Pamiętnik Dawida Rubinowicza – Bodzentyn r. 1939-1942

A Comparative Study | Forth version (2023)

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Introduction

The history of the Jewish Community in Krajno and Bodzentyn during the Nazi occupation can be studied in part from the perspective of the "Diary of Dawid Rubinowicz". By selecting and focusing on particular themes from the "Diary" and showing how these had been endured and are still remembered by survivors, this comparative study aims to broaden our understanding of Dawid's plight and to shed more light on details of the everyday life and hardships imposed on Jews, especially in relation to the following topics: Childhood; Antisemitism; The Outbreak of War; German Occupation; Refugees from Płock; Life in the Ghetto and Deportation to the Camps.

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You will find references to ten testimonies of men and women who were born in Bodzentyn: Rachell Szachter Eisenberg (1929); Irene Szachter Horn (1927); Max Safir (1925); Eva Sztarkman Herling (1923); Sonja Sztarkman Applebaum (1921); Shlomo Fish (1921); Jakub Bromberg (1919); Rachel Saphir Einesman-Binstock (1917); Samuel Flaumenbaum (1915) and Pinchas Frimerman (1915).[1]

There are also references to five testimonies of men and women who were deported to the ghetto of Bodzentyn from the city of Płock in the early spring of 1941—Michael Zelon (born in Płock 1922), Lena Michalowicz (born in Płock 1920), Nathan Smiga (born in Płock 1918), David Dantus (born in Sierpc 1922) and Tema Lichtenstein (born in Warsaw 1918).[2]

In addition to these oral testimonies, you will find quotations from the memoir of Goldie Szachter Kalib, who was born in Bodzentyn 1931,[3] along with quotations from a transcript of an interview with Henry Krystal, a man who was born in Sosnowiec in 1925 and came to live in Bodzentyn a few months after the outbreak of war in 1939.[4]

The “Diary” in itself speaks for perhaps thousands and thousands of Jewish contemporaries: Dawid went through the torment of registration, the prohibition of using public transport, the enforcement of fines for real and imaginary offences, the rationing of food, forced labour, the house-to-house searches, the degradation in many ways that removed Dawid and other Jews from the fabric of society including the marking, i.e. wearing a Star of David, the wholesale confiscation of property and the deportation of Jews to camps as slave labourers and ultimately for extermination. There is coherence to be found between the testimonies used in this study. They also give a voice to the men and women who did not live to tell their stories.

2011-01-12, Habo in Sweden.
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Childhood

In October 1939, all Jewish children were excluded from the Polish state school system. Rachell and Irene Szachter recall that their family, and others who could afford it, made clandestine arrangements for groups of children of similar ages to be taught privately by both Polish and Jewish teachers. The situation was tense Irene Szachter recalls: “You were not supposed to have books, and you were not supposed to study […] every time we heard a knock on the door […] the books were hidden in flour boxes.” Also, twelve-year-old Dawid Rubinowicz continued to study, but seemingly on his own and at home, or so he writes on August 12 1940, i.e. just before the first anniversary of the outbreak of war and only weeks before the beginning of a new term. Thinking about how he used to go to school, Dawid feels like bursting into tears. “Today, I must stay at home and can’t go anywhere,” he exclaims.

The school notebooks that Dawid had came in handy when he started keeping his diary on March 21 1940. Dawid wrote in Polish, the language he was taught at the local school, as were the other Jewish children of his neighbourhood. “Jewish and Polish children attended elementary school together,” Jakub Bromberg recalls. “Jews weren’t taught religion there. We would leave during the first lesson because that was usually the Catholic religion. So then, we moved out of the way, went to the school ball ground and roughhoused there.” Jakub recalls having one favourite among the teachers: “She was so loving—like a mother.” Also Irene Szachter mentions “two excellent teachers” who inspired her during her first years in school.

We can assume that Dawid, like his contemporaries, spoke Polish at home along with Yiddish, if not with his parents, then with his closest elder relatives. This is how Rachell Szachter recalls it. She spoke Yiddish to her grandparents and at home most of the time, but sometimes also Polish, and Polish, of course, in her conversation with Gentile friends. Pinchas Frimerman however remembers speaking Polish in school and only Yiddish at home.

It is most likely that, in addition to public school, Dawid attended a religious elementary school (*cheder*), which was customary in those days. His family was religiously observant. Dawid's mother laid the table more formally—festively—every Friday evening, lighting two candles to welcome the Sabbath (*Shabbat*). Also, Dawid and his father went to pray even when it was prohibited; this was the situation on May 8 1942. In the ghetto, communal prayer was held by secretly forming groups of ten male Jewish adults (a *minyan*)—the required quorum. Rachell Szachter recalls that the men got together "without entering the main streets […] just by passing through the courtyard, younger children kept watch".

The reason for the Rubinowicz family's moving from Kielce, where Dawid was born, to the rural setting of Krajno close to Bodzentyn is not known. There may, however, be some indication in the old records of births and marriages of this small satellite farm village. More than a few Jewish families are known to have lived there, including members of the extended Rubinowicz family. There was even an earlier "Dawid Rubinowicz" before the Dawid that we know from the "Diary".[5]

Even at the time of war, and especially in the summer of 1940 and even in 1941, Dawid describes the everyday life in the rural setting of Krajno with great fondness, gazing at the green fields from his window, going to the woods, picking morels (mushrooms), bilberries et cetera. His depiction of the area is very much the same as those of survivors recalling their own childhood in nearby Bodzentyn. Rachell Szachter recounts: "I recall being outdoors a lot, summer and winter. In the summertime, we would—just ten minutes from our house—we would walk and roam and play in the meadows and go and pick blackberries […] We very seldom were chaperoned by adults […] it was really a joyful childhood."

Rachell Szachter remembers having a lot of Gentile friends from school and that Jews and non-Jews led a reasonably good life together. Poles and Jews would visit each other during

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holidays. However, “we knew that we were different and separate,” she says. Shlomo Fish recalls that he used to play with Polish kids too. He saw himself “both as a Jew and as a Pole”.

The Jewish political movement Zionism is known to have been quite active in Bodzentyn and the vicinity. Young people were especially attracted to it, and more and more Jewish men and women emigrated from Bodzentyn between the wars.[6] Pinchas Frimerman, who was a member of the local right-wing Zionist organization, remembers attending preparations for emigrating to the British mandate of Palestine where the young people were being told that their certificates were arriving any day.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is known to have been a major factor in precipitating Jewish emigration from Poland. The Jews of Bodzentyn who attended school in the 1920s and 1930s refer to such incidents. “One [particular] teacher did not respect the Shabbat. He wanted us to have a seminar on this day,” Rachel Saphir-Einesman recalls. There were also instances when Jewish children were subjected to the medieval myth of Jews killing a Christian child to use the blood for the Passover, baking the unleavened bread (*matzót*). Eva Sztarkman remembers that “there was one teacher—he used to tell us to write down: ‘the Jews killed a child before Passover and the blood they used for *matzo’*”. Jakub Bromberg says that Polish children exposed him to this myth too in school, but not so much by the teachers as. “… when they let us, boys, out for the break, into the schoolyard, we’d knock each other down, fight and call each other names.” One of these names was “Beilis”, a Jew who had been accused of ritual murder. The other name was “Macoch”, a Christian who had been accused of stealing. “So when the boys were fighting with each other, then all you could hear was: ‘you beilis!’ and ‘you macoch!’” Irene Szachter recalls that her elder brother Moishe was a well-behaved child who refrained from fighting, thus being aggravated and wishing to avoid fighting like these boys; he felt nervous in school.

Rachel Saphir-Einesman and Jakub Bromberg specifically recall one teacher who was a known antisemite and taught at the local school in Bodzentyn’s public school in the mid-1920s and the following years. He would sing a song about wishing to see the Jews killed. Rachel’s father, Icek, complained to the school management, and asked them to remove this teacher who “called for violence against the Jews”. Nonetheless, the teacher was permitted to remain at his job.

Rachell Szachter recalls life in Bodzentyn as quiet up to the late 1930s. “Not until close to the war did I ever experience any anti-Semitic incidents […] But just prior to the war when

Hitler was already having his power in Germany—I think it must have been very close to '39 […] this teacher, who was known to be an antisemite, was teaching geography. And she called a Jewish boy, and she wanted him to show Gdynia [on the map]. Gdynia was the port, the farthest northern port in Poland. First, she brought a little stool, and she made fun of him because he was too short. And then, when he pointed to Prussia, she said: 'Run away from there, Jew, because that is where Hitler is, and he does not like Jews.' And this was the first time that I openly experienced an antisemitic outburst." Later on, Rachell learned that her parents, dreading the thought of being subjected to antisemitism for some time, had been saving money so that they, when such a time came, could make their escape.

In one account, the attitudes between Jewish and Polish children altered just before the war broke out in 1939. Pinchas Frimerman recalls: "I liked everyone in school. Jews and Polish pupils [were] together. But not in the last years, [we did] not play together because of the growing antisemitism."

Most historians would agree that from the mid-thirties, that is, after the death of the former chief of state Józef Piłsudski in 1935, Polish antisemitic propaganda intensified. There were barriers introduced to ritual slaughter, as well as restrictions on Jews' access to education and certain professions. Nationalistic factions agitated for economic boycotts in order to persuade all the country's Jews to emigrate. This movement was not only endorsed by the Polish government but also by many leaders of the Catholic Church in Poland.

With war closing in on Poland**,** local antisemitic activists in Bodzentyn would take up posts outside Jewish shops and stalls, attempting to prevent Poles from entering them.[7] "They shouted to others 'do not buy from Jews', but there were those who would roam around the store until the site was clear, and then they would go into the store and buy whatever they needed anyway," Rachel Saphir-Einesman recalls.

With the influx of Nazi German propaganda, Dawid is likely to have experienced for himself the gradual intensification of anti-Semitism in his own neighbourhood. Sometime after the

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outbreak of war it was even expressed by the village mayor in Krajno. On January 16 1942, Dawid writes: “The mayor said all Jews would have to be shot because they were enemies. If I could only write down just a part of all those things said at our house, but I simply can’t …” Dawid himself had seen the village constable’s cruelty in forcing local Jews to shovel snow in the bitter cold, so it was probably no surprise to learn that it was the constable who was responsible for setting up a poster with a caricature of the Jews headed “The Jew is a Cheat, Your only Enemy”.[8]

The Outbreak of War

With the war on the way, both Polish and Jewish men had to leave their families to join the army. Victor, the eldest brother of Eva Sztarkman was called up, as were Samuel Flaumenbaum and Pinchas Frimerman. Pinchas recalls that his departure from home “was like a funeral […] they all cried”.

The sense of insecurity and fear was growing among Poles and Jews alike. Some of the people in Bodzentyn may have heard Hitler’s speeches over the radio owned by the Szachter family. It was kept on the balcony of their house, and those in earshot could hear the broadcasts from there. Even so, Rachell Szachter says that she felt secure enough, believing her parents would “fix things” when the war broke out. Eva Sztarkman also recalls that at first people did not find the occupation so alarming: “We were scared; all the Jews were scared because we heard what he [Hitler] was doing with the Jews. Just when they [German troops] [first] came in [to Bodzentyn] they did not harm the Jews; then we were happy.” Rachel Saphir-Einesman also remembers that her father, a veteran of World War I, found it hard to believe that the Germans who had been “friendly people” should turn against the Jews.

It was not until March 1940—more than half a year after the outbreak of the war—that Dawid first attempted to chronicle his experiences. Posted on a storefront in Krajno there is a notice that catches his attention: Jews are no longer allowed to travel on vehicles. Some months later, on September 1—on the first anniversary of the outbreak of war—Dawid recalls the suffering that people have already experienced and how much everyone has gone through in such a short time. Also, Dawid writes that so many people, including those in his own family, have become “utterly unemployed”. They are running out of stock—merchandise and food. In the same fashion, Eva Sztarkman remarks that her family couldn’t do any business since the time the Germans occupied her hometown. Indeed making a living was becoming increasingly difficult. Goldie Szachter recounts how the family mill was confiscated by the occupation government in the closing months of 1940 and handed over to a *Volksdeutsche*, a German living in Poland, who had moved into Bodzentyn and been elevated to the position of a commissar.[9] On November 4, that same year, the Banking co-operative of Bodzentyn (Bank spółdzielczy) excluded all of its Jewish clients and closed their accounts.[10]

German Occupation

Dawid uses the Polish expression for the SS extermination squads, the German żandarmerią. He also refers to the *Judenrat*, the Jewish Council. From the end of 1939, the German occupiers ordered that a council of "Jewish elders" was to be established in each Community and that it was to be fully responsible for the execution of German orders.[11] According to Dawid's diary, Dawid's father and other adults elected such a council on August 5 1940. The Judenrat and the Jewish Police were forced, often under the pain of death, to follow the directives of the Nazis and their ever-increasing demands. They had little choice but to act. In normal circumstances, elders were indeed often heads of the Jewish communal organization. However, in Bodzentyn at this time, the elderly Community leaders, Nus'n Szachter and Icek Szafir were perceived as being unable to cope with the Germans. Rachel Saphir-Einesman recalls that her father, Icek, asked to be relieved of his duties as a member of the Jewish Council, conceiving himself far too old for this difficult task. After that, Icek wouldn't even go out into the streets.

The town elders of Bodzentyn deemed it wise to select "a younger man who would be better suited to cope with the expected difficult demands of the cruel occupation government. The committee saw fit to place its trust in Uncle Froyim [Szachter]".[12] Initially, he sought to mitigate German demands for valuables and to lessen the horror of labour roundups, but in the end, he found it impossible to cope with the situation. Szachter was arrested and taken to the Gestapo in Kielce for questioning.

"Uncle Froyim was being charged with sabotage [having warned people who were wanted by the Germans] and with failing, as head of the Judenrat, to fulfill satisfactorily the demands of the Germans authorities."[13] Various attempts to pay a ransom for his release failed. He was eventually transferred to Auschwitz, where he perished.[14]

At the beginning of the occupation, mainly men were singled out to perform forced labour. Shlomo Fish recalls: “We were forced to do different kinds of jobs. Sometimes we got home in the evening. We were to clean, collect wood […] At one time, I was taken to Słupia Nowa [Nowa Słupia] for months in a row […] and sometime later to a stone quarry.” There were instances when men were taken away; nobody knew where Irene Szachter recalls. Rachel Saphir-Einesman remembers that slave labourers were also taken to Bieliny and that they never returned from there.

Nathan Smiga describes that the Germans used to come and take the men to work in trucks. There was a call for workers in the synagogue where Nathan was staying with other Jews from Płock who had not been assigned a place elsewhere to stay: “The committee from that town came in: ‘We need a hundred men for today.’ We had no choice. We went. There was a Jewish police already; they would take you down to the places, wherever you would have to go. They were very responsible; every day you had to go.” Nathan Smiga recalls that from time to time, it happened that people who had means hired a replacement: “I went for them, and I made a few dollars, a few zlotys. With them, you could buy bread.” Seizing the opportunity to reunite with his brother, who had been deported elsewhere during the expulsion from Płock, Nathan attempted to escape from Bodzentyn: “[My brother] came, and the Jewish police caught us. They put us in the jail, in the *mikva* [a bathhouse used for the purpose of ritual immersion in Orthodox Judaism]. The mikva was [used for] the jail. We broke a window […] walked out from there and fled, ran away, fleeing on foot to Częstochowa.”

On 15 January 1942 Dawid writes from Krajno: “ . . . They chased us out into the snow, but we didn’t know we were supposed to go and shovel snow. We wondered where on earth they might be taking us. My brother, Auntie and I ran off into the village while the militia [was] still standing outside the shop, but Uncle, Mother and Grandma went away […] Mother had gone without gloves, Grandmother too […] While I was having my dinner I saw the same militiaman who’d been at our place, walking along the street. I ran out into the fields, fleeing because I thought he was coming to fetch us.” When the Jews were sent to forced labour, the overseers, were sometimes people of the own neighbourhood. In Krajno it was the village constable who ordered Dawid and other boys to go and shovel snow on 16 and 19 January, taking them right up the hill where the worst frost and driving snow was. There—weeping from the cold—everyone had to stay until sunset.

Young Dawid begins to sense the escalating danger, but not so much in 1940 and not so much in Krajno. Henry Krystal, who had come to lodge with his maternal grandparents in Bodzentyn a few months after the outbreak of war, remarks that "things were not yet tightened up in the small towns and villages, but it was getting there". On March 24 1941, Dawid writes: "… we hardly ever see any soldiers in our part of the neighbourhood."

Learning about the killing of "another victim" on December 13 1941, Dawid says, "nothing like that had ever happened". Michael Zelon, a refugee from Płock, confirms this description of events: "At that time, the [whole] situation changed. They were stricter with us: the Germans came in every few days with some Germans inspecting [making searches] and confiscating things."

In the early spring of 1941, Michael Zelon felt that "there was total freedom of movement" in and out of the ghetto. His recollection of the situation, changing for the worse some months later, is probably partly due to the introduction of the death penalty, or *Schiessbefehl*, for anyone caught leaving the ghetto. This was decreed in the latter part of 1941 in an attempt to deter smuggling and escape. On November 1 1941, Dawid writes: "Today notices were put up in Kielce that anyone who goes in and out of the 'Jewish Quarter' will face the death-penalty […] These notices were not only put up in Kielce but in all the towns under the 'Generalgouvernement'."[15]

In the districts of the General Government, Jews were required to wear an armband with a Star of David on it. Dawid knew that moving illegally, he would need to take off this armband in order not to be quite so easily recognized as a Jewish fugitive. Walking to Bodzentyn on March 12 1942, the day the family moves into the ghetto, Dawid writes: "I

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went without an armband on […] I was terribly frightened, O God, if anybody had met us, then… Thank God we arrived safely.” Having a fake identification card could help one to avoid arrest, as did change one’s appearance. Michael Zelon and his father, who had started small business smuggling leather from Bodzentyn to Szydłowiec, understood that they would not be allowed to leave the town with this new order. Their business, however small, was their livelihood, and they decided to keep it up: “My father came up with a bike idea, he bought a bicycle, and I went on the bicycle to Szydłowiec, and we hid leather under my shirt. I could go fairly freely because in school [in Płock] as a [lone] Jew we had on our report card ‘religion’ and by mistake, they put on my report card ‘Catholic’ […] as a matter of fact [the Germans] stopped me once and I showed the document. They let me go without any problem as a Catholic.” Knowing his way around from his childhood, Max Safir, born in Bodzentyn, succeeded in fleeing from the ghetto in Kielce to his brother in Wierzbnik-Starachowice. He recalls: “I cut my hair [taking away the sidelocks worn by some men and boys in the Orthodox Jewish Community] so that my appearance would resemble a Christian.” Even a different garment would help with not being recognized: “We dressed like Poles just to get hold of potatoes and […] peels of potato; from this, my mother made soup,” David Dantus recalls. “We used a big moustache and a Polish cap.”

Bodzentyn had fallen within the jurisdiction of a Gendarmerie post under the command of a man named Dumker, also referred to as Dunkier in an alternate spelling[16]: “In his periodic visits to Bodzentyn, Dumker arrested various members of the intelligentsia—both Jews and non-Jews—who were never seen again. Sporadically, he also shot Jews ‘wherever and whenever the spirit moved him.’ The post-war German judicial investigation by the State Prosecutor’s Office in Hamburg identified a number of *Gendarmerie* members who rotated through Starachowice at one time or another. But the three most notorious tormenters of the Jews—Ertel, Schmidt, and Dumker—were never listed as being among the commanding officers or even identified by name by anyone who was interrogated.”[17]

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In her memoirs, Goldie Szachter recalls the terror that Dumker incited from the very beginning to the end of the days of the ghetto period: “More horrifying was an incident that served as a precedent for incalculable repetitions of the same atrocity. There was a Jew in Bodzentyn who used to commemorate the anniversary of the death of his parents by visiting their grave at the Jewish Cemetery down Kielce Street and by reciting the memorial prayer there. One day, as he was standing in front of the tombstone intoning his prayer, the German gendarmerie happened to pass by the cemetery on its way to Bodzentyn. Apparently, a German caught sight of this Jew in the cemetery, and the head of the gendarmerie, Herr Dumker, halted the advancing group. The Jew was probably questioned and then ordered to go along with the Germans to a lot adjoining the property of the synagogue. There, Herr Dumker was seen taking out a revolver and shooting the guiltless Jew in cold blood. He photographed his slain victim before ordering him buried in this lot. From this point on, the gendarmerie chief periodically sought out victims for his new Jewish cemetery in Bodzentyn, wherever and whenever the spirit so moved him. Each burial was enacted only after his murdered victim had been photographed.”[18]

People witnessed that the *Gendarmerie* and, specifically, the blond man of short stature, “pies krwawy” (“bloody dog”) Dumker, was harassing the Jews of Bodzentyn frequently, almost every day.[19] Whenever Dumker was in town, he left pools of blood. He was seemingly obsessed with the killing of Jews, “especially the religious [ones] who wore side curls,” Rachel Saphir-Einesman recalls. Henry Krystal accounts: “… they started increasingly to kill people and sometimes at random, sometimes at the flimsiest excuse, like if you were running […] they started beating you and they would just do it until they killed you.”

Rachel Saphir-Einesman has a vivid memory of the murder of the young Jewess Gela Sztarkman: “I remember that Dumker often came along; he had several mistresses. He came into the store asking me for various things. We gave him whatever he demanded. We heard that already on the road, he had killed several people. I remember that this Dumker killed the Sztarkman family. A Polish man gave the German some vodka [as a bribe because] he wanted to buy the house of this family. So the Germans killed the parents, leaving a 14-year-old daughter, Gela Sztarkman, and a boy of 10. Daddy said to me: ‘Go check on Gela, see what she needs.’ For me, it was easier. Daddy felt responsible for the two orphans. When I went to Gela, Dumker appeared. [The Sztarkman family] had a candy store. I was standing in the corner, wishing to speak with her, but there was no time. The Germans from Bieliny came, as well as Dumker, along with his mistress. He commanded [Gela] to give him some pralines, for the Polish girl [the mistress] wanted to have these. She went up to the shelf on a ladder to bring the box down. Then he shot her in the back. She fell [off the ladder], and they all laughed at this ‘show’. I sneaked out. They had not seen me. I ran off. I do not know what happened to the [Sztarkman] boy.” Not being mortally wounded, Gela tried to make her escape when Dumker left the store. However, he returned and killed the young woman in the courtyard.[20] Not only did the killing take place anytime and anywhere, but also the Germans had their victims buried on the spot, often in the courtyards of the families. Dawid acknowledges this on 28 December 1941: “The militiaman ordered them to be buried in a hole in their own yard. That was a father, 3 sons and a daughter.”

Still residing in Krajno on December 12 1941, Dawid starts receiving alarming news about the terror of the Germans and reveals his escalating fear of coming face to face with them. He writes: “… they met a Jew who was going out of the town, and they immediately shot him for no reason, then they drove on and shot a Jewess, again for no reason […] All the way home I was frightened I might run across them …” From this time on Dawid’s reports on such killings and shootings intensifies. There is “another victim”, “two more victims”, “five Jews killed for hiding furs”. Indeed days and weeks pass full of fear and terror. By January 8, 1942, Dawid knew the Germans well enough to expect that a man who was not killed immediately when hit by a gunshot would almost certainly be beaten to death. Dawid’s life is fraught with fear from the endless atrocities.

The Refugees from Płock

The Jewish refugees from Płock (Plotzk), who Dawid and his family encountered in the ghetto, had already gone through hell prior to their deportation to Bodzentyn in the spring of 1941. “As elsewhere in Poland, the Jews of Płock were quickly subjected to confiscation [of personal property], marking [i.e., wearing a Star of David], forced labour, and many other indignities. They were also ‘ghettoized,’ forced to reside in a delimited but unwalled section of town and forbidden to leave without a permit. As Płock was part of the ‘incorporated territories’ of western Poland annexed to the Third Reich, the threat of total expulsion also hung over Poles and Jews alike. The Jews paid a large bribe in mid-January 1941 to defer deportation until the winter weather had passed but to no avail. In a last flurry of expulsions in early 1941—before military claims on rail transportation in preparation for the invasion of the Soviet Union brought such expulsions to an end—the Jews of Płock were deported in late February.”[21]

Tema Lichtenstein recalls her deportation from Płock: “some people […] came out with children, some came out with infants. They put something around their neck in order to hold up the child in it. The Germans pulled it off from their neck and threw the child against a tree, against anything that was there […] and the younger children—when they put us on open trucks, we were put so tightly—and the little children could not catch their breath, and they arrived at the destination dead.” “When they could not squeeze us in, they used the guns. […] On my truck [there] were twelve deaths,” Nathan Smiga witnesses. “Where was God? Everybody was screaming [the Hebrew credo] ’Sh’ma Yisrael’ [‘Hear O Israel’] [but] no angels were coming.”

The Jews of Płock were taken a short distance northwards to a transit camp at Soldau (now Działdowo) on the old Polish-East Prussian border. Michael Zelon recalls the further deportation from Soldau: “After seven days they called us. They [said]: ‘You’d better clean up, and you get ready for transportation.’ […] We were going on a train the whole night, and we landed up in a town by the name Skarżysko-Kamienna. We were unloaded […] the Polish police were there—no Germans—and we had a few hundred horse carriages or wagons waiting for us. There were farmers called in to move us. And we were loaded on a wagon like that, the six of us. And we went to a town. Bodzentyn was the name. […] This was a very poor little town […] [The Jews] were very primitive people, very religious, very superstitious and very warm-hearted. They were very poor, so they unloaded us into a big synagogue, and we were waiting. […] They prepared some food—some soup. And from the synagogue, they picked out different people for different places. The houses consisted of one room. Some of them had a room and kitchen.”

On their arrival, members of the refugee families were separated. The local Jewish citizens took them in, mainly two to a family, Irene Szachter recalls. Michael Zelon remembers that he and his brother were lodged at the house of a “very beautiful couple” who were not rich but gave them “everything”, even their own bed to sleep in. David Dantus, however, does not recall his reception as being quite so friendly. “They did not want us there,” he says. One should keep in mind that the refugees from Płock suffered terribly in the year to come and that the local Jewish families could not keep up giving their help for long. From the day that the refugees from Płock arrived in Bodzentyn a local Jewish committee was in charge of baking bread and cooking potatoes or soup in the synagogue for the hungry masses. Nevertheless, the depth of poverty was painful to witness: “I was shocked when, for the first time, I saw a Płock Jew drinking the water in which potatoes had been cooked,” Goldie Szachter recalls.[22] The tragedy befalling the Płock Jews was deepening day by day. On April 19 1942, Dawid writes in his diary about the shortage of food and that almost nothing could be delivered to the refugees. They were “jostling one another […] each one wanting to be first for those two potatoes in water! Today I also saw dinner being doled out in the kitchen. One person said, ‘I’m entitled to dinner for 3 persons, why have I only got it for 2 etc.?’”

Long before Dawid is enclosed with his family in the ghetto, he is affected by the situation. On May 25 1941, he writes from his residence in Krajno that “hundreds of people are dying of hunger, and there are thousands who don’t even have a bite to eat.” The following month, on July 10, he declares: “It’s a difficult business surviving […] it’s hard to buy food even for a day. Not a day passes without someone coming around begging; they’re all after food, but that’s the hardest thing to come by.”

The Płock refugees organized a committee in Bodzentyn, and an appeal was sent to Warsaw, asking for help. “A letter of May 5th describes the position of the refugees. Epidemic diseases had caused many deaths. ‘We had to bury 100 of our brethren,’ communicated another letter. Mortality was high. People wore rags, were hungry and were covered with [sores].”[23]

Another witness accounts: “My family and I were assigned to Bodzentyn. In Bodzentyn, the conditions were horrible […] twelve people altogether were living in an empty little store. Children were swollen from hunger and cold, and an epidemic broke out […] Our people died en masse from cold, hunger, and typhoid […] In the little town, I could not recognize our people. They were transformed into skeletons. All of them were in rags; they had open sores, and they were all begging. Thus appeared our compatriots before the end...”[24]

Remaining in Bodzentyn for a brief period of time, Lena Michalowicz recalls that there was a “mount of cemetery” in the ghetto. She got out of there before the typhus epidemic broke out. “We got into Skarżysko-Kamienna, we got in […] by horse and buggy,” she says.

The Jews of Płock were a considerably more modern and cosmopolitan Community than that of Bodzentyn. David Dantus found the construction of the houses to be primitive medieval, with thatched roofs. One letter passed from the ghetto on August 7 1941, reports the destruction of a Jewish family from Płock; the small town is even referred to as something akin to “a hole”: “My dear ones, even from a hole like Bodzentyn letters arrive to you [...] I will be candid and admit that food parcels would now be very, very useful [...] since one can sell such packages and buy bread and potatoes from the proceeds...”[25]

The influx of the Płocker refugees almost doubled the Jewish population of Bodzentyn.[26] As a result of this, an epidemic of typhus broke out. “The Germans would not allow us to have the sick at home,” Rachel Saphir-Einesman recalls. Those who caught the fever were lodged in the former house of prayer: “Epidemic of typhoid broke out, and I got sick,” says Michael Zelon. “They converted the synagogue into a hospital and with one doctor only. No medication. But nevertheless, I was young, I was strong, I survived the 105 degrees—whatever we went through—this lasted about two weeks. After two weeks, I went out. I was weak, and it took a little time until I got well.” According to Rachel Saphir-Einesman the bodies of the dead were buried in graves just outside the building.

Michael Zelon recalls: “We lost a lot of people. You could see people well respected from Płock, people with degrees, people [who] were prosperous before the war, totally neglected, swollen feet, swollen faces, torn clothes and very unfriendly, ready to fight for no reason what so ever […] it was heartbreaking to see those people ‘going down’ so quickly. And a lot of people died because […] of the really painful life.” For David Dantus, the hardest blow was the death of his father. “I had to bury my father’s corpse. It was hard; there had been a harsh winter. We had to take away the snow and use an axe to dig a hole in the ground. Into one grave, we put five corpses, and that we did every day.”

Life in the Ghetto

Hearing the news, on January 11 1942, that all Jews are to be evacuated from the villages the throws the whole Rubinowicz family into turmoil. Dawid writes: “They’re going to evacuate us now in such a sharp winter, and where? Now it’s our turn to suffer. How long, God only knows.”

Forced labour in the neighbourhood was different from being brought to the labour camps, Dawid discovers. On March 19 1942, he writes about “raids of course not on Aryans, only on Jews. Everyone goes round frightened, wondering where he can hide and find somewhere safe”. Irene Szachter recalls that the raids were done frequently and were greatly feared. Henry Krystal remembers hiding “when they were catching people”. He continues: “On some occasions I managed to run away so I was doing some work under these local premises, forced labour […] they would bring more German troops and use the Polish police and eventually also the Jewish police, go from house to house and take all the men and send them away […] If they found somebody hiding they might just shoot them […] I remember one time, we were upstairs then and I was looking out and I saw these gendarmes going around and shooting people. I got so scared I was shaking […] I had a dark place where I was hiding […] as much for my safety as for my being isolated […] so that I wouldn’t be part of what is going on.”

Seemingly, quite a few people went into hiding. “My father was the first person to hide [behind a double wall in the attic],” Irene Szachter recalls. “[This happened] because one baker in town was caught with a sack of flour and they asked him where he [had] bought it and he said he bought it from Mr. Szachter, because we had a flour mill. And it was not true because at the time we were not selling flour. My father decided not to get in trouble with the Germans and not to do anything against their rules. They had a rule that we had to supply so much flour to certain bakeries and that’s all we did. And we never sold anything

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illegally. But this man said that because my father was a prominent citizen and he thought that by saying that he bought it from Mr. Szachter, or from Mr. Szachter's mill, he would not be in trouble. He was in trouble anyway […] they attached him to a wagon that was drawn by horses and they dragged him all over town until he died." Dawid got to know about this horrific event too. On 15-16 January 1942, he writes perhaps more accurately: "… they'd manacled a Jew and taken him to the local police. […] They'd tied him to their sledge and he'd been forced to run after it. […] While he was tied to the sledge he couldn't run any more, and they'd dragged him along behind the sledge and then shot him…"

Shut off from the outside world, Dawid experiences how life changes. At home in Krajno, there was always something to occupy him, but in Bodzentyn, he hardly dares to go out in the streets.[27] The people of Bodzentyn were struck by fear, and the Jews knew that every time the Germans would come, some of them would get killed. Eva Sztarkman recalls: "… they didn't station in our little town—just away from us maybe ten kilometres—then when they came in every time they killed, we were sitting in the house and shivering, [wondering] to whose house he will go in? Then they came in, in somebody's house, and they killed a few people and then they left. Or if somebody walked on the street; once I remember a pregnant woman walked on the street, a Jewish woman, they killed her. And they took her body; they buried [it] in front of their house—of her parents' home. It was very scary and very bad. […] We could not go out from the town. Whoever stepped out, they killed." On April 10 1942, Dawid writes: "If only you could have one quiet day. My nerves are utterly exhausted; whenever I hear of anyone's distress, I burst tears, my head starts aching and I'm exhausted, as if I'd been doing the hardest possible work. It's not only me, everyone feels the same."

In the spring of 1942 and continuing towards the summer, raids and house-to-house searches intensified. Those accused of hiding goods were arrested, those who refused to cooperate with the Germans were shot or sent to Auschwitz, the numerous killings left orphans having to find an extended family or face their destiny alone, and Jews seen outside the ghetto or disobeying curfew laws were shot.[28]

Forced Labour

On May 5, Dawid writes, “there are rumours of a raid on the Jews tonight.” On the following day, he remarks: “A terrible day!” Jewish and Polish policemen came knocking on the door in the middle of the night: “They rummaged about a bit, found no one, however, only they took the two from Płock.” Michael Zelon recalls this moment of terror: “This was in the middle of May 1942 […] at night there were Germans coming in and Polish Police—front door, back door—and caught us, myself and my brother, and we tried to struggle with the Polish police man, we pushed him but there was another one, and they loaded us on trucks. And […] without saying goodbye to my people, we couldn’t have a chance even to say … to get a second change; whatever [clothes] I had, this was it. They drove us to Skarżysko-Kamienna, and there were prepared barracks for us, and this was Hasag Company […], but we didn’t start working in the ammunition factory. We were assigned ‘division A’ […] to build a railroad track. I can’t even describe the tough life we had; it was incomprehensible […] Seven in the morning, a group of Jews were assembled and away we go […] three kilometres, which is two miles, from our location, and we started working on the railroad.”

David Dantus also refers to this raid: “May 5 1942, early in the morning, they took all young people. They came to take us from the houses and put us in the barn belonging to the fire brigade. We were locked in, and later on, German trucks came to get us. We were going to a labour camp; we were even to get paid for the job.” That same “terrible day”, Dawid finds out that his father has also been arrested and will be taken away on one of those trucks.

In 1942, with rumours of the liquidations of ghettos spreading, Jewish men and women of German-occupied territories became increasingly aware that obtaining a work card might postpone their deportation to the unknown. We know now that the deportations were to camps of extermination. Irene Szachter recounts: “They sent them to someplace, and nobody would believe they were sent for extermination […] Nobody came back to tell the story.” Henry Krystal also recalls that there were words spread about labour camps, from which some came back, and then there were rumours going around about being sent

"East": "That was kind of a mysterious word," he says. "If you were sent 'East', you don't come back."

The perception that life would be easier in a small town during the German occupation was reversed in the spring and summer of 1942. The Sztarkman family sought means to leave, trying to obtain work cards where such could be offered. Eva Sztarkman recalls: "Until we heard, 'they're taking the Jews to Treblinka then we knew [there] was no way to survive if we would continue to live in this little town. Then we tried to escape to a bigger town, where [there] were factories or something, and then we tried to escape when they came closer to us when they talked about they are going to take the people, the Jews, from our little town. We were running away to different towns, and we hoped that [there was] going to be a miracle—until they [would] come to this town [and] the war would be over."

The escapees fled by foot through the forest, taking off their Star of David armbands, and some even dressed in outfits that would make them appear less Jewish and resemble someone from the local Polish population. Through trusted people, arrangements were made for workers' documents, and one by one, whole families who could manage their escape left Bodzentyn.[29] Members of the family for whom working cards had not been obtained faced the selection when the liquidation of the ghetto took place. Such was the situation in of Wierzbnik-Starachowice where Eva Sztarkman and her sister Sonja had fled. They were selected for work while other family members were forced on the trains to the extermination camp at Treblinka.

Seemingly, in the early summer of 1942, workers were recruited to volunteer or forced into the labour camps. At least 17 transports of Jews, whether forced labourers or volunteers were brought to Skarżysko-Kamienna between March and July from Bodzentyn and other places.[30] The possibility for forced labourers to exchange letters with family members, who remained in the ghetto, as Dawid did with his father, may have been arranged to make Jews believe that the Hasag was willing to accept volunteers in an attempt to gain control of Jewish labour.[31] On 31 May, Dawid writes: "Today a notice was put up that the workers in

Skarżysko are to be exchanged, and on 4th June 60 persons are to report to the Council; those who report get cards […] The 60 persons will only be going for a week.” Shlomo Fish recalls an SS representative from Starachowice who came to Bodzentyn and asked if anyone would like to work at the ammunition factory. He also declared that anyone who would pay could come. “I had the money and paid for me, my parents and brothers,” Shlomo says. Henry Krystal also seized such an opportunity—a seat on a truck—just a few days before the liquidation of Bodzentyn, as he remembers it, making his escape to a labour camp: “Well, then it became clear that they were liquidating the ghettos and then that they were coming closer and closer to us [...] the idea that they were killing them was, was talked about a lot […] It was just a matter of when they were coming […] There [was] a number of labour camps around in that vicinity because that was [a] central Polish industrial area […] they started coming with trucks. They just did it on two different days, taking people [to Starachowice]. And the first day I didn’t go […] because I didn’t want to leave my mother. But I had a very good friend there, whose name was Chaim and he encouraged me to go […] the second day I did go and Chaim went with me and some cousins were on the same truck […]. [As] we were leaving I was looking down and my mother was standing there just dissolving in tears, knowing that this is a goodbye, you know, forever.”

We know from Dawid’s account that he and his family were lodged at 13 Kielce Street with his cousins. Apparently, his uncle, Dawid Cisłowski, the tailor, had previously earned a living in Krajno,[32] but at the time of the German occupation, he and his family were residing in Bodzentyn.

The possibility of making an escape was talked about in the house where Dawid Rubinowicz lived. As a matter of fact, the majority of the members of the Cisłowski family fled to Wierzbnik-Starachowice before the liquidation of the ghetto, as did their closest neighbour, the Sztarkman family.[33] Their names are to be found in the list of slave labourers of Starachowice.[34]

Ruchla Roza Cisłowska Zilberberg seemingly brought it to the family's attention that Dawid might try to hide. Having blue eyes and light hair, he may have seen fit to pass as a Gentile.[35] Dawid's father Josek was not in favour of such a scheme, firmly believing that "one cannot escape one's destiny". On 28 February 1942, prior to the deportation to Bodzentyn, Dawid writes something that resembles his father's fatalistic frame of mind: "We've put ourselves in God's hand and are ready for anything."

Tema Lichtenstein says that "mostly looks and luck" were the reasons for her survival in concealment. Rachell Szachter did not have such an advantage though it had been arranged for herself and her sister Goldie to be taken into hiding by two trustworthy Polish families. Finding Rachell too dark, however, they were unwilling to take the risk: "I was dark, not blonde like my sister," Rachell Szachter recalls. "I had a big nose, and I just did not look 'non-Jewish'."

Those who went into hiding often adopted a Polish name, a Christian way of life, attended mass in the church and were taught to make the sign of the cross and say the prayers. Even so, they were always in constant danger of being discovered. Anyone hiding a Jew was also in potential danger. When Tema Lichtenstein found out that her parents and sister were staying in Wierzbnik-Starachowice, she left Bodzentyn and joined them. Later on, she concealed her identity as a Jewess and was hidden by Teofil Novak in Bronkowice, changing her name to Wladyslawa Smiechowska. Both Tema and her guardian were arrested and subjected to a lengthy interrogation. However, Novak kept his promise and never gave her away.

In hiding Goldie Szachter was called Halinka Bertusówna. Her family was fairly confident that the good Polish people who knew her true identity would not betray her or Mme Surowjecka, who was hiding a young girl from the Germans. However, since Goldie, like anyone attempting flight or going into hiding, or even trying to live openly with false Aryan papers, would do so under the constant threat of denunciation from Polish informers—it was eventually decided that she should leave her hiding and join the family in the labour camp in Wierzbnik-Starachowice.[36]

Deportation to the Camps

To many Jews in Bodzentyn, the day of liquidation came suddenly before they could follow through on any escape plans. Rachel Saphir-Einesman had arranged for her little boy to be taken into the care of a Polish man she trusted from her hometown of Bodzentyn. In the early hours of the following morning, she found out that it was too late, the ghetto of Wierzbnik-Starachowice, where she had fled previously, was already being liquidated, and she was selected for work in the camps.

The mother of Henry Krystal tried to make it out from Bodzentyn, but there was no time: "My mother, I was told, was trying to smuggle herself out and to walk to join me where I was [in Starachowice] […] She couldn't have gone to the camp to work and she couldn't have joined me or anything. But she tried and they caught her and put her in jail, but they released her on the day that they took all the Jewish population..."

Four Jews are known to have made their escape later on from the camps and found shelter with the assistance of the Dziuba family in the vicinity of Bodzentyn, and Nachman "Józef" Rubinowicz was hidden behind something like a double wall in the house of Maria and Kazimierz Zygadlewicz in Bodzentyn from 1943 until the end of the war.[37]

From Dawid's diary and eyewitness accounts, we know that raids took place, and people were brought to the Hasag Skarżysko-Kamienna slave labour camp in June 1942. At that time, there were still some months left until the liquidation. As the "Diary" ends abruptly with one final entry on 1 June 1942, leaving many questions unanswered, we cannot know what Dawid's last days were like.

When the ghetto's liquidation took place in late September or early October,[38] the German gendarmerie motored into town, doors were banged on, and all of the Jewish men, women

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and children were rushed to the Lower Market Square. Peasants were called to assist with their horse-drawn wagons. The Jews were marched to Suchedniów, and there they were loaded on trains that took them to the extermination camp at Treblinka.[39] Afterwards, goods were collected, and hideouts discovered and emptied—everything and everyone was delivered to the executioners.[40]

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[1] USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History Archive: VHA 3915 (Rachell Szachter Eisenberg), 3948 (Irene Szachter Horn), 23507 (Max Safir), 16492 (Eva Sztarkman Herling), 15836 (Sonja Sztarkman Applebaum), 14839 (Shlomo Fish), 15961 (Jakub Bromberg), 11566 (Rachel Saphir-Einesman-Binstock), 33477 (Samuel Flaumenbaum) and 2070 (Pinchas Frimerman). Rachel Saphir-Einesman-Binstock is referred to by her maiden name and the name that she received through her first marriage to Noach Einesman. The interviews originate from Argentina, Canada, Israel, Mexico, Poland, Sweden and U.S.A.; they were conducted in English, Hebrew, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Yiddish. An interview with Jakub Bromberg is partly accessible in English: "Witness to a Jewish Century, Photographs and Life Histories from Central and Eastern Europe" (an electronically-posted memoir is available at this address: http://centropa.org/module/ebooks/files/PL_Bromberg_US.pdf). A transcription of the original interview in Polish was made available to the Author by Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation.

[2] USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History Archive: VHA 15132 (David Dantus, 1996), 4272 (Tema Lichtenstein, 1995), 31161 (Lena Michalowicz, 1997), 36287 (Nathan Smiga, 1997), 47180 (Michael Zelon, 1998).

[3] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991).

[4] Henry Krystal, 1996. Holocaust Survivor Oral Testimonies, University of Michigan-Dearborn (an electronically posted memoir is available at: http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/krystal).

[5] According to Kielce-Radom SIG Journal, Vol. 8, No. 1 Winter 2004 there was registered a marriage in 1869 in Krajno of Dawid Rubinowicz, son of Uryn and Ruchla née Wolfowicz, and Zelda, daughter of Mosiek and Hana née Zilberberg (an electronically posted copy is available at: http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-PL/kr-sig/krsig_journal_downloads.htm). Se also records of births in this volume; they confirm the correct spelling of the name "Dawid Rubinowicz".

[6] Wołczyk, Artemiusz. "Pozostał po nich tylko kirkut…", Przemiany nr 6 z 1987 r., p. 28.

[7] Wołczyk, Artemiusz. "Pozostał po nich tylko kirkut…", Przemiany nr 6 z 1987 r., p. 26.

[8] *Pamiętnik Dawida Rubinowicza*, entry 19 January 1942 and 12 February 1942.

[9] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), p. 106.

[10] Wołczyk, Artemiusz. "Pozostał po nich tylko kirkut…", Przemiany nr 6 z 1987 r., p. 28.

[11] Browning, Christopher R. *Remembering Survival, inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (W. W. Norton, 2010), p. 34.

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[12] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), p. 102. Seemingly "M. Silberstajn" was head of the Jewish Community during the first year of occupation. For further information read: Wołczyk, Artemiusz. "Pozostał po nich tylko kirkut…", Przemiany nr 6 z 1987 r., p. 28. In the Auschwitz Death Registers, The State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau Moszek Zylbersztajn (likely to be "M. Silberstajn") is reported to have been brought to his death in Auschwitz on August 1 1942 (an electronically posted testimony is available at The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Yad Vashem: http://www.yadvashem.org).

[13] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), pp. 109-110.

[14] The signature of Froyim Szachter is to be found on at least two archival documents: "Ältestenrat Der Juden In Bodzentyn/Rada Starszych Zydow w Bodzentynie 24/XI 1940" and "Ältestenrat Der Juden In Bodzentyn/Rada Starszych Zydow w Bodzentynie 1/V 1941", Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the Virtual Shtetl Project (electronically posted copies should be available at: http://www.sztetl.org.pl). In the Auschwitz Death Registers, The State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau Froyim Szachter is reported to have been brought to his death in Auschwitz on January 29 1942 (an electronically posted copy is available at The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Yad Vashem).

[15] The General Government was the Nazi colonial regime during the German occupation of WWII that administered central Poland.

[16] Fafara, Eugeniusz. *Gehenna ludnosci zydowskiej* (Warszawa, 1983), pp. 96, 345, 347, 428, 429.

[17] Browning, Christopher R. *Remembering Survival, inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (W. W. Norton, 2010), pp. 44-45.

[18] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), pp. 95-96.

[19] Fafara, Eugeniusz. *Gehenna ludnosci zydowskiej* (Warszawa, 1983), p. 428.

[20] Fafara, Eugeniusz. *Gehenna ludnosci zydowskiej* (Warszawa, 1983), pp. 429-430. Note that here Gela is referred to by the witness as "the young Jewess Fiela Sztarkman". The sign of the store "Fruit and sweets – Gela Sztarkman" is preserved in Bodzentyn. It was shown to the public in 2009 during the Dawid Rubinowicz Days by Towarzystwo Dawida Rubinowicza (TDR)/The Dawid Rubinowicz Society.

[21] Browning, Christopher R. *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (W. W. Norton, 2010), p. 53.

[22] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), p. 104.

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[23] Kermish, Dr. Joseph. “Plotzk Refugees in Exile,” *The Jews of Plotzk under the Nazi Regime*. An electronically posted copy is available at this address: http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/plock/plo070.html (Excerpts from the Płock community memorial book are electronically posted at this address: http://www.zchor.org/plock/sefer5.htm.)

[24] *Voices from the Abyss: Letters and Essays*, ed. Leon Kilbert, p. 9. Excerpts from this book are electronically posted at this address: http://www.zchor.org/abyss/abysbit.htm. The original documents of these excerpts should be available at YIVO Archives-collection of Eyewitness Reports of the Holocaust. Record group # 104, second series. Testimony of F. Finlay (Fela Rawicka).

[25] *Voices from the Abyss: Letters and Essays*, ed. Leon Kilbert, p. 111. The letter is passed from Dodzia Kilbert.

[26] “Bodzentyn”. *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939-1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warszawa, 1979), p. 111. The refugees from Płock are estimated to have been 700 in number. Prior to the liquidation of the ghetto in September 1942, the number of Jews in Bodzentyn increased to 3 000 individuals. Read also: Fafara, Eugeniusz, *Gehenna ludnosci zydowskiej* (Warszawa, 1983), pp. 625. For the table listing the shifting Jewish population of Bodzentyn, prepared by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, see Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, Walka I Zaglada Ludnosci Zydowskiej w Dystrykcie Radomskim Podczas Okupacji Hitlerowskiej,” *Biuletyn Zydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, vol. 15-16 (1955), pp. 138-165.

[27] Pamiętnik Dawida Rubinowicza, entry 16 March 1942.

[28] Pamiętnik Dawida Rubinowicza, entry 22 March, 2, 10 April 1942. Also Rachel Saphir-Einesman, Eva Sztarkman and Michael Zelon and Rachell, Irene and Goldie Szachter refer to such incidents. Several Jews from Bodzentyn that were arrested for real and imaginary offences are registered in the Auschwitz Death Registers, the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (electronically posted testimonies are available at The Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, Yad Vashem: http://www.yadvashem.org).

[29] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child’s Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), p. 123.

[30] Felicja Karay, *Death comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna slave labor camp*, (Harwood Academic, 1996), pp. 31-32.

[31] For further reading concerning the economics of German slave labor: Felicja Karay, *Death comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna slave labor camp*, (Harwood Academic, 1996); and Browning, Christopher R. *Remembering Survival, inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (W. W. Norton, 2010).

[32] 1929 Polish Business Directory Project, JRI Poland in cooperation with JewishGen: “Krawcy (tailleurs): Cislowski D. Wojewodztwo Kieleckie, Krajno,” p. 235 (an electronically posted copy is available at: http://www.jewishgen.org/).

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[33] Eva Sztarkman, one of the two surviving sisters of the Sztarkman family, confirms that her family was living at Kielce str. nr 11 (Author's interview, 2010). The location of their house at the Kielce str. is also confirmed by Jakub Bromberg.

[34] "Namentliche Liste: Der Juden, Die Im Lager Sich Befinden." *Wierzbnik-Starachowitz: A Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv, 1973), ed. by Mark Schutzman, pp. 59-76 ("Cisłowski Ancel, born 1926"; "Cisłowski Chaim born 1892"; "Scisłowska Nacha [Nata] born 1923"; "Cisłowski Dawid" (there are no notes of his year of birth in the list). Nata Cisłowska Grinberg, one of two surviving sisters of the family residing at Kielce str. nr 13 in Bodzentyn, left several documents at The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Yad Vashem (electronically posted testimonies are available at: http://www.yadvashem.org).

[35] Janicki J., Wiernik B. "Telefon", *Reszta nie jest milczeniem* (Warszawa 1960).

[36] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), pp. 197-198.

[37] Four Jews were sheltered by Stanisława Dziuba in something like an underground cellar. For further information, read "Wyjscie z Bodzentyna", *Nowa Kultura* number 19, 5 May 1960. Read also: Fafara, Eugeniusz. *Gehenna ludnosci zydowskiej* (Warszawa, 1983), from page 445; and Wołczyk, Artemiusz. "Pozostał po nich tylko kirkut…", Przemiany nr 6 z 1987 r., p. 30. Also Nachman "Józef" Rubinowicz was hidden behind something like a double wall in the house of Maria and Kazimierz Zygadlewicz in Bodzentyn. For further information, read "Kazik – pomóż...", Janicki J., Wiernik B., *Reszta nie jest milczeniem* (Warszawa 1960).

[38] Concerning the date of the liquidation of the ghetto: The so-called Fahrplananordnung Nr 587 was sealed and dated in Krakow on September 15 1942. The timetable Nr. 587 stated that the train leaving from Suchedniów on September 21 1942, would arrive at Treblinka on September 22 and return empty some hours later. A photo reproduction was published in the first Polish version of Dawid Rubinowicz's Diary: Rubinowicz, D., Rutkowski A. & Jarochowska, M. (1960). *Pamiętnik Dawida Rubinowicza*. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, pp. 26—28. Another date—October 3, 1942—is mentioned as the exact date of the liquidation of the open Bodzentyn ghetto by the eyewitness in Kalib Szachter, G., Wachsberger, K., & Kalib S. (1991). *The Last Selection: a Child's Journey Through the Holocaust.* Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, p. 145. A postcard dated September 30 1942, from Rózia in Bodzentyn to Józek Frydman in the Warsaw ghetto supports the latter date (source: Ring. II/275/3).

[39] Szachter Kalib, Goldie. *The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), pp. 143-148. Fafara, Eugeniusz. *Gehenna ludnosci zydowskiej* (Warszawa, 1983), p. 430. See also the so-called Fahrplananordnung Nr 587 that was sealed and dated in Krakow 15 September, 1942, concerning the liquidation of the ghetto in Bodzentyn 21/22 September (an electronically posted copy is available at: http://www.zydziwpolsce.edu.pl/rubinowicz/gfx/max2.html).

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[40] The Germans collected all valuables from the houses. After World War II the former residences of Jews were considered as vacant and the state assigned these apartments and houses to citizens in need of housing without regard to the property's legal ownership status. This practice was called prescription. For further information, read Wołczyk, Artemiusz. "Pozostał po nich tylko kirkut…", Przemiany nr 6 z 1987 r., p. 30.