation. He himself managed to hide in the attic. See VHA 9113, Account of Hyman Flancbaum.

come back; they wanted to kill all nine of us, not to leave a trace of our existence. I told them to return the next day, then they would meet those two as well. They told me that the next day it would be too late. I felt both hot and cold when I heard them say that. I winked at my men to leave the apartment one by one. [...] The hooligans did not interfere. [...] When all of my companions were gone, I ran away, too, and they took everything from the apartment. [...] I left for Łódź after this incident. [...] On March 19, I returned to Wąchock to fetch my companions. On the same evening we were attacked for the second time by the same perpetrators. Two people, Josef Wajsblum and Mendel Brit, who had just come back from Auschwitz, were shot. [...] After this murder we left the town (AŻIH 301/215, Account of Efraim Wajnsztajn, trans. after Grochowska, 2011, p. 18).

The witness also gives an account about his cousin, who had to go back to Wąchock

to take back the house we both owned. While in Wierzbnik, eight kilometers away from Wąchock [...] he filed his case with the court. The case was to be tried on Friday, May 30, 1945. [...] I came to Wierzbnik and went to talk to the Jews. They told me that on Tuesday he had gone to Wąchock to get the deed that needed to be presented to the court from the Municipal Office. He wanted to return to Wierzbnik on the same day [...] because he was afraid to stay in Wąchock. He went to the railroad station. The murderers were already waiting for him and shot him there. After the first bullet, which injured him, Chaim Binsztok tried to escape but he was unable to run far away. The murderer came up to him and killed him on the spot (AŻIH 301/215, Account of Efraim Wajnsztajn, trans. after Grochowska, 2011, p. 18).

The events in Wąchock and Wajnsztajn's account laid the foundations for a superb feature article by Magdalena Grochowska, entitled *W szczelinie* [In a crevice] (Grochowska, 2011). The author writes about the meaningful silence surrounding Jewish issues, and the fear of losing the buildings that had been appropriated by Poles in the town. When directly asked about the murder at the railroad station, the local priest replied: "I do not believe that people harbor such dreadful reflexes. After the war, these situations were provoked. After all, Poles saved great numbers of Jews. I am in favor of seeking the truth" (trans. after Grochowska, 2011, p. 18). Kazimierz Winiarczyk, a popularizer of the history of Wąchock whose writings fail to remark on these issues, said:

I've heard something [...] but I do not want to go into these kinds of details. I am interested in positive things. There were no conflicts in the interwar period here, no rankling grudges that would impinge on Polish-Jewish relations (trans. after Grochowska, 2011, p. 18).

The most likely same events (different dates are given) were addressed by other scholars as well. On the basis of the above account, Aleksandra Bańkowska, Agnieszka Jarzębowska and Magdalena Siek (Bańkowska, Jarzębowska, & Siek, 2009) write, for instance, that during an attack by "Home Army troops" on a house in Wąchock on March 19, 1945, Josef Wajsblum (or Wajsberg) and Mendel Brit were murdered; and on May 26, 1945, Chaim Binsztok was murdered when attending to matters related to his property. Other sources were used by Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki when writing his extremely biased and specious, albeit posing as objective, study (Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, 2005),²⁶

²⁶ The most important thing is that Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki subconsciously, but quite indisputably, makes the assumption that not only was the post-war fighting morally unambiguous, but that some murders of Jews were

in which he mentions three Jews having been killed by the unit of Stanisław Skorupka, “Smrek” (“Spruce”), in the first half of 1945 (IPN Wa 0615/98, Characteristic of the unit of Stanisław “Smrek” Skorupka, l. 5, as cited in Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, 2005, p. 260).²⁷ The same author wrote also about a Jewish man having been killed “by several individuals” probably in Małomierzyce in the evening of June 14 (IPN Wa 0296/28, Vol. 3, WUBP ten-day report for the Kielce Province, June 10–20, 1945).

We come across another handwritten, succinct but poignant account similar to Wajnsztajn’s in Wierzbnik (part of present-day Starachowice). Hersz Lipsztejn (born 1915), a painter, testified as follows:

On the 18th day of April 1945, as I was riding home to Wierzbnik, I noticed a freshly dug grave in the Jewish cemetery outside the town. After I returned home, I went to see it out of curiosity. As I entered the cemetery, I spotted two corpses lying next to the grave. I recognized the bodies of two Jews who had come back from the camp in Auschwitz only a week before. Later on, I learned that Brit and Wajsberg (these were the names of the two victims), at around eight o’clock in the evening, had returned to the house where they lived and gone to bed. Home Army troops found them in bed and shot them dead. In the morning, the corpses of the unfortunate victims were found by other Jews who had managed to flee and escape the same fate. The head of one corpse had been shot through, and the other victim had been shot in the chest. The bodies were buried by Poles in a fraternal grave in the Jewish cemetery (AŻIH 301/7265, Account of Hersz Lipsztejn).

In the article titled *Patterns of anti-Jewish violence in Poland, 1944–1946*, David Engel refers to material in Central Archives of Modern Records (AAN) and mentions the killing of two Jewish women and two children in the same town on June 6, 1945 (AAN-MAP 786, item 20, Descriptions of some murders and robberies perpetrated against Polish citizens of Jewish nationality, after Engel, 1998, p. 76). Also, Chairman of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP) and parliamentary deputy Emil Sommerstein said in his speech at the eight session of the Homeland National Council on July 21, 1945, that two people had perished in Wierzbnik on June 15, followed by another on June 17 (*Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z posiedzeń Krajowej*

plainly justified (!), while others were the product of “provocations and manipulations by the officers of security services” (Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, 2005, p. 227). This can already be seen in how the research objectives were formulated: “To distinguish between the cases of genuine threats faced by the underground due to such contacts [between Jewish communities and the Soviets or security services – B.K.] and mistaken identification [of such cases] is a serious research challenge” (Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, 2005, p. 252) and “the basic issue is to determine whether the individuals who participated in it were subordinates in underground structures with broader organizational ties (NIE, DSZ, WiN, NSZ, NZZ), or the responsibility for the ‘action’ should be attributed to the so-called loose (‘wild’) individuals” (Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, 2005, p. 252). Only the latter cases, killing those who “had nothing to do with the intelligence network of the repressive authorities [...] deserve to be unanimously condemned” (Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, 2005, p. 253). It is implied that other cases do not! The very formulation of this line of reasoning shows the intention of justifying certain murders (although the author uses other names, for instance, “prevention of a threat”). Thus, when Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki writes: “Research should determine whether we are dealing here with liquidation actions carried out by underground hit squads (patrols) due to an identified danger, or whether these were unauthorized acts of ‘loose groups’ driven by antisemitic motives, or simply criminal acts by ordinary criminals” (Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, 2005, p. 263), one can say that whether or not killers were members of the “underground” is of the same significance as whether a murder was committed by an “ordinary” bandit or a member of a gang. This does not change the fate of the victims in the least.

27 Two cases are referred to here, one in Starachowice on April 4, 1945, and another one in Wąchock on May 12 (or on April 4 and June 21 in Wąchock). The author mentions Chaim Binsztok among the victims, which is how we know that the same event is being discussed.

Rady Narodowej z 21, 22, 23 lipca 1945 r. sesja VIII [Shorthand report of sessions of the Homeland National Council of July 21, 22 and 21, 1945; 8th session], 1945, col. 80).²⁸

In lieu of a conclusion

Alina Cała, who conducted her questionnaire surveys in a slightly different area in the 1980s,²⁹ wrote that whenever she asked about post-war violence against Jews in her surveys, the answers were invariably affirmative. Nevertheless, many issues have not been written about so far.³⁰ Cała wrote: “the results were astonishing, confirming the existence of this phenomenon in all the localities surveyed” (Cała, 1995, p. 215). In the second edition of her study, issued originally in 1992, she added that, while writing this book, she “did not expect that the post-war violence against Jews might also have occurred elsewhere. Today we know that secret murders and anti-Jewish acts were relatively widespread in 1945–47” (Cała, 2005, p. 184). Therefore, it transpires that the timeframe of the fight for survival in an extremely hostile environment should probably be extended to encompass the post-war period, and different survivors’ dilemmas, including the fundamental decision of what choice to make: stay in Poland or leave the country? That, however, is quite a different story.

Archive materials

1. Instytut Pamięci Narodowej [Institute of National Remembrance]

A. File reference: IPN Ki 013/118

– Akt oskarżenia przeciwko Stanisławowi Wrzochalowi i Władysławowi Michalcowi, czerwiec 1951 rok [Indictment against Stanisław Wrzochal and Władysław Michalec, June 1951].

– Akta śledztwa w spr. p-wko Władysławowi Garbarczykowi, s. Władysława, ur. 07. VIII. 1917 r. i innym, podejrzanych o zabójstwo obywatela polskiego narodowości żydowskiej dokonanego w dniu 19.VIII.1945 r. [Investigation file in the case against Władysław Garbarczyk, son of Władysław, born August 7, 1917, and other suspects in the murder of a Polish citizen of Jewish nationality perpetrated on August 19, 1945].

²⁸ Complete text of Sommerstein’s speech is also available in “Dos Naje Lebn” of July 31, 1945, pp. 2–3.

²⁹ “This study is based on questionnaire surveys conducted in 1975–1978, and 1984 in southeastern and eastern Poland. These surveys were made in villages and towns in the following provinces: Krosno, Rzeszów, Przemyśl, Zamość, Chełm, Bielsk Podlaski, and Łomża” (Cała, 1995, pp. 9–10).

³⁰ Among the “case studies” that have been described, it is worth mentioning the article by Dariusz Libionka *The life story of Chaim Hirszman. Remembrance of the Holocaust and reflections on postwar Polish-Jewish relations* (Libionka, 2006) and the studies by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir from the book *Pogrom cries* [in particular: *The trial of Tadeusz Maj. The history of AL Unit “Swit” in the Kielce Region* (Tokarska-Bakir, 2018b)]. See also: Bańkowska et al., 2009; Kwiek, 2013; Skibińska, 2007. To a large extent this issue is also the topic of famous books placing murder incidents in broader contexts, namely *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* by Jan Tomasz Gross (Gross, 2007) and the above-mentioned *Wielka trwoga* by Marcin Zaremba (Zaremba, 2012). I discuss them in greater detail in: Krupa, 2014. Last but not least, the last *opus magnum* by Professor Joanna Tokarska-Bakir needs to be mentioned, the two-volume study entitled *Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* [Under a curse. A social portrait of the Kielce Pogrom] (Tokarska-Bakir, 2018a), where the background of the pogrom in Kielce is reconstructed with unbelievable, and admirable, pedantry.

- Anonimowy list do sekretarza partii z 1951 r. [Anonymous letter to the secretary of the Communist Party from 1951].
- Charakterystyka sprawy niżej wymienionych, Starachowice 11.X.1950 r. [Description of the case involving the below-named, Starachowice, October 11, 1950].
- Doniesienie Antoniego Dwojaka (brata Wacława) do UB w Starachowicach z dn. 23.III.1951 r. [Report by Antoni Dwojak (brother of Wacław) to the Department of Security (UB) in Starachowice of March 23, 1951].
- Meldunek Garbarczyka z 26.X.1950 r. [Garbarczyk's report of October 26, 1950].
- Meldunek PUBP Pyrzyce do PUBP Starachowice z 19.II.51 r. [Report submitted by the PUBP Pyrzyce to the PUBP Starachowice on February 19, 1951].
- Pismo do PUBP w Starachowicach z dn. 13.III.50 r. [Letter to the PUBP in Starachowice of March 13, 1950].
- Pismo Kom. Pow. MO w Starachowicach do Szefa PUBP w Starachowicach z dn. 4.XI.1950 r. [Letter of the District MO in Starachowice to the Head of the PUBP in Starachowice of November 4, 1950].
- Podanie Marianny Lichockiej (matki zamordowanego Mieczysława) do UB w Starachowicach z dn. 29.III.1951 [Application by Marianna Lichocka (mother of the murdered Mieczysław) to the UB in Starachowice of March 29, 1951].
- Postanowienia o zatrzymaniu z 15.III.1951 Starachowice – Wrzochal Stanisław i Garbarczyk Władysław [Detention decisions of March 15, 1951, Starachowice – Wrzochal Stanisław and Garbarczyk Władysław].
- Postanowienie Najwyższego Sądu Wojskowego z dn. 25 kwietnia 1952 r. [Decision of the Supreme Military Court of April 25, 1952].
- Postanowienie o tymczasowym aresztowaniu Władysława Garbarczyka z dn. 25 VI 1951 r. [Decision of provisional arrest of Władysław Garbarczyk of June 25, 1951].
- Postanowienie o tymczasowym aresztowaniu z dn. 18 lipca 1952 r. [Provisional arrest decision of July 18, 1952].
- Prośba Komendy Wojewódzkiej MO w Kielcach o udzielenie informacji skierowanej [sic] do Wydziału VI Biura "C" MSW w Warszawie z dn. 4 czerwca 1970 r. [Request of Provincial MO Headquarters in Kielce for information submitted to Department VI of Bureau "C" of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs in Warsaw, June 4, 1970].
- Prośba PUBP w Starachowicach do Prokuratora Pow. w Starachowicach o przekazanie więźnia z dn. 27.III.1951 r. [Prisoner transfer request sent by the PUBP in Starachowice to the District Attorney in Starachowice of March 27, 1951].
- Protokół konfrontacji Stanisława Wrzochala i Władysława Garbarczyka w dniu 12 maja 1951 r. [Report from the confrontation of Stanisław Wrzochal and Władysław Garbarczyk on May 12, 1951].
- Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego – Garbarczyka Władysława w dn. 15 marca 1951, Solec [Suspect interrogation report, Garbarczyk Władysław, March 15, 1951, Solec].
- Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego – Michalca Władysława w dn. 1 kwietnia 1951 r. [Suspect interrogation report, Michalec Władysław, April 1, 1951].
- Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego – Michalca Władysława w dn. 26 czerwca 1951 r. [Suspect interrogation report, Michalec Władysław, June 26, 1951].
- Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego – Śpiewaka Aleksandra w dn. 16 kwietnia 1946 r. [Suspect interrogation report, Śpiewak Aleksander, April 16, 1946].
- Protokół przesłuchania podejrzanego – Wrzochala Stanisława w dn. 10 maja 1951 r. [Suspect interrogation report, Wrzochal Stanisław, May 10, 1951].
- Protokół przesłuchania świadka – Władysława Michalca z dn. 20 IX 1952 r. [Witness interrogation report, Władysław Michalec, September 20, 1952].

- Protokół przesłuchania świadka z dn. 18 maja 1951 r. [Witness interrogation report, May 18, 1951].
- Protokół przesłuchania świadka z dn. 9 lutego 1950, Starachowice, Kędzierska Anna, ur. 13 lipca 1904 r. w Solcu [Witness interrogation report of February 9, 1950, Starachowice, Kędzierska Anna, born July 13, 1904 in Solec].
- Wniosek o wyłączenie ze sprawy do odrębnego prowadzenia śledztwa z dn. 15 I 1951 r. [Motion for preclusion from the case for a separate investigation of January 15, 1951].
- Wyrok Sądu Rejonowego w Kielcach na sesji wyjazdowej w Radomiu z dn. 20 III 1952 r. [Verdict of the District Court in Kielce issued at local assizes in Radom, March 20, 1952].
- Zeznanie Aleksandra Śpiewaka z dn. 10 sierpnia 1945 r. [Aleksander Śpiewak's testimony of August 10, 1945].

B. Other documents:

- Charakterystyka oddziału Stanisława Skorupki "Smrek" [Characteristic of the unit of Stanisław "Smrek" Skorupka], IPN Wa 0615/98.
- Franciszek Świątek, *Wspomnienia kapitana z KWMO Kielce* [Recollections of a Kielce Province MO Headquarters captain], IPN BU 2241/433.
- Sprawozdanie dekadowe WUBP z województwa kieleckiego za okres od 10 do 20 VI 1945 r. [WUBP ten-day report for the Kielce Province, June 10–20, 1945], IPN Wa 0296/28, vol. 3.
- Tadeusz Zygadlewicz, *Walka z podziemiem zbrojnym na terenie powiatu Starachowice i Iłża w latach 1945–1946* [The fight against the militant underground in Starachowice and Iłża District 1945–1946], IPN BU 2241/257, account no. 73.

2. Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute]

- Relacja Efraima Wajnsztajna [Account of Efraim Wajnsztajn], ref. AŻIH 301/215.
- Relacja Hersza Lipsztejna [Account of Hersz Lipsztej], ref. AŻIH 301/7265.

3. Archiwum Akt Nowych [Central Archives of Modern Records]

- Opisy niektórych mordów i rabunków dokonywanych na obywatelach polskich narodowości żydowskiej [Descriptions of some murders and robberies perpetrated against Polish citizens of Jewish nationality], AAN–MAP 786, item 20.

4. Visual History Archive

- Relacja Hymana Flancbauma [Account of Hyman Flancbaum], ref. VHA 9113.

References

Adamczyk-Garbowska, M. (2007). *Patterns of return: Survivors' postwar journeys to Poland*. Washington, DC: USHMM.

Bańkowska, A., Jarzębowska, A., & Siek, M. (2009). Morderstwa Żydów w latach 1944–1946 na terenie Polski na podstawie kwerendy w zbiorze 301 (Relacje z Zagłady) w Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego. *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, 231(3), 356–367.

Barański, C. (Ed.). (2009). *Ziemia Lipska: Wybrane zagadnienia z dziejów* (Vol. 3). Sandomierz: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne i Drukarnia.

Cała, A. (1995). *The image of the Jew in Polish folk culture* (M. Jagendorf, Trans.). Jerusalem: Magnes Press.

Cała, A. (2005). *Wizerunek Żyda w polskiej kulturze ludowej* (2nd ed.). Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa.

Engel, D. (1998). Patterns of anti-Jewish violence in Poland 1944–1946. *Yad Vashem Studies*, 26, 43–85.

- Frister, R.** (1996). *Autoportret z bliźną*. Warszawa: Świat Książki.
- Główny Urząd Statystyczny.** (1938). *Drugi powszechny spis ludności z dn. 9 XII 1931 r.: Mieszkania i gospodarstwa domowe: Ludność: Stosunki zawodowe: Województwo kieleckie*. Retrieved December 27, 2018, from <http://sbc.wbp.kielce.pl/publication/8589#info> (Statystyka Polski, seria C, zeszyt 86).
- Główny Urząd Statystyczny.** (1939). *Mały rocznik statystyczny GUS, rok X*. Retrieved December 27, 2018, from <http://mbc.cyfrowemazowsze.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=14498&from=publication>
- Grabowski, J., & Engelking, B. (Eds.)**. (2018). *Dalej jest noc: Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*. Warszawa: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów.
- Grabowski, J., & Libionka, D. (Eds.)**. (2014). *Klucze i kasa: O mieniu żydowskim w Polsce pod okupacją niemiecką i we wczesnych latach powojennych 1939–1950*. Warszawa: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów.
- Grochowska, M.** (2011, January 29). W szczelinie. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, p. 18.
- Gross, J. T.** (2001). *Neighbors: The destruction of the Jewish community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gross, J. T.** (2007). *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An essay in historical interpretation*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Kopciowski, A.** (2007). Zajścia antyżydowskie na Lubelszczyźnie w pierwszych latach po drugiej wojnie światowej. *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, 3, 178–207.
- Krupa, B.** (2014). Historia krytyczna i jej "gabinet cieni": Historiografia polska wobec Zagłady 2003–2013. *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, 10(2), 721–767.
- Krzyżanowski, Ł.** (2015). *Dom, którego nie ma: Powroty ocalałych z Zagłady do miasta średniej wielkości w Polsce (1945–1950)* (Doctoral thesis). Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa.
- Kwiek, J.** (2013). Zabójstwa ludności żydowskiej w Krakowskim w latach 1945–1947: Fakty i mity. *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, 2013(4), 679–695.
- Libionka, D.** (2006). The life story of Chaim Hirszman: Remembrance of the Holocaust and reflections on postwar Polish-Jewish relations. *Yad Vashem Studies*, 34, 219–248.
- Młynarczyk, J. A.** (2007). *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945*. Darmstadt: wbg Academic.
- Schütz, A.** (1945). The homecomer. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50(5), 369–376. <https://doi.org/10.1086/219654>
- Skibińska, A.** (2007). Powroty ocalałych 1944–1950. In B. Engelking, J. Leociak, & D. Libionka (Eds.), *Provincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (pp. 505–599). Warszawa: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów.
- Skibińska, A.** (2011). Powroty ocalałych i stosunek do nich społeczeństwa polskiego. In F. Tych & M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (Eds.), *Następstwa zagłady Żydów: Polska 1944–2010* (pp. 39–70). Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.
- Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, R.** (2005). Podziemie antykomunistyczne wobec Żydów po 1945 roku – wstęp do problematyki (na przykładzie województwa kieleckiego). In J. Wijaczka & G. Miernik (Eds.), *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich: Polityka – gospodarka – kultura – społeczeństwo* (pp. 249–277). Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej.
- Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z posiedzeń Krajowej Rady Narodowej z 21, 22, 23 lipca 1945 r. sesja VIII.** (1945). Warszawa.
- Swajdo, J.** (2005). *Między Wisłą a Pilicą: Dzieje podziałów administracyjnych w rejonie kielecko-radomskim do 1975 roku*. Kielce: Agencja JP.
- Tokarska-Bakir, J.** (2018a). *Pod klątwą: Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* (Vols. 1-2). Warszawa: Czarna Owca.

Tokarska-Bakir, J. (2018b). The trial of Tadeusz Maj: The history of AL Unit “Świt” in the Kielce Region. In J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Pogrom cries: Essays in Polish-Jewish history 1939–1946* (pp. 69–114). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Wasiutyński, B. (1930). *Ludność żydowska w Polsce w wiekach XIX i XX: Studium statystyczne*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Kasy im. Mianowskiego Instytutu Popierania Nauki.

Winiarczyk, K. (2002). *Kalendarium Wąchockie*. Wąchock: Wydawnictwo Stachurski.

Wiśniewski, J. (1909–1911). *Dekanat iłżecki*. Radom: Druk. i Lit. “Jan Kanty Trzebiński”.

Zaremba, M. (2012). *Wielka trwoga: Polska 1944–1947: Ludowa reakcja na kryzys*. Kraków: Żnak.

Żbikowski, A. (2011). Morderstwa popełniane na Żydach w pierwszych latach po wojnie. In F. Tych & M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (Eds.), *Następstwa zagłady Żydów: Polska 1944–2010* (pp. 71–94). Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.

Powrót. Studium przypadku

Abstrakt: Studium dotyczy historii powrotu ocalałego z Zagłady Żyda – Szlomo Himelfarba – do jego rodzinnego miasteczka Solec nad Wisłą i jego zabójstwa przez miejscowych milicjantów. Oparty jest na analizie materiałów tzw. sierpniówek. W zakończeniu autor wskazuje również na inne przypadki mordów w powiecie iłżeckim tuż po wojnie.

Wyrażenia kluczowe: Żydzi; Zagłada; mienie żydowskie



Article No. 1731

DOI: 10.11649/slh.1731

Citation: Krupa, B. (2018). Homecoming: A case study. *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, 2018(7).
<https://doi.org/10.11649/slh.1731>

This is the translation of the original article entitled *Powrót. Studium przypadku*, which was published in *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, 2018(7).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 PL License, which permits redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, provided that the article is properly cited.
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/pl/>

© The Author(s) 2018

© To English translation: Katarzyna Matschi, 2018

Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

Author: Bartosz Krupa, Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

Correspondence: bartlomiej.krupa@ibl.waw.pl

The work has been prepared from statutory funds of the Institute of Literary Research.

Competing interests: The author has declared he has no competing interests.