

On the So-called “Diamant Network” The Activities of Jewish Undercover Agents in Occupied Kraków in Relation to the Polish Underground

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This article is an analysis of the actual links between Jews and the Gestapo in Kraków in relation to the activities of the so-called “Diamant Network,” which supposedly consisted of Jewish undercover agents and informers. According to some statements made after the end of World War II, the network had not only threatened the safety of Jews hiding on the “Aryan side,” but also the Kraków underground. The mythologized image of the so-called “Diamant Network” has been overlaid with a great many legends, including it supposedly being an armed agency of the Gestapo focused on the liquidation of the local resistance movement.

The myth of widespread Jewish collaboration in the capital of the Generalgouvernement has taken root as a result of the lack of a thorough analysis and examination of archival material from both the war and following it. It should be emphasized, too, that in general the issue of collaboration with the German authorities continues to be poorly researched. In most available publications, this theme has not yet merited its own study, or else it has been treated stereotypically.¹

1 This includes the work of Andrea Löw and Marcus Roth, *Krakowscy Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945* (Kraków: TAIWPN Universitas, 2014); Witold Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim. Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy, ‘Zagłada Żydów,’” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały*, vol. 2 (2006), pp. 202–221; Katarzyna Zimmerer, *Zamordowany świat, Losy Żydów w Krakowie 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004); Andrzej Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002); Józef Bratko, *Gestapowcy. Kontrwywiad, konfidenci, konspiratorzy* (Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1990). Mędykowski’s work is somewhat fragmentary but is a starting point for further study. There has been scholarly discussion of the phenomenon of Jewish collaboration during the war for many

To be sure, there were Jewish undercover agents, and the underground tried to carry out death sentences with regard to some of them, but not in any consistent manner.² The most common practice of writers who participated in the postwar discourse on the activities of the so-called “Diamant Network” was unreflectively and superficially to rehash opinions that were making the rounds. It is important to note, too, that they became a fixture in academic and popular works at a time when scholars did not have access to a great many documents.

- years. See, for example, Boaz Tal, “Sądzenie tych którzy nie mogą być sądzeni – procesy kolaborantów w Izraelu, Zagłada Żydów,” *Studia i Materiały*, vol. 2 (2006); David Engel, “Who is a Collaborator? The Trials of Michał Weichert,” in Sławomir Kapralski, ed., *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 2 (Kraków: Judaica Foundation, Center for Jewish Culture, 1999), pp. 339–370; David Engel, “Why Punish Collaborators?,” in Gabriel N. Finder and Laura Jockusch, eds., *Jewish Honor Courts: Revenge, Retribution, and Reconciliation in Europe and Israel after the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015), pp. 29–48; Rivka Brot, “Julius Siegel: ‘A Kapo’ in Four (Judicial) Acts,” *Dapim. Studies on the Shoah*, no. 25 (2011), pp. 65–127; idem, “No One Was an Angel: The Gray Zone of Collaboration in the Court Room,” in Finder and Jockusch, eds., *Jewish Honor Courts*, pp. 327–360; idem, “The Gray Zone of Collaboration in the Court Room (Hebrew),” *Teoria U-Bikoret*, no. 40 (2012), pp. 40–56; Katarzyna Person, “I am a Jewish DP — a Jew from the Eternal Nowhere: Jews from Poland in Displaced Persons’ Camps in the Occupation Zones of West Germany — Encounters with Poles and Memories of Poland, 1945–1946,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 246 (2013), pp. 246, 312–318; idem, “Jews Accusing Jews: Denunciations of Alleged Collaborators in Jewish Honor Courts,” in Finder and Jockusch, eds., *Jewish Honor Courts*, pp. 225–246; Barbara Engelking, “Rada Żydowska,” in Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 136–189; Leszek Hońdo, “Judenrat w Tarnowie,” in Martyna Grądzka-Rejak and Aleksandra Namysło, eds., *Elity i przedstawiciele społeczności żydowskiej podczas II wojny światowej* (Katowice-Kraków-Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IPN, 2017), pp. 51–69; Aldona Podolska, *Służba Porządkowa w getcie warszawskim w latach 1940–1943* (Warsaw: Historia pro Futuro, 1996); Adam Sitarek, “Otoczone drutem państwo”. *Struktura i funkcjonowanie administracji żydowskiej getta łódzkiego* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo IPN, 2015); Alicja Jarkowska-Natkaniec, “Żydowska Służba Porządkowa w okupowanym Krakowie. Nowa elita w getcie krakowskim i niemieckim obozie Płaszów. Wybrane historie,” in Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, eds., *Elity i przedstawiciele społeczności żydowskiej podczas II wojny światowej*, pp. 197–215. See also Katarzyna Person, *Policjanci. Wizerunek Żydowskiej Służby Porządkowej w getcie warszawskim, 1940–1943* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, forthcoming 2018). See also report prepared by Simon Wiesenthal regarding Jewish betrayers and the judging of Jewish collaborators, YVA, M.9 /87.
- 2 For details on this, see my book, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada? Wokół przypadków kolaboracji Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Universitas, 2018).

After 1989, however, Polish scholars were faced with the prospect of free access to sources held abroad.

Discussion of the attitudes of Jews in occupied Poland also filtered into the postwar Jewish press.³ The names of people accused of treason were published. In terms of Kraków, above all, the names Brandstätter, Puretz, Selinger, and Spitz came up. However, the circle associated with the Kraków underground was particularly interested in the issue of the so-called "Diamant Network." The legend was reinforced by numerous accounts of Jewish undercover agents' brutal behavior. In terms of the whole country, this phenomenon was especially evident in publications appearing on the cusp of the antisemitic wave of March 1968, and during the following years.⁴ Currently this theme continues to be used instrumentally in Polish discourse on the Holocaust. Above all, the attitudes of Jewish police officers and undercover agents are attacked. In works dealing with Gestapo collaborators, a great deal of information, which I have already discussed on several occasions, has been distorted by the prevailing atmosphere that has affected the writers, or simply by their personal attitude to the so-called "Diamant Network."

We should also draw attention to the variety of these attitudes and the constant changes resulting from their complexity. Current historical policies, aiming to mold national consciousness, are based on stereotypes, emotions, and fear, invoking simplified myths. They are weighted with much misrepresentation and ascribe responsibility for war crimes to the victims. As Professor Andrzej Żbikowski of the Jewish Historical Institute has recently correctly stated:

Basically, the Nazis are seen as the perpetrators, as well as possibly units or formations working with them, for instance Lithuanian, Ukrainian or Belarussian ones. This term is applied neither to Jews nor to Poles. Jews are never included among the

3 There were discussions on the subject in, *inter alia*, *Folkscajtung* and *Nasze Słowo*. Articles on similar subjects appeared in the Montreal *Keneder Odler* and the New York *Forverts*.

4 This included Ryszard Gontarz, "Samotni wśród współbraci," *Kurier Polski*, March 29, 1968, no. 2; Adam W. Wysocki, "W obronie pamięci bohaterów getta," *Kurier Polski*, April 13–15, 1968, no. 3. Many memoirs written after the war on the subject of Kraków can be found in the collections of the Kraków branch of the Archiwum Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, as well as the Archiwum Dokumentacji Czynu Niepodległościowego "Sowiniec" in Kraków. I have used some of them in preparing this article.

perpetrators, not even Jewish collaborators or members of the Jewish Order Service [*Ordnungsdienst*].”⁵

My research on the “Diamant Network” resulted in my Ph.D. dissertation, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada? Wokół przypadków kolaboracji Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie* (“Coerced Collaboration or Treason? On the Subject of Cases of Jewish Collaboration in Occupied Kraków”).⁶

It is important to note that the object of this research, based on accessible archival material, was not solely to recreate the history of the so-called “Diamant Network” and verify its fate. I was also interested in how it was presented, under what circumstances it was written about, and to what end the attitudes and behavior of specific Jewish undercover agents, as reflected in personal documents (memoirs, reminiscences) and the Polish underground press, were dredged up. Hence I turned to selected biographies of Gestapo collaborators.

This article is not a discussion of the reality of the occupation and the Jewish community’s daily life. Rather, it analyzes attitudes denounced by the greater part of society and the underground in the context of their wartime assessments. People learned about them from the underground press, general rumors, and the accounts of witnesses to these events.

I have attempted an analysis of this issue, checking available Polish, Jewish, and German⁷ sources, both in terms of their content and of what has been excluded. In the archives we find the wartime history of

5 <https://oko.press/historyk-slowa-morawieckiego-o-zydowskich-sprawcach-faux-pas-blad-zabraklo-wiedzy/> (accessed March 5, 2018).

6 *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada? Wokół przypadków kolaboracji Żydów w okupowanym Krakowie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Universitas, 2018).

7 These include: 1. German documents of an administrative nature (i.e., regulations, decrees, correspondence, accounts, reports, and communiqués) on the situation in the [Polish] homeland, as well as reports covering the period 1939–1944, and of a legal nature (i.e., court records of postwar trials); 2. Primary Polish documents from the occupation period (reports and assessments by the Home Army, the Council to Aid Jews, the underground press); secondary sources (memoirs, accounts, reminiscences, the postwar press); and legal ones (court records of postwar trials before Special Criminal Courts, Appellate Courts, District Courts, and the Supreme Court); 3. Jewish primary documents (accounts and reports of the Judenrat, the Jewish Social Self-Help, the Joint, the Centos [Federation of Associations for the Care of Orphans]); secondary sources (accounts, reminiscences, memoirs, the press); and legal ones (court records of postwar trials before the Jewish Central Committee in Poland).

the so-called “Diamant Network” based above all on individual reports and reminiscences of members of the local ZWZ/AK (Związek Walki Zbrojnej, Union for Armed Struggle; Armia Krajowa, Home Army), as well as on reports of witnesses to the events. The source that begins the story is a 1940 Krakow underground report (further discussed below), found in the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Kraków. It is supplemented by postwar depositions by officials of the Kraków Gestapo and their victims made before German, Polish, and Jewish courts, as well as court records of cases before the German public prosecutor’s office, Special and Appellate courts in Kraków, and the Citizens’ Court of the Jewish Central Committee in Poland.

Examining individuals’ biographies has turned out to be key in this kind of research. Recreating individual fates from the perspectives of time and place has allowed me to draw some conclusions on the activities of the so-called “Diamant Network.” These accounts provide information on the attitudes and behavior of Jewish undercover agents, excluded after the war from the community of victims, because, as Primo Levi has written, “the worst survived, the selfish, the violent, the insensitive, the collaborators of the ‘gray zone,’ the spies. It was not a certain rule..., but it was nevertheless a rule.”⁸

I also wanted to find an answer to the myth developed during the occupation of the widespread collaboration of Jews in occupied Kraków and to study the scale of this phenomenon, which, when one reads ZWZ/AK reports and memoirs, appears to be exaggerated by the Polish underground.

One more issue should be noted. Taking into account the circumstances and dynamics of the Holocaust, an assessment of the behavior of Jewish undercover agents collaborating with the Germans continues to present a moral problem. I have not tried to resolve it here.

Owing to the subject matter of the issues under discussion, I have used the method of deconstruction and reconstruction⁹ at work in the general consciousness, as well as in the professional literature, of an image of the so-called “Diamant Network” as created on the basis of the above-mentioned sources. This was also supported to a great extent

8 Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Summit Books, 1988), p. 82.

9 I use these methods based on the research results of Dariusz Libionka and Laurence Weinbaum. See Dariusz Libionka and Laurence Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy, opisywacze. Wokół Żydowskiego Związku Wojskowego* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011).

by a body of materials created after World War II often representing a starting point for writers of pieces on the collaboration of the Jews.¹⁰ Thus, the article is a discussion of the history of the so-called “Diamant Network” from the perspective of the writers of accounts and related documents. Then, in order to be able to assess what really happened, I will outline the nature of the collaboration between Jews and the Germans in occupied Kraków based on surviving and available sources. To this end, I will quote examples of the individual behavior of Jews connected to the so-called “Diamant Network,” and I will turn to the circumstances in which the legend of its activities arose. Using previously unknown materials collected during research in archives outside Poland and presenting new interpretations of accounts in the academic arena, finally, I shall explain the context of how the story of the activities of Jewish undercover agents in occupied Kraków actually developed.

According to information included in the annals of memoir literature and in historical works, a group of Jewish undercover agents led by a certain Maurycy Diamant operated in Kraków during World War II.¹¹ Similar information on informing appeared in underground documents, which are discussed below in more detail. According to these reports there were anywhere from fifteen to seventy Jews in the group, and they identified and infiltrated the Kraków underground.

10 I have in mind here above all memoirs by members of the Kraków underground.

11 These include the works of Katarzyna Zimmerer, *Zamordowany świat. Losy Żydów w Krakowie 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004); Andrzej Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002); Józef Bratko, *Gestapowcy. Kontrwywiad, konfidenci, konspiratorzy* (Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1990); Elżbieta Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo IPN, 2014); Andrea Löw and Marcus Roth, *Krakowscy Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945* (Kraków: TAIWPN Universitas, 2014); Stanisław Dąbrowa-Kostka, *W okupowanym Krakowie 6 IX 1939–18 I 1945 r.* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 1972). With regard to the spelling of personal and family names of Jewish undercover agents, when quoting documents I have used the original spellings. The writers of memoirs and reports very often knew the Gestapo collaborators only by hearsay; hence the many errors when recording their personal details. I give the correct version in the body of the text. The most often to be distorted are details on Maurycy Diamant. In many original sources from World War II and afterward, his name appears as “Diamant,” or “Diamand.” On the basis of his death certificate, issued by the Grodzki Court, I use the former version. In the document mentioned there is an extract from a wedding book of 1923, for Moses Diamant. Archiwum Narodowy w Krakowie (ANKr), I Zg 360-49, no page given.

From a report from the AK sub-unit “Antyk,” we learn, for example, of sixty Jews on the Gestapo’s payroll and in constant touch with the Communists (especially Ukrainians) and the PPR, to whom they supplied firearms.¹² However, this document does not include the full complement of the so-called “Diamant Network.”

Only the following names are known: Maurycy Diamant, Julian Appel, Salomon Weininger, Aleksander Förster, Stefania Brandstätter, Marta Puretz, Lejzor Landau, Ignacy Taubman, Jakub Selinger, Szymon Spitz, Mojżesz Brodman, and Mojżesz Białobroda. Władysław Boczoń (“Pantera”), a ZWZ/AK intelligence officer, also mentioned a group of seventy Jewish undercover agents.¹³ I have been unable to confirm these details.

Maurycy Diamant was born on January 24, 1896, in Podgórze in Kraków,¹⁴ the son of Majer and Perla, a beautician by trade; they lived at 11 Skawińska Street. Maurycy had been married until 1939, to Balbina Zimmerstark. That year Balbina probably left for Warsaw, but he remained in Kraków.¹⁵

It is difficult to establish what Diamant did prior to the outbreak of World War II. One source has him running “a herring shop” in Stanisławów and “sympathizing with the communists”;¹⁶ another mentions that he supported himself selling confectionery and minor accessories.¹⁷ However, Julian Kudasiewicz, an industrialist from Kraków, maintained that before the war Diamant had been in haulage.¹⁸ On the basis of this information, it is possible to state that before the outbreak

12 The report provides no information about them or their backgrounds. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Antyk, 228/17, vol. 67. Other reports speak of a seventy-strong group of Jewish undercover agents. See *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*.

13 Report from the head of counter-intelligence of 1 III-10 IV 1943. Archiwum Pamięci Narodowej (AIPN) AIPN BU, 01476/141/3, p. 70.

14 ANKr, Oddział II, Zg 360-49. My thanks to Piotr Własow for making this document available to me.

15 Ibid.

16 Testimony of Eliaszk Kaszuk, AIPN Rz, 1559/49, p. 18. This information came “second hand,” i.e., from the then-head of the military police in Jarosław. Kaszuk also did not indicate the shop’s exact location.

17 Jacek Wilamowski, *Honor, zdrada, kaźń... Afery Polski Podziemnej 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza CB Andrzej Zasieczny, 1999), p. 227.

18 Extracts from accounts (testimony) in the case of SS-Sturmbannführer Willi Haase, testimony of Julian Kudasiewicz, Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (AŻIH), 303/XX/553, Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna przy CKŻP. 1944–1947, Kraków. WŻKH, p. 13.

of war he had been in trade. It is impossible to confirm Diamant's membership in the Communist party. More than likely, this was just a rumor in occupied Kraków.

We also do not know the circumstances under which Maurycy Diamant decided to collaborate with the German authorities. This was probably between 1941 and 1942, at the time that the Kraków ghetto was being created. He might have been motivated by the desire to avoid compulsory resettlement to the enclosed residential area in Podgórze. Whereas memoirs and reports do not mention a financial angle, this factor also cannot be discounted as one of the elements that influenced Diamant's decision to reach out to the Germans.

Owing to the fragmentary nature of the sources, as well as the vague accounts of witnesses and report writers for the underground, it is difficult to establish the extent of Maurycy Diamant's duties as a Gestapo agent. This is especially so since his name is mentioned in the context of alleged or real¹⁹ operations carried out by a group of Jewish undercover agents; in particular, operations directed against members of the Polish underground resistance movement. We also do not know to what extent Diamant and his people participated in crimes committed against Poles in occupied Kraków. However, some of the details regarding this undercover agent's activities seem unrealistic and exaggerated.²⁰

According to surviving sources, the so-called "Diamant Network" operated in the Kraków area from 1942. One exception is the previously-mentioned 1941 report by "Pantera."²¹ From there it emerges that a group of Jewish undercover agents was by then already active in the capital of the Generalgouvernement. Unfortunately, I have been unable to confirm this information. Members of the underground also accused the Jews of continuing in the service of the Kraków KdS's

19 There is a dearth of reliable sources documenting their participation in these operations. Witnesses to the events mention them in very general terms. In most memoirs and statements, similar phrases crop up, including, "Diamant's network was responsible for..." The lack of details relating to the place, year, and circumstances prevents us from establishing a definitive version of events.

20 A very good example of collaboration with the German authorities is the story of Stella Goldberg, recreated by Peter Wyden. See P. Wyden, *Stella: One Woman's True Tale of Evil, Betrayal and Survival in Hitler's Germany* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

21 A report from the head of counter-intelligence covering the period 1 III -10 IV 1943; AIPN BU, 01476/141/3, p. 70.

Jewish Section and that their relationship with the Gestapo was one of permanent and structured collaboration.²² However, there is no information in Pantera relating to the formation of a group of Jewish undercover agents. Underground reports related only that they worked in two groups led by Maurycy Diamant and Aleksander Förster. Similar announcements were placed in the underground press. On August 1, 1943, the *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*, an underground publication produced during World War II in Krakow, informed that:

- 22 The so-called Jewish Section, i.e. Department IV-B1, in the office of the chief of the Sipo and SD in Kraków (*Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD* — BdS and *Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des Sicherheitsdienstes* — KdS). We learn about the extent of the Jewish Section’s responsibilities in a 1940 report by the government of the Generalgouvernement [GG]: “One of the recommendations of the GG’s Book of Regulations I no. 4 of 2 IIII 1940 envisages the creation of an independent section for Jewish affairs attached to the administration of the Generalgouvernement, the Administrative Department for Population and Welfare and subordinate agencies. The duties of these Jewish sections were as follows: the registration of Jews and the resolution of issues concerning their Jewishness, the creation of Jewish Councils of Elders, issuing regulations affecting Jews and dealing with emerging general Jewish issues, with the exception of social security. The creation of Jewish sections in all administrative offices has made it possible to tackle all Jewish issues in a uniform and professional manner.” *Dziennik Rozporządzeń Generalnego Gubernatora dla okupowanych polskich obszarów*, July 1, 1940, p. 474. KdS Kraków — The Headquarters of the Sipo and the SD consisted of four and later five departments: Department I — Administration and Justice; Department II — SD; Department III — Gestapo; Department IV — Kripo. On June 26, 1942, there was a partial reorganization of the GG’s security apparatus. On the strength of instructions from Wilhelm Krüger, “on the new Sipo and SD structure in the *Generalgouvernement*” the KdS’s organizational chart was modified. Using the RSHA model, the following departmental numbering was introduced: Department I/II — Administration and Justice; Department III — SD; Department IV — Gestapo; Department V — Kripo. The Kraków KdS had an additional Department VI, with an office for a RSHA liaison officer responsible for foreign intelligence. Each of these departments was divided into sections, and these into smaller organizational cells, which carried out specific tasks within the remit of the individual sections. There was a focus above all on overseeing German policies in occupied areas and developing police law. Primarily Departments III and IV of the KdS, using an extensive network of agents, informers, and moles, carried out surveillance and intelligence work. For detailed information on the structure of Police Headquarters and the Security Service for the Kraków district, see Marek 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* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo PROMO, 2012), pp. 259–264, as well as files on the Kraków Gestapo, Archiwum Okręgowej Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu (AOKŚZpNP), Ds. 5/67, p. 45.

two groups of Jewish Gestapo undercover agents are operating in the Kraków area. One is led by FOERSTER, whom we have already mentioned several times; the other by DIAMANT. FOERSTER lives in the Spiski Palace on Spinarczyk Square and uses an agent, Marta Puryc,²³ currently Panecka, living at 5 Zybkiewicz Street, as well as TATARUCH living at 12 Traugutt Street. Under Diamant's command are Appel, Stefania Brandtszteter and other Jews residing at 6 Sławkowska Street and adjacent buildings.²⁴

The Secret Military Organization of the Kraków Garrison (Tajna Organizacja Wojskowa Garnizonu Krakowskiego), soon to be absorbed into the ZWZ and later the AK, busied itself with identifying and combating agents of the Kraków Gestapo. From 1943, the "Żelbet" group carried out intensive surveillance work for the AK.²⁵ Members of the "Alicja"²⁶ platoon and Unit II "B" of the AK, whose files could be found in all five departments, also identified undercover agents. The sabotage groups mentioned drew up reports on the group of Jews clustered around Maurycy Diamant and the people working with him, focusing, too, on his methods of working with the German authorities.²⁷

Surviving underground reports are composed almost exclusively of notes on meetings of the so-called "Diamant Network" with Germans on the premises of 6 Sławkowska Street, 22 Zybkiewicz Street, and 6 Mikołajska Street (the address of the Ziemiańska Café). In November and December 1943, the last location was under round-the-clock surveillance by members of Kedyw, the AK's sabotage unit. Postwar memoirs by members of the Kraków underground, especially of the Żelbet sub-unit, supplemented these reports with detailed descriptions of the activities of a Jewish spy network. These sources paint a picture of a dangerous and undefeated network of Jewish collaborators with the Gestapo. And this is the image that has become indelibly engraved in the pages of the history of the capital of the Generalgouvernement (GG):

23 Original spelling.

24 *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*, 1.VIII.1943, no 1, p. 5.

25 Józef Proficz, *Hasło "Jemioła"*. Archiwum Dokumentacji Czynu Niepodległościowego "Sowiniec" ("Sowiniec"), sygn. 364b.

26 See Czesław Skrobecki, ed., *Podgórski pluton dywersyjny "Alicja" Szarych Szeregów w Krakowie* (Kraków: Komisja Historyczna ZBoWiD. Oddział Kraków-Podgórze, 1983).

27 A detailed analysis of these documents can be found in my above-mentioned dissertation, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*

A group of a dozen or so undercover agents, recruited from the dregs of Jewish society, operated on the territory of the *[General] Gouvernement*. Men and women. Well-educated and bold, brazen, exceptionally clever and adept at their work. They had a permanent hideout at 6 Sławkowska Street in an annex on the second floor, with other well-concealed ones scattered in a number of places in the city, including on Żółkiewski Street, at the corner of Kazimierz Wielki Street and Urzędnicza Street. Their principal members are Diamant, Appel, Gotlieb, Birner, Selinger, Traubman, Róża Brandstater, Szpic....It was extremely difficult to get to them for they were very vigilant, careful and suspicious. They were well armed and really ready for anything. To liquidate even a few of them would be a great service....They worked cleverly and brazenly. They had good information on arrested Poles being held at the Monte[lupich] Prison, and they tried to get in touch with their families, offering help, for money of course, citing their contacts in the Gestapo. They skillfully pretended to be underground activists, trying to obtain more information about the prisoners. In addition they set up provocative underground groups, distributed pamphlets and the underground press, proposed to sell firearms and then artfully gave people away, collecting a reward for their criminal activities from their masters. The “Żelbet” team has been ordered to liquidate this group, or at least break it up.²⁸

In the language of the memoirs written by members of the underground and the wartime perception of the world of collaboration with the Germans, we find many efforts to distinguish traitors from the rest of society and depersonalize them. The object was not only to typecast this group and its behavior, but also to depersonalize undercover agents. In studying this issue Agnieszka Haska has correctly pointed out that, “in order to stigmatize and ostracize them, they had to be identified, hence a number of efforts had to be made to identify traitors.”²⁹

As we can see, when describing the activities of the so-called “Diamant Network,” pejorative characterizations are used — “dregs,”

28 “Sowiniec,” sygn. 364b, p. 82.

29 Agnieszka Haska, “Kto rzekł, że to zdrajca?” *Dyskurs zdrady w wybranych tytułach prasy konspiracyjnej*, Warsaw, 2013, p. 60; Ph.D. dissertation defended in 2013, at the Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warsaw, supervised by Professor Barbara Engelking.

“brazen,” “clever,” “adept,” “suspicious” — that raise the emotional tone of the text and the reader’s reaction. Over time the vocabulary became even more radical.

From 1943, we find in accounts by members of the Kraków underground various hints of murderous activities by the so-called “Diamant Network” against the inhabitants of Kraków. These included the participation of Diamant and his collaborators in the pacification operation in Wola Justowska in July 1943, in which the Germans, under the command of SS-Obersturmführer Eduard Schubert, shot twenty-one people to death for possession of an illegal printer.³⁰ This was the place where the first issues of the underground newspaper *Dziennik Polski* were printed.

The Jewish undercover agents were described as a group of exceptionally dangerous and armed people. In the opinion of Stanisław Dąbrowa-Kostka, for example, the Jews possessed not only firearms, but also a trained dog, issued to Diamant by the Gestapo.³¹ These accounts resonated widely, mainly among members of the Kraków underground, and they were soon enriched by additional details, including the participation of Jewish undercover agents in fighting the underground resistance in Miechów County.

Information on the activities of Jewish informers in occupied Kraków rarely reached the inhabitants of the Kraków ghetto or the inmates of the Płaszów camp. However, individual accounts by Jews on collaboration with the Germans in operations against the Poles have survived. Yet allegations against specific people were not connected to the so-called “Diamant Network.” In these accusations, the subjects were generally called Jewish Gestapo agents, among other things. They were blamed above all for taking part in blowing the cover of Jews residing illegally in Kraków, as well as of extorting money in exchange for getting people’s loved ones released from German prisons.

In Polish historical works, the so-called “Diamant Network” was described as a weapon of terror in the hands of the occupying power. Above all, participation in operations directed against the Polish underground resistance, especially the AK, was attributed to it. This

30 Stanisław Dąbrowa-Kostka, *Hitlerowskie afisze śmierci* (Kraków: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1983), pp. 129–131; Czesław Czubyrt, Jerzy Michasiewicz, eds., *Przewodnik po upamiętnionych miejscach walki i męczeństwa lata wojny 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sport i Turystyka, 1988), p. 361.

31 Dąbrowa-Kostka, *W okupowanym Krakowie*, p. 105.

myth took root in the Polish academic community's consciousness, and it has become part of a still-binding historical narrative. In it, we find a great many emotional postwar accounts by members of the Kraków underground distorted by their authors under the influence of the prevailing attitude toward Jewish informers, of gossip, and of their own personal stories.

The memoirs of inhabitants of the Kraków ghetto were an exception. This is especially evident in the works of Tadeusz Pankiewicz and Aleksander Bieberstein. Apart from insignificant errors³² resulting from all sorts of rumors regarding the activities of Jewish informers, these works do not try to pass moral judgment on Gestapo collaborators. Nor are any special "attributes" and associated privileges ascribed to them.

Polish memoirs and reports by the underground pay special attention to external attributes and to the privileged position of Jewish undercover agents in the Kraków Gestapo. Polish undercover agents supposedly were not granted some of these privileges. These memoirs and reports describe very close relations between the Jews and the Germans, including mention of alcoholic beverages in the company of Gestapo officers in Jews' private apartments and private meetings at the premises on Sławkowska and Zyblikiewicz streets. They were supposedly often surrounded by armed Jewish police officers from the Kraków ghetto. These Polish writers drew attention to the important role played by the members of the so-called "Diamant Network" in the Gestapo structure. In this connection the names of Wilhelm Kunde, Herman Heindrich, and Erich Volbracht of the Kraków KdS crop up the most frequently in witness accounts.

The accounts of negatively-disposed underground activists were stoked by tales that circulated with regard to their subject. For example, they included rumors of an affair between Stefania Brandstätter and a leading official of the Kraków Gestapo. Brandstätter had close relations with her boss, Rudolf Körner, who, in 1944, helped her leave for Hungary.³³ Supposedly, Marta Puretz, who was similarly intimate with Rudolf Körner, supposedly played a similar role.³⁴

32 I have in mind here memoir writers who confuse informers with members of the Jewish Ordnungsdienst.

33 We find this kind of information in at least a dozen accounts by witnesses to those events, among them the testimony of Barbara Pawlik, AŻIH, 301/1218; of Henryk Mandel, YVA, O.3/2670, p. 5; and of Marta Puretz, AIPN Kr, 010/6637, p. 24.

34 See AIPN Kr, 010/6637, pp. 21–23; testimony of Marian Feber, AŻIH, 301/1940, pp.

The motif of a Jewish woman becoming involved with a German officer emerges from many accounts of the occupation, interspersed with reports on the subject of Jewish collaboration with the Germans. They included, too, the fact that the members of the so-called “Diamant Network” used a horse-drawn cab for transportation. It is worth adding that this was also mentioned in the context of failed attempts by the underground on the lives of Jewish undercover agents. At the key moment, the Jews fled the scene.³⁵ An account by Stanisław Dąbrowa-Kostka, an operative in the Kraków Kedyw, describes this very well.

Birner turned up punctually at eleven. He was followed immediately onto Szczepański Square by Diamant in a horse-drawn cab and dressed in a light sports coat, jodhpurs and splendid officer’s riding boots. It was too far for a shot. “Afrykańczyk”³⁶ was waiting for “Ciemny”³⁷ to follow the plan and bring in the undercover agents. The three of them slowly approached the chalk mark... Then Diamant stopped, said goodbye, turned, almost ran to the cab standing nearby, and drove off through Szczepański Square in the direction of Sławkowska Street.³⁸

In Dąbrowa-Kostka’s description, typical of accounts by members of the Polish underground, there is no lack of references to external appearances: the jodhpurs and officer’s riding boots, which were meant to represent the Jewish Gestapo’s status as collaborators and the perks they enjoyed at Gestapo headquarters on Pomorska Street.

The underground press trumpeted this image by regularly highlighting these people and mentioning them by name. They were seen in the public consciousness as equally responsible for German crimes. Over time subsequent layers of the tale distorted the image of Jewish informers, turning them into a symbol of collaboration with the German authorities, erasing the people behind them and their stories. Thus, blowing the Polish resistance movement’s cover in occupied Kraków was laid at the feet of the Jews, irrespective of their actual level of guilt.

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35 Dąbrowa-Kostka, *W okupowanym Krakowie*, p. 61; *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*, 1943, no. 8, p. 2; Ryszard Nuszkiewicz, *Uparci* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1983), pp. 174, 176, 180.

36 Stefan Pawlik, “Afrykańczyk.”

37 Karol Łysogórski, “Ciemny.”

38 Dąbrowa-Kostka, *W okupowanym Krakowie*, p. 61.

Most of the information on the so-called "Diamant Network" has not been confirmed by sources. The writers of these accounts also exaggerated the number of undercover agents, classifying them as permanent collaborators with the German authorities. Charges of Jewish involvement in operations against the Polish underground have also turned out to be untrue. They have falsely been accused of crimes against members of the Polish underground in Kraków and Miechów. I do, however, understand that it is impossible to confirm every piece of information. It is difficult to assess insinuations based on rumors in Kraków from both Polish and Jewish sources. Given the fragmentary nature of surviving source material, we are unable also to answer unambiguously a great many questions dealing with the moral dilemmas facing these people, and the reasons for which they decided to collaborate with the occupying power. The lack of German sources from World War II is an additional handicap.

Jewish undercover agents are as a rule described through the prism of personal experience. For example, they were perceived as the authors of denunciations. Julian Appel was one of those supposedly involved in this. This was confirmed by a number of witnesses, who testified to what was being said in the Kraków ghetto:

I knew that Appel was the terror of Jews in hiding in the town. I heard of several cases of Appel finding Jews in hiding and turning them over to the Gestapo. I do not know their names.³⁹

For the most part, however, his work with the Gestapo consisted of identifying and then eliminating members of the Jewish and Polish resistance movements. The members of these groups recalled this in detail.⁴⁰

Appel was a valuable Gestapo informer because of his extensive knowledge of the structure of the so-called Kraków ŻOB, of which he was a member.⁴¹ However, the scale of this collaboration was much less substantial than it might appear from reports, particularly Polish ones.

39 Testimony of Edmund Sztulbach, a former member of the Kraków ŻOB. AIPN Kr 502/3526, p. 6.

40 Including "Sowiniec," 364b, p. 82; testimony of Edmund Sztulbach, AIPN Kr 502/3526, p. 4; testimony of Henryk Krischer, AIPN Kr 502/3526, p. 6; testimony of Józef Lieberman, YVA, O.3/1391.

41 Testimonies of Edmund Sztulbach, Henryk Krischer, AIPN Kr 502/1061, pp. 4–5, 225.

Gestapo operations against the Polish resistance movement required the involvement of far more informants, especially Poles. On the basis of postwar assessments, it is possible to estimate that out of 800–1,000 Gestapo agents, only about twenty or so were Jews.⁴² Leszek Gondek states in his book that, toward the end of the occupation, around 2,000 informers supposedly worked on a permanent basis with the Kraków Gestapo.⁴³ It seems simplistic then to lay the deaths of these people exclusively at the feet of Appel.

The first agents of the Kraków Gestapo were people connected to pre-war German intelligence operating in the area. From source documents, it emerges that the brothers Gustaw and Max Kwast, who, as Polish citizens, had lived in the city permanently since 1927, continued to work with the German authorities in occupied Kraków.⁴⁴ In 1939, the Kwasts signed the *Volksliste* and volunteered to work with the Kraków KdS as interpreters. Given their place of residence, they knew the local community and its habits. The fates of Karol Pfeiffer (“Max”),⁴⁵ Marian Sohnel,⁴⁶ and Elżbieta Bauer,⁴⁷ working in Section IV-A in the Kraków Gestapo, provide us with partial information on the activities of German undercover agents.

The people who made contact with the German authorities were usually casual informers voluntarily providing information on Polish behavior and attitudes toward the new authorities, or on Jews who were in the city illegally.⁴⁸ As Barbara Engelking has correctly pointed out, agents partially embedded themselves into the system of terror, becoming a permanent element in the Gestapo’s work. Those who wrote letters that included tip-offs, and who helped the German authorities, received no money for their efforts.⁴⁹

42 Leszek Gondek, *Polska karząca 1939–1945. Polski wymiar sprawiedliwości w okresie okupacji niemieckiej* (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1988), p. 114. See also AIPN Kr 075/1 vols. 1–15.

43 Gondek, *Polska karząca 1939–1945*, p. 114.

44 See AIPN Kr 010/3900. Files on the case of Maks Kwast; AIPN Kr 425/302, prison file: Maks Kwast.

45 See AIPN Kr 010/6504. Case of Karol Pfeiffer.

46 See AIPN 020/4186. Case of Marian Sohnel.

47 See AIPN Kr 010/705. Case of Elżbieta Bauer.

48 Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, eds., *Accusatory Practices. Denunciation in Modern European History 1798–1989* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press Journals, 1997), p. 1.

49 Barbara Engelking, “Szanowny panie Gistapo.” *Donosy do władz niemieckich w Warszawie i okolicach w latach 1940–1941* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2003), p. 17.

The largest group of collaborators with the Gestapo, and the ones posing the greatest danger to the inhabitants of Kraków and its environs, were informers who were also commonly known as snitches. In other words, these were people whose relationship with the occupying power was episodic or sporadic, often the result of a desire for revenge, an opportunity to enrich themselves (blackmail), or, more rarely, out of fear of crackdowns by the German authorities.⁵⁰ Others found this a method of settling scores "between neighbors," or a way to get their hands on someone else's property. The latter's victims were usually Jews hiding out on the so-called "Aryan side," or fugitives from the ghetto, and sometimes Poles. The Poles were specifically in danger if they were sheltering Jews or even helped them only once. Taking into account the time and the place, we should mention, too, the not insignificant undercurrent of antisemitism in Kraków and its environs.

Partial reports by members of the Polish underground and by workers in the Government Homeland Delegation from 1940–1942 have survived. From these it emerges that several hundred people were working for Sipo at that time.⁵¹

The issue of the activities of Polish undercover agents and collaborators with the German authorities requires a separate study. Surviving primary source material enables a detailed analysis of this issue with reference to the Polish agents' activities, especially after 1942. I am currently critically evaluating these documents.

It is impossible to establish an accurate total of the Gestapo undercover agents' victims, nor the scale of the phenomenon of collaboration with the occupying power and of informing by the inhabitants of Kraków during World War II. How many Jews died as a direct result of their tip-offs? How many people did not succeed in making incriminating denunciations? Did they become victims of the postwar pogroms? Did they emigrate?

At the present time it is possible to reconstruct a most accurate history of the so-called "Diamant Network" on the basis of available

50 Here I have in mind tip-offs to the German authorities about Poles sheltering Jews, at a time when the penalty was a death sentence for all involved.

51 Readers of the underground press were kept up to date on the issue with the publication of the names of those accused of treason. In 1940, a list of 100 Gestapo agents in the Kraków District was published in the *Małopolski Biuletyn Prasowy*. By 1943, this number had increased many times over. The personal details of people collaborating with the political police were regularly published in several places, including the *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*.

sources. Both the documents produced by the Polish underground and the majority of accounts assembled after the war allow us to draw general conclusions on the subject of the activities of a so-called organized group of Jewish Gestapo agents.

The first information on Jews collaborating with the Kraków Gestapo dates from October 15, 1940, from a report by the Polish underground, “The Political Police in the City of Kraków” [*Policja polityczna w m. Krakowie*]. From it we learn which Jews remained in the pay of Kurt Heinemeyer⁵² and Adolf Spilker of the Kraków KdS. According to this document Heinemeyer’s agents included

Marian Söhnel, the Feingold brothers, Jews resettled from the Reich and residing at 4 or 5 Józefitów Street; the Selingers, husband and wife, names unknown, also Jews resettled from the Reich, residing on Karmelicka Street (surveillance showed that Selinger visited Grodzka Street). Selinger’s wife was the Feingolds’ sister. Aleksander Förster continued to stay in touch with Heinmayer.

Spilker’s agents were supposedly some individuals named Hische, Szymon Szpitz, Szymon and Karol Pfeffer.⁵³ The document quoted here has not, however, been confirmed by other source materials. According to available documents, the Germans made contact with the Jews no earlier than 1941/42. That was the case, for example, with Selinger mentioned above. According to the testimony of several witnesses, Jakub Selinger was supposedly already in the pay of the German authorities — or at least Max Kwast, the Gestapo interpreter, thought so.⁵⁴

It is unknown on what basis the authors of these extensive accounts of Jewish undercover agents’ activities in occupied Kraków made assumptions about the group’s size. The names of Jews provided by the members of the Kraków underground were not always confirmed by other sources, especially Jewish and German ones, which do not discuss the composition of the so-called “Diamant Network.” They are dominated by highly emotional accounts describing the activities

52 SS-Obersturmführer Kurt Heinrich August Dietrich Heinemeyer, born December 27, 1907, in Hanover, was, from 1940, an official in the Kraków KdS, then, from 1943 to 1945, head of sub-section IV-A-1 responsible for combating Polish left-wing organizations. In 1947, he was handed over to the Polish judicial authorities.

53 AOKŚZpNP, Ds. 5/67, no page given.

54 AIPN Kr 501/1061, p. 67.

of individuals, not groups of Gestapo agents. It is worth pointing out that the information contained in reports and accounts by people connected to the local underground were usually actually rumors that were making the rounds in Kraków. Very often the writers of these reports had not personally witnessed the events described and were simply repeating gossip.

No fewer than fifteen to twenty people were probably working with the Jewish section of the Kraków KdS.⁵⁵ Not all of them, however, can be accused of collaboration with the German authorities. In the case of certain individuals, charges of treason, including membership in an established network of Gestapo agents, were unjustified. It also seems that the activities of individual agents have been confused with the work of a group of the occupying power's informers. Using the phrase "the Diamant Network" in relation to Jewish collaborators with the Gestapo is therefore incorrect and untruthful. Interestingly enough, this term was not used during the occupation and appears only after World War II. It influenced the development of a picture of Jewish betrayal, making sense in a wider context within antisemitic circles regarding the discourse on the Jews' collaboration with the occupying power.

The number of members of the so-called "Diamant Network" and the scale of collaboration by Jews in occupied Kraków could also have been exaggerated for another reason. The underground carried out a couple of failed — indeed, inept — attempts on the lives of undercover agents, especially Maurycy Diamant. These assassination attempts were replete with blunders, incompetence, and inferior weaponry (grenades that failed to explode, abortive chases, etc.).

From surviving sources we learn that, in the spring of 1943, during a shootout on Paulińska Street, the Kraków underground liquidated three Jews who were collaborating with the Germans, and only Maurycy Diamant managed to get away. A short account of the death sentences, titled "Liquidation of Gestapo Agents," appeared on the pages of the *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*. One person was named — Grunbaum, a Jew. The other two victims were women. Their

55 I have managed to reconstruct the fate of twelve Jewish undercover agents: Maurycy Diamant, Julian Appel, Salomon Weininger, Aleksander Förster, Stefania Brandstätter, Marta Poretz, Lejzor Landau, Ignacy Taubman, Jakub Selinger, Szymon Spitz, Mojżesz Brodman, and Mojżesz Białobroda. I have described their individual histories in my dissertation, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*, based on the Polish, Jewish, and German sources mentioned above.

names were not revealed; the only information provided was that all of them had Hungarian identity papers. This was probably the local Kedyw's sole successful operation.

A great deal of doubt surrounds the activities of certain Jews widely recognized as undercover agents, such as the stories of Marta Puretz, Mojżesz Brodman, and Mojżesz Białobroda during the occupation. The documents that are available or that have survived in part raise many problems when it comes to assessing these people's contacts with the Germans; they also furnish little help in providing exhaustive answers to all the questions. Were the relationships incidental, consistent, or purely casual? It is easy to ascribe participation in crimes to people about whose actions we have incomplete information.

From the accounts of witnesses to those events, we can assert that, compared to other agents, Brodman and Białobroda inspired the greatest fear among ghetto inhabitants. They were accused of informing, spying, collaborating with the German authorities, and betraying Jews.⁵⁶ Brodman supposedly operated outside of Kraków as well. This was announced *inter alia* on the pages of the underground paper *Hechaluc Halochem*:

Brodmann, the well-known Jewish informer from Kraków, came to Bochnia to put on a performance. He works specifically in the area of uncovering secret convoys to Hungary. He organizes them himself in order to gain the trust of his victims and to hand them over to the police. A tall blonde man of around 40, he lives in an Aryan district.⁵⁷

Białobroda was then described by Mordechaj Wulkan, who recalled that "Białobroda was an informer. He worked openly with the Germans. Everyone in the area stayed clear of him."⁵⁸

This information, however, came mainly from people who were not eyewitnesses to the events described. The level of collective fear,

56 Including the testimony of Aron Goldwert, AŻIH 301/3366, pp. 1–2; OKŚZpNP, KPP/73, p. 35.

57 *Hechaluc Halochem*, August 20, 1943, no. 30, pp. 2–4; based on Dagmara Swańtek-Niewińska, "Powiat Bocheński," in Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, eds., *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów and IFiS PAN, 2018), vol. 2, pp. 523–637. I am very grateful to the author for making available to me a typescript of her article, as well as information on the journal *Hechaluc Halochem*.

58 Testimony of Mordechaj Wulkan, YVA, O.3/2822, p. 7.

especially among the inhabitants of the Kraków ghetto, inspired panic among the Jews. The words of a certain "Stefan," a Polish policeman on duty near the ghetto, gives a very good idea of the atmosphere during those times. He observed the types of rumors on treasonous behavior that were making the rounds in the enclosed district:

A wicked person always behaves like a swine, which is what the Germans did when they set up the ghetto, immediately seeking out Jews with weak personalities, whom they made their undercover agents. Arrests and intrigues began immediately. Their leaders were Föster, Spitz and Białobroda, and these scum were the terrors of the ghetto. While the Jewish people groaned under the blows of rapine and murder, these dirt bags and scum enjoyed themselves, rolling in money dripping with blood.⁵⁹

The terms "dirt bags," "scum," and similar pejorative descriptions appear in many postwar accounts on the subject of the Jewish undercover agents' activities. The accumulation of negative terms in the quotation testifies to the memories' emotional resonance. As noted above, the authors often identified with the victims of these collaborators with the occupying power.⁶⁰

Rumors circulating in the ghetto about the many crimes committed by Gestapo agents were repeated, as were descriptions of reactions to events taking place in the Jewish district and outside. Negative characteristics, such as vindictiveness, wickedness, zealotry, treachery, and servility, were ascribed to the agents. In order to underscore the seriousness of the charges, these people were also called the "Jewish Gestapo." This term appeared in Polish as well as in Jewish documents. It is quite possible that after the war it became the basis for statements on the scale of Jewish collaboration with the Germans in occupied Kraków, as exploited by extreme right-wing and antisemitic circles. There is no doubt that this corresponded to the images of betrayal that appeared in articles in the underground press, memoirs, legal cases, postwar discourse, and historical narrative.⁶¹

Furthermore, as noted above, the fates of individual Gestapo

59 Account by "Stefan," AŻIH 301/2058, p. 7. We can find similar views in the interrogation report of Wiktor Taubmann, AIPN Kr 502/1061, p. 35.

60 This points to the emotional nature of many accounts and the level of detail in some of them.

61 Haska, *Kto rzekł, że to zdrajca?*, pp. 5–7.

undercover agents showed that the Germans used the services of individual Jews in specific circumstances (deportations, ghetto clearances, hunting hiding Jews, etc.). In this way they managed not only to save their own lives, but also those of their close families (for example, by a German-sponsored departure for Budapest in 1943).⁶²

Julian Appel and Ignacy Taubman were among those who began to collaborate with the Germans under such circumstances. Their families survived the war thanks to their activities and their contacts with Gestapo officials. This does not, however, change the fact that all this was at the expense of someone else's suffering or life. Heroic behavior was reserved for exceptional people. Clearly there is the question as to whether "heroic behavior" was at all possible. All one can do is to observe the different survival strategies in the age of the gas chamber. As Lech N. Nijakowski has correctly observed: "Man is not a self-sufficient ethical hero, but a straw in the wind, who requires peaceful times and a friendly environment in which to grow with dignity."⁶³

Maintaining close contact with the Germans was nearly always interpreted as collaboration with the occupying power. However, in light of eyewitness accounts, this did not mean that every action taken by some of the undercover agents and Jews working with the Germans, such as Spitz and Landau, should be seen as criminal and base. Each of the undercover agents or zealous Jewish police officers helped at least a few people. For instance, thanks to his connections, Symche Spira obtained permission from the SD for himself and others to remain in Kraków.⁶⁴ Thus Mosze Teler and his brother supposedly secured a stamp in their identity papers.⁶⁵ This also does not mean that we should attribute most of the tip-offs in occupied Kraków to them. These were incidental overall and not as common as the underground documents and postwar statements would have us believe.

This research does not aim to justify the attitudes and actions of collaborators, which were regarded as contrary to the principle of social solidarity. Rather, it attempts to understand these people's motivations. Did Jewish undercover agents work with the occupying power for gain, out of fear, or in extreme circumstances? This seems

62 The stories *inter alia* of Puzet, Selinger, Weininger, Appel, or Brandstätter.

63 Lech M. Nijakowski, *Rozkosz zemsty* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2014), p. 26.

64 Testimony of Herman Heindrich, Bundesarchiv (BA), B 162/1974, p. 1615.

65 Testimony of Mosze Teler, BA, B 162/1974, p. 1552.

to be especially relevant in the context not only of German policies in 1942/43, the period of “Operation Reinhard,”⁶⁶ but also with regard to the brutalization of daily life. During this time, the boundaries of acceptable behavior had shifted considerably. And it was during “Operation Reinhard” that most of the Jews in the so-called “Diamant Network” made contact with the Gestapo. In the course of “Operation Reinhard,” the Germans not only mobilized Jewish undercover agents, but also liquidated them as inconvenient witnesses to their crimes. In exceptional circumstances they got rid of them in 1944 (including Diamant), or helped them escape to Hungary (including Branstäter, Poretz, and Weininger). However, eyewitnesses to those events did not recognize this point. Moreover, when reading the documents emanating from the Kraków underground, one gets the impression that the Jews had been working with the Germans from the beginning of the occupation — which was referred to by “Pantera” in his report.

Information on the subject of Maurycy Diamant is the most dubious. Statements on his role in combating the Polish resistance movement are imprecise and based on the testimony of third parties recorded after the war. For the most part they repeated widely-known information on secret meetings between Jews and Germans at 6 Sławkowska Street and in Kraków cafés, and on the structured nature of this collaboration.⁶⁷ In reality these were places frequented by Polish Gestapo informants, including a certain Słanie and Jodłowski, both seen in the company of Diamant.⁶⁸

A weakness of the underground’s reports that I have already mentioned is their incomplete nature. I have managed to find a couple of reports from 1943, including a detailed surveillance report on members of the so-called “Diamant Network,” from which it clearly emerges that for some reason they represented a serious threat to the members of the resistance movement. An example of this type of remark is to be found in the memoirs of Józef Proficz, a member of the Kraków “Żelbet,” who describes this group of individuals as especially

66 On “Operation Reinhard” see Dariusz Libionka, ed., *Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 2017).

67 Including AIPN GK 174/670, p. 3; *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*, I.VIII.1943, no. 1, p. 5; Nuszkievicz, *Uparci*, pp. 174, 176; AIPN Kr 502/1061, p. 36; the wartime memoirs of Dominik Birski, “Kryptonim”. *Wasze ulice — nasze kamienice*, AIPN Kr 120/125.

68 Dąbrowa-Kostka, *W okupowanym Krakowie*, p. 39.

dangerous and as armed Gestapo agents.⁶⁹ This account was widely accepted by members of the Kraków underground and was soon embellished with further details.

In fact, however, the activities of most of the Jewish underground agents seem to have stemmed more from settling personal scores. The stories of Stefania Brandstätter and Ignacy Taubman may be proof of this. Brandstätter's victims were usually her pre-war friends; Taubman's work with the German authorities was one of several survival strategies that he used. His contact with the Germans was limited above all to arranging identity papers for foreign families in order to enable them to flee Poland. Interestingly enough, these people did not arouse fear at all in the Jewish resistance movement nor among the inhabitants of the Kraków ghetto.

Within the ghetto, Symche Spira of the Jewish Ordnungsdienst, Brodman, Białobroda, Spitz, and Appel were feared the most. From that perspective, the most dangerous also could have been Jakub Selinger and Lejzor Landau, who survived the war thanks to their close relations with Wilhelm Kunde from the Jewish section of the Kraków KdS. Those with the right connections had no problem leaving for Hungary in 1943 and 1944. Postwar testimony also reveals assistance given to their fellow Jews.

Some agents and members of the Jewish Ordnungsdienst in Kraków provided assistance to very religious Jews, probably hoping for repayment in the "world to come." As Michał Weichert has written, "thus they wanted to assure themselves of the assistance of rabbis 'in the world to come,' just to be on the safe side."⁷⁰

The stories of the rescue of several Hasidic leaders are illustrative of this. The Belzer Rebbe, Aaron Rokeach and his brother Mordechai, the Rabbi of Biłgoraj, were protected by Szymon Spitz and by the Ordnungsdienst and its head, Symche Spira. Similarly, the Bobover Rebbe, Szlomo Halbersztam, reportedly survived thanks to help from and an agreement with Jewish undercover agents.⁷¹

Some of the agents might also have felt that providing succor and protection to Hasidic leaders with large followings would mitigate the

69 "Sowiniec," 364b.

70 Memoirs of Michał Weichert, AŻIH, 302/25, part II, p. 89.

71 I discuss Halbersztam's story in detail in my book, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?* See also the testimony of Ida Grunberg, YVA, O.3/3091.

intense animosity towards them, thereby gaining them some personal safety.⁷² It is possible that some of the undercover agents needed an appropriate alibi in the event of a postwar reckoning with justice. In fact, Aharon Rokeach⁷³ and Szlomo Halbersztam⁷⁴ provided Lejsor Landau with such an alibi.

In establishing the scale of Jewish collaboration in occupied Kraków, the issue of an accurate list of the supposed members of the so-called "Diamant Network" is key. A valuable source for studying this issue is the postwar court records from trials of leading officials

72 See a memo dictated by Rabbi Mordechai Rokeach to Rabbi S. Rottstein, published under the title "Protocol ha-Hatzalah" (Hebrew), *Kotarat* (Hebrew), January 30, 2009. When the Rokeach brothers were smuggled into Ghetto A from Bochnia, Spitz declined Mordechai's request that he provide them with work permits, saying he never did a favor for anyone. Mordechai argued that since every public figure has many enemies, helping the Rokeachs could actually be to Spitz's own advantage, in that thousands of Hasidim would respect and trust him and even help him when necessary. This convinced Spitz and the next day he returned with two permits for the brothers. See also Yosef Israel, *Rescuing the Rebbe of Belz: Belzer Chassidus — History, Rescue and Rebirth* (Brooklyn: ArtScroll Mesorah, 2005), pp. 209–210. Both parties adhered to the terms of their understanding. The Rebbe and his brother received their work permits and later, during the October 1942 deportations, were protected by Spitz and Spira and were moved by Spitz to the safety of Spira's apartment for the duration of the *Aktion*. And the Rebbe continuously treated them with the utmost dignity and esteem and showered them with the highest religious honors. Regarding the great honors the Rebbe conferred on Spitz, Brodman, Förster, Weindling, and Spira on the night of the Simhat Torah holiday 1942, see Shaul Hutterer, *Yemey Shaul Bikhtuvim* (Yiddish) (Brooklyn: privately published, 2000), p. 172.

73 Kalman Landau (Lejsor Landau's son) in his book *Menat Helky: Hiddushim Ubi'urim al Masehet Bava Batra* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Landau family, 2004), p. 23, writes of going with his father to see the Rebbe before the latter's flight from Budapest. Many people had come to take leave of the Rebbe and his brother.

We went into the Rebbe's room. He told my father to sit by the table while I was standing next to him. After a short conversation, he told my father that since he himself is leaving [and would not be around to personally vouch for him] he would write him a letter [instead]. Meanwhile, eminent rabbis came to take leave of the Rebbe. Still, within less than an hour father was called to the Rebbe who handed him the letter that was written in his own holy handwriting; an exceptional rarity... The Rebbe's letter was very warm, saying that father saved thousands of Jews.

The Belzer Rebbe also sent his brother Mordechai with his attendant Hillel Wind to intercede for Landau with Judge Isaac Kister when he was accused in Tel Aviv.

74 Letter by Szlomo Halbersztam to Landau, October 9, 1958, in which he wrote: "I am enclosing herewith a copy of a telegram that I sent to the Attorney General when I found out that you are being accused with false suspicions." A facsimile can be found in my book, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?* pp. 392–393.

of the Kraków Gestapo who worked with Jewish underground agents. Legal action was taken in both Polish and German courts against, among others, Wilhelm Kunde, Kurt Heinemeyer, Oskar Brandt, Rudolf Körner, Paul Siebert, Edgar Schult, and Robert Weismann of the Kraków KdS. The testimonies of Kunde and Heinemeyer are of particular interest, although not devoid of convenient excuses by the accused. The latter testified:

I do not recall the date when there were twenty Jewish Gestapo agents in various houses in the Kraków area. At that time Jews resident in the ghetto were free to go out to work in Kraków; they took advantage of this and absconded from work in droves.⁷⁵

In turn, Wilhelm Kunde's testimony includes information on individual informers of the Jewish section of the Krakow KdS. Kunde also devoted a great deal of effort in describing his relations with Lejzor Landau. He doubtless took advantage of the opportunity to plead extenuating circumstances during his interrogation. He presented appropriate justification for his service in the Gestapo, probably counting on a reduced sentence. Kunde presented his friendship with Landau from the point of view of a German official working with a Jew under desperate circumstances, which represented a survival strategy. He above all drew attention to the help he gave; this included helping people smuggle and trade in 1941, in the Kraków ghetto, or helping people get to Bochnia and then to Budapest in 1943.⁷⁶ It is not out of the question that so-called transactions were made between Landau and Kunde, to which Landau himself referred in 1966:

This is how my acquaintanceship with Kunde began. After some time, when Gruber left and Kunde took over his position, Kunde introduced me to his deputy, Heindrichlt.⁷⁷

Thus Kunde was creating his own self-image quite different from the one that emerged from the charges against him. However, the

75 Records of the court case against Kurt Heinemeyer, AIPN Kr 502/2246, p. 171.

76 When asked after the war, at the trial of Wilhelm Kunde, about his friendship with the Gestapo officer, Landau, probably in order to avoid the consequences of having maintained contact with a criminal during the war, testified that they had met when the Jewish ghetto was being set up in Kraków in 1941; BA, B 162/1974, p. 1479. According to witnesses, this had taken place earlier in the war.

77 BA, B 162/1974, p. 1479.

information on Lejzor Landau's close contact with members of the so-called "Diamant Network," which the Jews of Kraków and Bochnia often mentioned, is less trustworthy.

In the testimony of these Gestapo officers, names of other Jewish undercover agents (including Spitz, Appel, Białobroda, and Selinger) crop up. On this basis, all we can assert is that only some Jews were connected to the Kraków KdS, in close touch with specific Gestapo officials, as well as with other German officials. Without a doubt these were people who were widely known in the underground world and usually beyond the reach of an AK execution squad. From the court proceedings of trials of Gestapo officials, it emerges, too, that contact with Jewish agents was sporadic and a function of place and time. This did not, however, have any connection to the operations of a network of underground informers.⁷⁸

The influence of pre-war stereotypes of the Jewish relationship with Communism is also evident in many documents. One AK report in 1943 states: "It has been noticed too that the Gestapo's Jewish undercover agents (Diamand's group) have numerous contacts with the communists, and thus appear to be working for both sides."⁷⁹

Similar notices were placed in the underground press, including in the *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa* and the *Agencja Prasowa*. This mythologized theory overlaid with untruths redefined events during the German occupation. Manipulated by the establishment of a hierarchy of values, and based on the deconstructed and widely-circulated myth of the "Żydokomuna," it has influenced the image of the so-called "Diamant Network" — which was, in turn, widely circulated by the Polish underground — as an organized Gestapo agency in cahoots with the Communists.

Conclusions

From 1944, settling scores for war crimes dominated the work of the Polish prosecutors' offices of the Special Criminal Courts, the Administrative Courts, the District Courts, and the Supreme Court,⁸⁰

⁷⁸ See *Wymuszona współpraca lub zdrada*.

⁷⁹ Archiwum Komendy Obwodu Armii Krajowej w Brzesku w l. 1942–1949, report covering the period from September 21 to October 20, 1943, ANKr 5.

⁸⁰ The largest number of trials was held before Special Criminal Courts (SSK). They

as well as Jewish justice represented by the CKŻP's Social Honor Court.⁸¹ An analysis of these documents does not allow us to establish the extent of collaboration on the part of Polish Jews. We can only draw general conclusions on the scale of this phenomenon in occupied Kraków. And this was without a doubt exaggerated by the Krakow underground.

The approximate number of Jewish agents was about twenty individuals. In specific accounts and statements, the names of other Jews working with the German authorities also emerge. However, I have been unable to confirm this information. Bearing in mind the initial number of between 800 to 1,000 Gestapo agents, Jews represented an insignificant percentage of people on the Germans' payroll.

Nor is it possible to assess the true participation of Jewish undercover agents in crimes against Jews, or in operations directed against the Polish underground in occupied Kraków. Many references

handed down sentences provided for in the resolutions of the PKWN Decree of August 31, 1944, with subsequent amendments. On February 16, 1945, the Supreme Court modified that decree, dividing it into separate paragraphs: §1 covered "involvement in murder," as well as "people sought or victimized by the occupying forces for whatever reason (except for criminal offences), condemned, imprisoned or deported by them"; §2 covered actions "other than those covered in §1 against the Polish State, or the civilian population, or prisoners-of-war." Up to July 22, 1946, 8,838 accusations reached the SSKs, of which 4,593 were investigated. Long prison sentences were handed down to 306 individuals, and 631 individuals were condemned to death. The Special Criminal Courts were abolished by a decree of October 17, 1946. Altogether, supposedly forty-four Jewish people were tried by the SSKs, of whom thirty were convicted, and ten of them condemned to death; two of these sentences were carried out. During this period the SSK prosecutor's office in Kraków initiated legal proceedings against eight individuals; four trials were held, the rest were adjourned, since the accused had not been apprehended. Grzegorz Jakubowski, *Sądownictwo powszechne w Polsce w latach 1944–1950* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IPN, 2002) pp. 35–37; Andrzej Rzepliński, *Przystosowanie ustroju sądownictwa do potrzeb państwa totalitarnego w Polsce w latach 1944–1956* in Witold Kulesza and Andrzej Rzepliński, eds., *Przestępstwa sędziów i prokuratorów w Polsce w latach 1944–1956* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IPN, 2000), pp. 16–21.

- 81 The Social Honor Court attached to the Jewish Central Committee in Poland (CKŻP) was set up in September 1946, and operated until 1950. Its principal task was to judge the activities of the members of the Judenräte, the Jewish police, the German concentration-camp administration, and Jews collaborating with the Germans during World War II. Sentences handed down by this court provided for reprimands, rebukes, censures, suspension of civil rights for between one and three years, as well as expulsion from the Jewish community. For more on the operation of this court, see Andrzej Żbikowski, *Sąd Społeczny przy CKŻP. Wojenne rozliczenia społeczności żydowskiej w Polsce* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2014).

to this come from unreliable sources, very often rumors heard "about town." The story of the activities of the so-called "Diamant" group, mainly in documents created by the Kraków underground, could serve as an example. The term "Diamant Network" was spread only after the war, and in fact it related to groups of individual Jews working with the Gestapo, and not to an organized Jewish agency.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, despite the generally accepted view of the inhabitants of the Kraków ghetto, using Jewish agents to get things done was not an obvious move for the Germans. When Jews wanted to accomplish something, they usually tried to bribe Germans, but this did not guarantee that a German official would keep his promise. At the same time, this did not mean that contacts with undercover agents were not sought out. They were the only ones able to negotiate with the occupying power, if only in the case of releasing people held in custody. A witness to those events, Janina Jankowska, recalled:

...in any event when we needed to negotiate with the Gestapo about a ransom for someone's life, or for some relaxation of the rigorous laws applied to the Jews we turned to Weininger, who handled such matters for a fee.⁸²

Some of the Jewish agents, however, set up meetings between prisoners and their loved ones, and even helped with escapes from custody, thus saving people from certain death. Tadeusz Pankiewicz, a pharmacist in the Kraków ghetto, was convinced that Aleksander Förster was someone who had interceded with the German authorities on key issues on behalf of the ghetto inhabitants. Förster was also able to obtain additional document stamps for people who had no other way of receiving permission to remain in the enclosed district. Förster supposedly played an important part during the operation deporting Jews to Bełżec in June 1942, when he personally intervened in order to help people who had been selected for deportation.⁸³

My aim has been above all to get beyond the postwar narrative of the so-called "Diamant Network" as a dangerous agency of the Kraków Gestapo. I have been especially interested in how this story of a group of Jewish undercover agents arose, and on what basis the arguments

82 AIPN Kr 502/2813, p. 37.

83 Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), p. 50.

that it was a threat to the Polish underground developed. Who spread these rumors and what was their aftereffect?

The image of Jewish undercover agents that emerges from underground accounts reflects a certain mental state on the part of the writers and appears to confirm stereotypes established earlier. They are based on the reports of people whose views we do not know. Moreover — and this is another problem for scholars — knowledge of the resistance movement in Kraków is very limited. There is still no academic study of the history of the ZWZ/AK in the Kraków district. In the context of the subject under discussion here, we know only that, from 1942, a cell of the “Skała” Independent Partisan Brigade, organized by Józef Baster (“Rak”),⁸⁴ was responsible for blocking tip-offs to the Gestapo and that it “intercepted thousands of anonymous letters.”⁸⁵ The counter-intelligence network operating at the General Post Office in Kraków, where anonymous letters were seized, was commanded at the time by Stefan Faber (“Stefan”), to whom “Rak’s” cell reported.⁸⁶

On the basis of the available source material, we should also study the underlying levels of antisemitism in Kraków. This is not just a problem of statistics, especially when we take into account the rural areas attached to the city in 1941, and the underground’s attitude toward Jews. Hence, for example, these particular judgments were those passed by members of the underground in their reports. This is a far-reaching generalization, but it best reflects the atmosphere during those years. We know, of course, that underlying antisemitism did not refer to all underground operatives. It is also worth considering what this underlying antisemitism meant, given the extremely challenging urban environment facing the occupying forces in metropolitan Kraków. These issues require separate studies, as do the ethics involved in the activities of the Jewish undercover agents.

Translated from the Polish by Jarosław Garliński

84 This cell was formed toward the end of 1939, by the Orzeł Biały organization. During World War II it continued to operate within the framework of the Kraków Kedyw. Its principal aim was to intercept letters to the German authorities that did not bear a sender’s name. It also noted the handwriting of the address.

85 Based on a conversation with Janusz Baster, Józef Baster’s son, February 5, 2016.

86 Dąbrowa-Kostka, *W okupowanym Krakowie*, pp. 43–44.