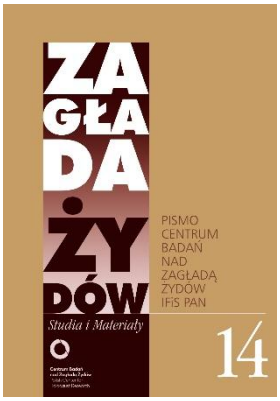

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"8 Liters of Gasoline Were Used." Prosaization of the Holocaust as Seen in the Documentation of the Chełm Branch of the State Archive in Lublin

„Benzyny zużyto 8 litrów". Prozaizacja Zagłady na przykładzie dokumentacji Archiwum Państwowego w Lublinie Oddział w Chełmie

Adam Puławski

adampulawski@wp.pl

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Adam Puławski

The "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre in Lublin
adampulawski@wp.pl

"8 Liters of Gasoline Were Used." Prosaization of the Holocaust as Seen in the Documentation of the Chełm Branch of the State Archive in Lublin

Abstract
In the State Archive in Chełm there is almost no documentation directly describing the Holocaust. Nonetheless, there are dozens of documents clearly illustrating the clerical approach to Nazi Germany's 'final solution'. The reader can connect the given document with the Holocaust only by using his external knowledge. The most striking matter, however, concerns the prosaic reasons why those documents were produced in the first place: a cost breakdown, an explanation of why some tools went missing, fire reports, etc. What arises is the prosaic nature of the Holocaust. In some of the documents the Holocaust is merely alluded to. It is only owing to our broader knowledge that we grasp that a certain document regarded, for instance, the tracking down of Jews in hiding.

Keywords
Holocaust, clerical routine, indifference, prosiness

In her book devoted to sources for research on the Holocaust in the territories of occupied Poland, historian Alina Skibińska rightly noted that "certain archives, particularly smaller and branch ones, lack files produced by German offices, institutions, and organizations during the Second World War, or they have few of them." At the same time she added that "this is not to say that one should not make use of them, even though the documentation regarding the occupation and the history of the Holocaust contained in them is fragmentary, secondary, and produced after the war." Skibińska's observation certainly includes the State Archive in Chełm.[1]

[1] Alina Skibińska, *Źródła do badań nad zagładą Żydów na okupowanych ziemiach polskich. Przewodnik archiwalno-bibliograficzny* [Sources for research on the extermination of Jews in the occupied Polish territories. Archival and bibliographical guide] (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN and Cyklady, 2007), p. 39.

Skibińska also classified the sources for research into the Holocaust in occupied Poland. The first category is that of files produced by the German administration and the police. The second one embraces files of Jewish Communities, and the third one is the Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, that is, the Ringelblum Archive. The next categories were: files of care and welfare institutions, documents of the Polish Underground State; investigation, prosecuting attorney's, and court files; prison and camp files; the press; telephone books and address directories; bills, posters, and ephemeral prints; personal document literature; and records of oral history. It was only when discussing the 12th position in that classification, vaguely called "other archival sources," that Skibińska returned to files of towns and communes,[2] not concealing the fact that "files as elementary to any historical research as files of towns and communes, which usually span dozens or even hundreds of years, have not been covered in a separate chapter. In these collections the occupation, the prewar period, and the postwar period constitute a fragment of a larger whole."[3]

As a Holocaust scholar of many years, I know that the most impressive sources are those which belong to personal document literature. In his article "Literature of the Personal Document as a Source in Holocaust Research"[4] Jacek Leociak quoted Witold Kula's diaries.[5] Thus, on July 23 – that is, a day after the Germans had begun the great liquidation campaign in the Warsaw ghetto – Kula wrote:

> Yesterday I could no longer write in the office […]. What I find most tiring and exhausting during the occupation is the constant psychological effort I need to make all the time, just as all the time I need to breathe, and it has two parts: not to be afraid, and not to think about the atrocities taking place [around me].[6]

On 24 July he added: "I am experiencing the most glaring denial of what I've written above. I cannot work, think, read, or even sleep, I cannot divorce my thoughts from the atrocities around me. I can't even concentrate on writing these notes. […] (I can't write. I'll go and put my shoes on)."[7] One must agree with Leociak that these quotations are not particularly useful to historians who are after 'historical facts'. But something else is more important here – although

[2] The last, 13th category is: "Photographs, films, material objects" (ibidem, pp. 7–8).

[3] Ibidem, p. 378.

[4] Jacek Leociak, "Literature of the Personal Document as a Source in Holocaust Research]," *Holocaust Studies and Materials* 1 (2008).

[5] Witold Kula, *Dziennik czasu okupacji* [Diary of the time of occupation], eds Nina Assorodobraj-Kula and Marcin Kula, introduction by Marcin Kula (Warsaw: PIW, 1994),

[6] Leociak, "Literature of the Personal Document…," p. 44, See also Witold Kula, *Dziennik*…, pp. 45–46

[7] Leociak, "Literature of the Personal Document…," p. 44. See also Kula, *Dziennik*…, p. 48.

the word 'Holocaust' is absent from the text, the reader senses it in the emotions of the author. Leociak aptly summed up Kula's words: "It is difficult to imagine a more bitter expression of this 'misadaptation' or 'incommensurability' of language when confronted with the 'unspeakable'"[8] that is, the Holocaust. Of course, many personal documents do provide facts and details. For instance, a Jewish observer of Umschlagplatz in the Warsaw ghetto wrote:

> I borrow binoculars and I return to the window. The following sight appears before my eyes: about a thousand Jews squeezed into a tetragon, pressed against one another so incredibly tightly that they reduce one another into a pulp. […] the tetragon of these poor souls is surrounded by approx. 200 Ukrainians, who mercilessly whack those standing closest to them with whips, clubs, and butts on the heads, faces, and backs, indiscriminately. At the oppressors' feet, in pools of blood, lay heaps of injured victims.[9]

The recollections of surviving members of the death camps' Sonderkommandos are no less shocking. After the war one of them, Rudolf Reder, an escapee from a camp in Bełżec, wrote:

> About a dozen SS-men hurried women with whips and sharp bayonets all the way to the chamber building and then up the three steps into the hall, with the askari counting groups of 750 people to fit into each chamber. The askari bayoneted the women who would not walk in, blood was gushing out and that was how the women were rushed into the death chamber. I heard the doors close, and moans and cries. I heard the desperate shouting in Polish and Yiddish, the blood-curdling lamentation of the children and women, followed by one joint terrifying cry…[10]

The reports prepared by the Jewish and Polish underground were equally blunt. In its letter dated by Władysław Bartoszewski on May 11, 1942 (actually April 26, 1942), the underground Bund made the following conclusion after listing a number of examples of the extermination of the Jewish population: "The above facts prove beyond doubt that the criminal German government has begun to realize Hitler's promise that five minutes before the end of the war, regardless of its outcome, he would murder all Jews in Europe."[11] Another

[8] "Literature of the Personal Document…," p. 45. More on the topic of personal document literature see idem, *Text in the Face of Destruction: Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto Reconsidered* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2004).

[9] Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction*…, p. 188.

[10] Rudolf Reder, *Bełżec*, eds Franciszek Piper, Joachim S. Russek, and Teresa Świebocka (Cracow: Fundacja Judaica and Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 1999), p. 49.

[11] *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej. Polacy z pomocą Żydom 1939–1945* [This one is from my homeland. Poles helping Jews 1939–1945], eds Władysław Bartoszewski, Zofia Lewinówna (3rd edition, Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie ŻIH and Świat Książki, 2007), pp. 961–963: "List Bundu

example is a fragment of a report prepared by the Polish Underground State: "We inform you that every day in Warsaw from a few dozen to a few hundred Jews are shot dead on the streets or at home. These murders are committed daily on the occasion of capturing those who are to be deported to be killed."[12]

Official Forms

In this article, however, I do not deal with these relatively well known types of sources. During my search query at the Chełm Branch of the State Archive in Lublin, I came across sources which affect the reader in a different way – in these texts the Holocaust is merely a background to prosaic actions, or it manifests itself only when the reader combines these sources with his external knowledge. I would call this phenomenon prosaization of the Holocaust or the alluded Holocaust (these two phenomena sometimes overlap).[13] In his book entitled *Sources of Holocaust Research*, Raul Hilberg discusses the "prosaic" German forms which recorded certain information, actions of a logistic nature, etc. One example is internal train schedules. Let us take a look at those which inform about the following trains scheduled for February 11, 1943: "Pj 131 [from] Białystok 9.00 [to] Treblinka 12.10 [number of passengers] 2,000. 11 [0]2 [1943] Lp [from] Treblinka 21.18 [to] Białystok 1.30." "Pj" denotes a train with Polish Jews, while "Lp" means an empty train.[14] Today we know that those were transports of Jews from the Białystok ghetto to the death camp in Treblinka.

In her article "'Turning Jews Over' – the Participation of Blue Policemen in Deportations of Jews Illustrated with the Example of Radomsko County," Ewa

w Polsce do rządu polskiego w Londynie w sprawie zagłady ludności żydowskiej w Polsce i potrzeby zastosowania przez rządy państw sprzymierzonych polityki odwetu wobec obywateli niemieckich [Letter from the Bund in Poland to the Polish government in London concerning the extermination of the Jewish population in Poland and the need for the Allied governments to implement a policy of retaliation against German citizens]," May 11, 1942; *Confronting the Holocaust: Documents on the Polish Government-in-Exile's Policy Concerning Jews 1939–1945*, ed. Piotr Długołęcki (Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2022) pp. 326–329: 26 April, 1942. Letter from Bund politicians to the Polish authorities in London on the situation of Jews in occupied Poland.

[12] Archiwum Akt Nowych [Central Archives of Modern Records] (hereafter: AAN), Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj [Office of the Delegate of the Government in Exile], 202/II-28, Likwidacja getta warszawskiego [Liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto], September 1942, pp. 101–112.

[13] For this reason I am not interested in documents produced during the 'ghettoization', that is, during 1939–1941.

[14] Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), pp. 73–77. Hilberg presented a different, interesting documentation in one of his earlier books. In a Lvov archive he studied correspondence between local German clerks on the topic of gardens and growing ornamental plants. He read in it that "the greens were used to camouflage the camps" (see idem, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* [Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996], p. 76.

Wiatr points to sources closer to this discussion.[15] They include various forms which blue policemen filed to report on their official trips, specifying what they did and how they used the means of transport they had at their disposal. These forms contain expressions such as "turning Jews over" or carrying out duties regarding "the deportation of Jews and then sealing the apartments vacated by the Jews", which describe the trips' objectives. One policeman wrote that he went by bike to where "the deportation of Jews" was underway, while a different one "assisted at a Jewish campaign." Another policeman arrived in a locality "to serve during the deportation of the Jews" and then went to a different locality which was "cordoned off" and where he "assisted with the deportation of the Jews." Last but not least, the man went to a third locality, where he "kept guard in the Jewish district during the deportation of the Jews." A different blue policeman set out "to serve the deportation of the Jews and in the ghetto."[16] As I have mentioned, the reason why these notes were taken was prosaic – the policemen were reporting on their work trips. However, we know that they made those trips to assist with deportations to death camps and that the documents were produced by Holocaust co-perpetrators (even though they might have been unaware of where the Jews were deported to). Is it possible to talk here of the banalization of evil in the way Hannah Arendt understood it? The scholar used that expression with regard to the perpetrators who "sat behind a desk" and justified their actions by saying that they were "only carrying out orders." Anyhow, the *banalization of evil* refers exclusively to perpetrators and not victims or witnesses.[17]

Before I discuss the sources from the Chełm archive, let me provide a few facts from the Second World War history of Chełm. According to the occupation authorities' statistics, the number of Chełm's inhabitants in December 1940 was 29,168 (including 10,395 Jews),[18] while in February 1941 it was 32,908 (including 21,561 'Aryans' and 11,347 Jews).[19] In August 1941 those data were

[15] Ewa Wiatr, "'Turning Jews Over' – the Participation of Blue Policemen in Deportations of Jews Illustrated with the Example of the Radomsko County," *Holocaust Studies and Materials* (2017).

[16] Ibidem, pp. 303–314.

[17] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Penguin Classics, 2006).

[18] Longin Tokarski, "W czasie drugiej wojny światowej 1939–1944 [During the Second World War 1939–1944]," in *Chełm i Chełmskie w dziejach* [Chelm and Chelmskie province in history], ed. Ryszard Szczygieł (Chełm: Komitet Obchodów 600-lecia miasta Chełma, 1996), p. 172; Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie Oddział w Chełmie [Chełm Branch of the State Archive in Lublin] (hereafter: AP Lublin O/Chełm), Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1241, Zapotrzebowanie na mąkę na grudzień 1940 r. [December 1940 demand for flour], no date, p. 30.

[19] Materiały Pomocnicze Okręgowej Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Lublinie [Auxiliary materials of the Regional Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation] (hereafter: MPOK Lu), USD, chest 7, Streszczenie

more or less similar.[20] A document dated July 1942 stated that the population of Chełm was 29,125 (including 6,536 Jews).[21] In March 1943 Chełm had 25,838 inhabitants (including only 145 Jews and 355 individuals of "other nationality").[22] A document produced in August 1943 did not mention any Jews, while the number of individuals of "other nationality" was 102 (out of 20,436 inhabitants).[23] In June 1944 there were 33 people of 'other nationality', while the total population was 21,828.[24] The decrease in the number of Jews in 1942 and 1943 was obviously connected with the process of the physical extermination of Jews in the General Government which began in March 1942 within the framework of Operation Reinhardt. In Chełm, just as across the Lublin District, the campaign was conducted first in the spring and then in the autumn of 1942. In May 1942 the Germans deported 4,300 people from the Chełm ghetto to the death camp in Sobibór, including most of the 2,000 Slovakian Jews who had been transported to the ghetto. A smaller campaign, which affected approx. 600 people, was conducted in late June or early July 1942. Another wave of deportations to the camp in Sobibór came during October 26–27 (or 27–28) and November 6–15, 1942. In October the Germans deported 3,000–3,300 Jews, while November 6 brought a deportation of 2,000 people. After the particularly brutal November campaign[25] approx. 1,000 Jews remained in the city, quartered

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sprawozdania starostwa powiatowego Kreis Chełm za m-c luty 1941 r. [Summary of the Chełm Kreishauptmannshaft's report for the month of February 1941] (from Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie [State Archive in Lublin; hereafter: AP Lublin], Urząd Okręgu Lubelskiego [Lublin District Office [hereafter: UOL], 207, p. 47). Other data, particularly that regarding the total number of Chełm inhabitants in February 1941, were included in "Lista wydanych kart na mąkę" [List of flour coupons issued] (36,545 inhabitants, including 12,000 Jews), see AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1242, Lista wydanych kart na mąkę [List of flour coupons issued], February 1941, p. 32.

[20] The total number of inhabitants was 32,000, including 21,500 'Aryans' and 10,500 Jews (AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma, 1194, Opis miasta [Description of the town], no date [in this document appears the date August 23, which is to be understood as August 23, 1941], p. 267. According to the flour demand list, in September 1941 the number of Jews was 9,345 (ibidem, 1241, Zapotrzebowanie na mąkę na miesiąc wrzesień 1941 r. [Flour demand for the month of September 1941], no date, p. 42).

[21] Ibidem, 1194, Pismo do Kreishauptmanna (raport do budżetu 1942/1943) [Letter to the Kreishauptmann (report for the 1942/1943 budget)], July 14, 1942, p. 319 (the same document ibidem, 1193, p. 5).

[22] MPOK Lu, USD, chest 7, Miasto Chełm wg stanu na 1 III 1943 r. [Town of Chełm as of March 1, 1943] (from APL, UOL, 139, p. 205).

[23] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1197, Pismo do Kreishauptmanna (raport do budżetu 1943/1944) [Letter to the Kreishauptmann (report for the 1943/1944 budget)], August 2, 1943, p. 226.

[24] Ibidem, 1199, Notatka [Memo], June 6, 1944, p. 93.

[25] Robert Kuwałek, "Zagłada żydowskiego Chełma. Żydzi w Chełmie Lubelskim w latach 1939–1944. Zarys problemu [The Holocaust of Jewish Chelm. The Jews in Chelm Lubelski, 1939–1944. An outline of the problem]," in *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji* [The

in various camps scattered across town. The last deportations of Jews from Chełm to the camp in Sobibór were conducted in January (500 people) and late March 1943 (300 people). The rest of the Jews were executed on the spot.[26]

In the documents which I collected from the Chełm Branch of the State Archive in Lublin, the aforementioned prosaization of the Holocaust is manifested in the notes taken by people who probably did not personally partake in the extermination process. One could venture a gradation of that prosaization. The first category is sources whose readers, without their external knowledge, would not associate them with the physical extermination of the Jewish population which was underway at the time of those sources' production. These texts do not even include words such as 'deportation' or 'campaign'. In my book *W obliczu Zagłady* [In the face of the Holocaust][27] I discuss the Chełm Municipal Authorities' memo which informed the Chełm Commissioner that on April 29, 1942 at four o'clock in the afternoon the SS apprehended nine Jewish laborers[28] and took them away. The municipal clerk wrote that "according to information from the Judenrat, the said Jews were probably deported to the camp in Sobibór."[29] That memo was produced at the beginning of the extermination of Jews at the Sobibór death camp. But certainly neither the Judenrat nor the deported Jews nor probably the director of the Chełm Municipal Authorities knew what the words "to the camp in Sobibór" actually meant. We who possess suitable extra-source knowledge can infer from the document that the individuals mentioned were among the first victims of that death camp. Without this knowledge the memo becomes a simple, one could say, standard and 'innocent' – in any rate unemotional – exchange of information between clerks. It is noteworthy that after the publication of the document in the said book the provincial monument conservator decided to put that source in his care.

Let me quote in extenso another document of this type, dated November 6, 1942:

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extermination of Jews in the Polish provinces], eds Adam Sitarek, Michał Trębacz, and Ewa Wiatr (Łódź: IPN and Wydawnictwo UŁ, 2012), pp. 193–197; idem, "Nowe ustalenia dotyczące liczby ofiar niemieckiego obozu zagłady w Sobiborze [New findings on the number of victims of the Sobibor German death camp]," *Zeszyty Majdanka* 26 (2014): 28, 34–35, 38–39. A slightly different October date can be found in the document quoted later.

[26] Kuwałek, "Nowe ustalenia dotyczące liczby ofiar…," pp. 35, 43, 59.

[27] Adam Puławski, *W obliczu Zagłady. Rząd RP na Uchodźstwie, Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj, ZWZ-AK wobec deportacji Żydów do obozów zagłady (1941–1942)* [In the face of the Holocaust. The Government of the Republic of Poland in Exile, the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Poland in Exile, the ZWZ-AK in the face of deportation of Jews to extermination camps (1941–1942)] (Lublin: IPN, 2009).

[28] The surnames are listed.

[29] Puławski, *W obliczu Zagłady…*, pp. 316–317; AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1286, Notatka Zarządu Miasta Chełma do Komisarza Miasta Chełma [Memo from the Chełm Municipal Authorities to the Chełm Commissioner], April 30, 1942, no pagination.

> Report. 1. A stall in the market place has been disassembled. 2. Effective November 1 [illegible] were let go from the allotment gardens; 2 workers have been hired to the storehouse [their surnames are listed here]; 3 new cleaning ladies have been hired to replace the Jewish ones [the women's surnames are listed here].[30]

The document emanates clerical routine: there used to be Jewish cleaning ladies, the Jewish cleaning ladies are gone for reasons unspecified in the document (they have stopped working), and new ones have to be hired. There is no mention of what happened to them or that it was the height of the anti-Jewish campaign in Chełm. The Jewish women might have fled or – and this is more probable – they were simply murdered in the camp in Sobibór. Moreover, this information follows the information about the dismantling of the stalls in the market place.

Relatively voluminous correspondence with der *Stadtverwaltung der Stadt* Chełm (Chełm Municipal Authorities) regarding "dismissed Jews" or Jews who "left" their workplace was produced between May and November 1942 – that is, during the period of several deportations of Jews from Chełm. Some of this documentation also regards the requests submitted to the German Employment Office for allocation of groups of Jewish workers to various kinds of community work. However, we are interested in the first kind of documents. Consisting of a hundred names, the list of Jewish laborers dismissed on June 27, 1942 was sent to the Chełm Employment Office on June 29, 1942.[31] On July 16, 1942 the Municipal Authorities sent to the Employment Office another list of five "Jewish laborers who stopped working for the Municipal Authorities without permission."[32] A short memo was sent to the Employment Office on August 1, 1942: "This is to inform that the following Jewish laborers have been dismissed from the Municipal Authorities." One of those people "quit," another one was fired "for insubordination," and a third laborer "died."[33] The next lists of "dismissed Jewish laborers" were sent by the Municipal Authorities to the Employment Office on August 10[34] and September 30, 1942.[35] According to a memo dated

[30] Ibidem, 1252, Sprawozdanie [Report], November 6, 1942, p. 20.

[31] Ibidem, 1325a, Lista zwolnionych robotników żydów w dn. 27 VI 1942 r. [List of Jewish laborers dismissed on June 27, 1942], June 29, 1942, pp. 20–21.

[32] Ibidem, Lista robotników żydów, którzy samowolnie porzucili pracę w Zarządzie Miejskim [List of Jewish laborers who quit working for the Municipal Authorities without permission], July 16, 1942, p. 28.

[33] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełmno], August 1, 1942, p. 29.

[34] Ibidem, Lista zwolnionych robotników Żydów [List of dismissed Jewish laborers], August 10, 1942, p. 31.

[35] Ibidem, Wykaz robotnic Żydówek, które zostały zwolnione z dniem 12 IX 1942 r. [List of Jewish female laborers who were dismissed effective September 12, 1942], September 30, 1942, p. 39.

September 11, one of the Jewish women who was to be employed in the Municipal Authorities "has not yet reported for work." It was requested that "she be sent over by force."[36] As we learn from a memo dated October 9, another woman "quit working in the Municipal Authorities without permission,"[37] while according to a September 3 memo another one "left."[38] Some of the documents state the causes for dismissal, but their credibility remains disputable. For instance, according to the memo dated September 11, one of the Jewish women "left without permission and transferred to *SS-Standortverwaltung Lublin – Zweigstelle Chełm*."[39] The memo dated October 1 states that another Jewish woman "was let go from the Municipal Authorities" because "she transferred to the gendarmerie."[40] According to a document produced on October 16, two other individuals of Jewish nationality were let go because they had transferred "to the *Kreishandelgenossenschaft*."[41] Other "new workplaces," which became the reason for dismissal by the Municipal Authorities, were the "barracks" or the German Scala movie theater.[42] These documents might indicate that the Jews were trying to find more permanent and safer work details – that is, ones offering protection from deportation. But it is more probable that those individuals were simply deported from Chełm to the camp in Sobibór (particularly those whose surnames appear on the list of 100 names) and that the documents were simply a manner of settling the matter so that "everything looked good on paper."

Fiscal Documentation

Another category concerns documents which do include key words such as 'deportation', and whose prosiness is revealed in the context in which these words are used. The fundamental issue was money. Next to the date April 17, 1942 in the "Cash book of the Siedliszcze Commune Board" for the period 1940–1942 in the blank entitled "paid by or paid to", two positions were written on the "Income" side: "108 [zlotys] Judenrat Deportees on the spot" and "508 [zlotys]

[36] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełmno], September 11, 1942, p. 36.

[37] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełm], October 9, 1942, p. 41.

[38] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełm], September 3, 1942, p. 35.

[39] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełm], September 11, 1942, p. 38.

[40] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełm], October 1, 1942, p. 40.

[41] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełm], October 16, 1942, p. 44.

[42] Ibidem, Pismo do urzędu pracy w Chełmie [Letter to the Employment Office in Chełm], September 3, 1942, p. 35.

50 [groszes] Judenrat Permanent inhabitants on [the spot]."[43] The reference literature compels us to believe that the 'deportees' were not people deported to the death camp but Jews from Theresienstadt brought to Siedliszcze, which was used as transit ghetto (after a while the Jews were murdered in the death camp). The first transport of Jews from Siedliszcze to the death camp in Sobibór took place on May 18, 1942, while the second one was conducted on October 22, 1942.[44] The sums of money were probably taxes paid by the Jewish Community in Siedliszcze. To present the prosaization of the Holocaust I shall quote the July 30, 1942 entry in this book, that is, one written after the first deportation. Item 649 in the "paid by or paid to" column reads: "Judenrat in Siedliszcze," with the income in the amount of 86.99 zlotys.[45] The smaller tax probably meant a small number of inhabitants.

A 'classic' example of the prosaization of the Holocaust is an entry in the budgetary expense ledger of the Rejowiec Commune Board for 1942–1943. In the "Unexpected expenses" section ("2,000 [zlotys] budgeted [for the entire year]") the entry dated May 8, 1942 reads: "To J. Tracichleb – for candles for the school building on the day of the reception of the evacuated Jews." The man was paid 7.50 zlotys.[46] That might have been a reference to the 'evacuation' of Jews from Rejowiec to the death camp in Sobibór (which took place in early May 1942) or to the arrival in Rejowiec, which was also a transit ghetto, of one of the three groups of foreign Jews (on April 16, 18, or 20, 1942).[47] The banality of the reason for the inclusion of that entry is striking: it was a simple payment for candles. The evacuated Jews were only an addition, an explanation for the

[43] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Siedliszcze [Siedliszcze Commune files], 71, Księga kasowa Zarządu gminy Siedliszcze pow. Chełm (poz. 73 i 74) [Cash book of the Board of the Siedliszcze Commune in Chełm County (items 73 and 74)], April 17, 1942, p. 70a.

[44] Robert Kuwałek, "Getta tranzytowe w dystrykcie lubelskim [Transit ghettos in the Lublin district]," in *Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* [Aktion Reinhardt. Extermination of the Jews in the General Government], ed. Dariusz Libionka (Warsaw: IPN, 2004) pp 146–147; idem, "Nowe ustalenia dotyczące liczby ofiar…," p. 38; Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka. The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington–Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 390.

[45] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Siedliszcze [Siedliszcze Commune files], 71, Księga kasowa Zarządu gminy Siedliszcze pow. Chełm (poz. 649) [Cash book of the Board of the Siedliszcze Commune in Chełm County (item 649)], July 30, 1942, p. 90.

[46] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Rejowiec [Rejowiec Commune files], 36, Księga rozchodów budżetowych Zarządu Gminnego w Rejowcu na rok 1942–1943 [Budgetary expense ledger for 1942–1943 of the Rejowiec Commune Board], May 8, 1942, p. 67a.

[47] Kuwałek, "Nowe ustalenia dotyczące liczby ofiar…," p. 38 (according to the author the transport of Jews from Rejowiec arrived in the Sobibór camp on April 2, 1942); idem, "Getta tranzytowe…," p. 146; Dariusz Libionka, *Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 2017), pp. 114, 121; English edition: *Holocaust in the General Government of Nazi-Occupied Poland*, trans. Jerzy Giebułtowski (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 2024).

expense. After all, any "public funds" spent should be accounted for. Another document exhibiting a comparable level of prosaization of the Holocaust also comes from the Rejowiec Commune. One of six entries in point d) in the "unexpected expenses" section of the fiscal statement for the year 1942/1943 reads: "Expenditures connected with the deportation of Jews." They amounted to 325.84 zlotys. The annual fiscal statement confirmed that the annual budget for 'unexpected expenses' was 2,000 zlotys. In the end, the Community spent 1,937 zlotys and 15 groszes (it was then stated that 62.85 zlotys remained). Point f), that is, "expenses connected with the quota delivery" and b) – "maintenance of *Markthelfer's* office" were larger than the unexpected "expenses connected with the deportation of Jews," which amounted to 605.98 and 528.49 zlotys respectively. By contrast, the sums spent on "a. Court expenses with regard to Bielak's case", "c. Confiscation of falsified money," and "e. Financing review commissions" were smaller, amounting to 157.50 zlotys, 245.50 zlotys, and 73.84 zlotys respectively.[48] Thus, we know how much the Community spent on the 'unexpected' "deportation of Jews." The 7 zlotys spent on the candles must have been included in that sum.

The 1942 "Book of Subscribers to the Chełm Municipal Waterworks' Installations" listed sums paid by "SS Sobibór" under dates June 25 and October 8, amounting to 498, 70, and 400 zlotys respectively.[49] This means that the communal company rendered some installation services at the death camp in Sobibór.

Tool Inventories

The documentation produced during the period of the anti-Jewish campaign in Chełm and in the communes in Chełm county includes not only words such as "deportation" or "campaign", but also slightly longer references to those events. Valuable for clearly factographic considerations, these sources shock the reader with the prosiness of the reason for their production, which is even greater than in the case of the aforementioned Holocaust "bookkeeping". What I have in mind is the reports produced by the town's communal services. The earliest one was written a day after the first deportation of Jews from Chełm. On May 23, 1942 a commission consisting of the manager and two employees of the Traffic Department "concluded that between May 19 and 21, 1942, that is, during the deportation of Jews from Chełm, a group of Jews sent to work on the military cemetery on Wojsławicka Street by order of the Town Commissioner was

[48] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Rejowiec [Rejowiec Commune files], 34, Sprawozdanie rachunkowe za rok 1942/1943 [Fiscal statement for 1942/1943], no date, pp. 22, 64.

[49] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1315, Księga Abonentów za instalacje Wodociągów Miejskich w Chełmie [Book of Subscribers to the Chełm Municipal Waterworks' Installations], June 25, 1942, October 8, 1942, pp. 8–9, 18–19.

apprehended along with their tools by the Authorities due to the fact that they did not possess suitable documents and so they were deported from Chełm." But the document concerned not the Jews but the tools. "Some of the remaining tools managed to be retrieved at the assembly point, but five spades and three shovels disappeared. As those tools could not be found, the Commission decided to cross them out of the inventory. That concluded the minutes, which was then signed."[50] The Municipal Authorities employees even went to the assembly point (where the Jews were probably assembled before being locked in freight cars), but they were not trying to recover the Jewish laborers who had been taken away. No, they were looking for the spades and shovels.

Another report was produced after the October campaign. On October 30 the three-person Commission, whose composition was now slightly different, "decided what follows: On October 21, 1942, during the one-day deportation of the Jews the Town Commissioner selected from among our Jewish employees a group of approx. 35 workers, whom he ordered to be delegated to work to the *SS-Standortverwaltung* on Sienkiewicz Street and to be issued as many tools as requested by the SS commandant." Although the Jews were mentioned later in the memo, the only thing of interest was the tools: "A lot of tools were consequently supplied, particularly that there was already a group of Jews digging foundations, laying bricks, and gardening, who were short on tools. Meanwhile, the number of the Jewish laborers working there was reduced by half, and after about ten days, when we wanted to retrieve our tools, it occurred that inclusive of the SS tools the number of the tools was smaller even than the number of the tools provided by us alone." To retrieve the tools the Municipal Authorities employees even resorted to theft, which the report bluntly states: "Thus we received what they saw fit, plus their tools we stole when they were not looking. But even so our losses were: 13 spades, 4 pickaxes, 2 wheelbarrows." The Commission concluded: "Having no other option, it was decided that those tools be removed from the inventory. That concluded the minutes, which was then signed."[51]

The next minutes of this type were produced by the specially established commissions after the November campaign, though one of the documents concerned the October events. The minutes included not only dry statements, but also descriptions of the Jews' reaction. The minutes dated November 25, 1942 regarded shovels and pickaxes: "The Commission […] has established that on October 21, 1942, that is, on the day of the deportation of the Jews, as a result of the Jewish Community's announcement that all Jews were to report to the square on Siedlecka Street at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the Jewish laborers panicked and abandoned their posts, discarding the tools. Two shovels and one pickaxe went missing on that day." Attempts were made to find those tools: "Those tools could not be retrieved because the Jews who had been issued the

[50] Ibidem, 1330, Protokół nr 9 [Minutes no. 9], May 23, 1942, p. 48.
[51] Ibidem, Protokół nr 16 [Minutes no. 16], October 30, 1942, p. 25.

tools had been deported." The closing sentences were the standard ones: "it has been decided to remove these tools from the inventory. That concluded the minutes, which was then signed."[52]

The November 7 minutes regarded the campaign conducted on the previous day. The Commission "has established what follows: On November 6 the Jews were sent off to work as usual. Among other matters, 15 Jewish women with 15 spades were allocated to the horse-drawn wagons transporting sand to Bydgoska Street." The moment when panic broke out among the Jewish women was described in a similar down-to-earth fashion: "After the first round, that is, after sand had been transported to the work site, news about the final deportation campaign spread like wildfire among the Jews. The Jewish female laborers panicked. They all jumped off the wagons and ran off, discarding the tools. The wagons had to return to the barracks after the unfinished workday." It remains unknown why after these sentences the individuals who prepared the minutes provided the following incredibly important information: "That day all the Jews were deported from the town for good." Obviously, the conclusions regarded the tools: "In consequence, 15 spades went missing. It has been decided to remove them from the inventory. That concluded the minutes, which was then signed."[53] But the man in charge of the Traffic Department magazine did not give up. On November 8 he sent the following written order to that Desk's employee (who also belonged to the Commission). It can be inferred that the latter was a 'technician' who oversaw the Jewish women's work: "You are requested to return the 15 spades which you collected from the Traffic Department for the performance of the works on Bydgoska Street" (to the order attached was a form confirming that person's collection of the 15 spades). The technician responded with the following handwritten memo: "I have no tools to return. My kikes jumped off the wagons and ran off in all directions when they learned about the final roundup. They took the spades with them or discarded them on their way. I have neither the spades nor the Jews."[54] Regionalist Zbigniew Lubaszewski, who was the first to access those documents, rightly stressed the following: "In the Municipal Authorities' reports, the liquidation of the ghetto in Chełm was presented in a shockingly prosaic manner […]. For the Chełm clerks more important was the spades the Jews had been issued than the individuals who discarded them in panic upon hearing about the roundup and the deportation to Sobibór."[55]

[52] To the minutes attached are forms from the storehouse concerning receipt of those tools (ibidem, Protokół nr 18 wraz z formularzami [Minutes no. 18 with forms], November 25, 1942, pp. 21–22).

[53] Ibidem, Protokół nr 17 [Minutes no. 17], November 7, 1942, p. 23.

[54] Ibidem, Pismo magazyniera wraz z odręczną notatką technika [Storage man's letter with the technician's handwritten memo], November 8, 1942, p. 24.

[55] Jacek Barczyński, "Ni szpadli, ni Żydów [Neither spades, nor Jews]," *Dziennik Wschodni*, February 15, 2008 .

The last in that series of minutes was written in January 1943, though it concerned events in November 1942. Even though it does include expressions such as "ridding the town of Jews" and the "sale of the personal estate," it was produced predominantly "with regard to […] the three barriers used by the SS to block streets:" "On November 11, 1942 the *SS-Standortverwaltung* demanded three barriers for closing ghetto streets during the removal of the Jews from the town and the sale of their personal estate." Then followed an account of what happened: "As the barriers had not been returned for quite some time, we went to the ghetto to find them. After close inspection of all the streets only one barrier was found and, making matters worse, it had been broken by the peasant horse-drawn wagons transporting purchased Jewish junk which had forced their way (it was beyond repair – a piece of junk). The remaining two barriers must have been stolen by the residents for fuel because they were nowhere to be found." The Commission concluded: "Thus, it has been decided that 3 barriers, 6 trestles, and 3 wooden signs be removed from the inventory. That concluded the minutes, which was then signed."[56] There is no doubt that the locals had bought the post-Jewish personal property. Asked by a journalist to comment on that, Robert Kuwałek talked about the plunder of the ghetto by looters "or, bluntly speaking, hyenas." This is how Lubaszewski summed that up: "It is shocking how the clerks distanced themselves from what was happening with the Jewish portion of the town's population […]. On the other hand, one should bear in mind who demanded and read the documents they produced. The clerks obviously could not include any personal reflection."[57] On the other hand though, we know that those were internal documents whose authors were not afraid to mention stealing tools from the SS.

Bureaucracy in the Post-Jewish World

The documentation produced during the war but after the deportations of Jews from Chełm illustrates another category of the prosaization of the Holocaust (and the alluded Holocaust). Although it includes expressions such as "post-Jewish", the main topic was completely different, just as in the case of the earlier categories of documents. These documents also speak to the reader by means of the silence or emptiness that remained after the Jewish population had been murdered. Moreover, the Jews are referred to here as a separate category of dead people. An example of this last issue can be illustrated with a fire brigade's report produced after an intervention. Dated January 18, 1943, intervention report no. 81 reads: "On January 17, 1943 (Sunday) at 11.15 a Polish policeman notified the Fire Brigade about a human being in the well on Kolejowa Street 67. Five fire fighters immediately drove to the accident site. After removing the

[56] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1330, Protokół nr 19 [Minutes no. 19], January 15, 1943, p. 19.

[57] Barczyński, "Ni szpadli, ni Żydów."

drowned body from the well it turned out to be a Jewish woman. The fire fighters returned to the barracks at 11.45." Why did the report author emphasize that the drowned body belonged to a Jewish woman? Did that affect the actions taken which simply belonged to the fire brigades' duties? It seems that it did. At first there is the notification about "a man in the well" who requires assistance. Then it turns out that this person is dead. The dead person proves to be a Jewish woman – and that is the end of the intervention. All the fire fighters can do is return to the barracks and write: "Eight liters of gasoline were used."[58] Our extra-source knowledge compels us to wonder whether the Jewish woman was trying to survive on the 'Aryan' side on her own or was sheltered by non-Jews. She probably committed suicide or was killed, but of course she might have fallen into the well by accident. Whatever the case, the attempts to save her failed.

Nor was this the first time when the fire brigade treated Jews like a separate category of people. A fire report dated May 1, 1943 described an intervention in the ghetto in Włodawa conducted on the previous day. It should be explained that all fire reports were produced by filling in a special form. One of the points read: "Rescued: … people … animals … movables." Depending on the course of the intervention, the fire fighter filled in the blanks, left them empty or put in the sign "–".[59] In that instance the head of the fire brigade who filled in the form crossed out the word "people" and wrote "Jews." Thus, the sentence read: "Rescued: 15 Jews." Hence, Jews were not people. It turned out that it was arson. Six houses and four utility buildings burned down.[60] The fire started a day before the final liquidation of the Włodawa residual ghetto[61] (now we know that those events were connected[62]). It is noteworthy that the fire fighters had to submit proofs of their 'Aryan' ancestry going back three generations.[63]

[58] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1397, Raport wyjazdowy nr 81 [Business trip report no. 81], January 18, 1943, p. 110. Cf. ibidem, Raport o wypadku nr 54 [Accident report no. 54], June 24, 1942, p. 86 (On June 24, 1942 the fire brigade was notified about a woman who fell into a well in the ghetto. On site the fire fighters learned that the Jewish woman who fell into the well had been under water for about half an hour. Thus, she could not be saved. Consequently, "the fire fighters returned to their barracks, leaving the recovery of the body to the Jewish Order Service. 5 liters of gasoline were used." As one can see, in this instance the reaction was different).

[59] See, for instance, ibidem, 1402, Meldunek o pożarze [Fire report], September 11, 1943, p. 95.

[60] Ibidem, Meldunek o pożarze [Fire report], 1 May 1943, p. 95.

[61] The residual ghetto in Włodawa was on Jatkowa Street. The final liquidation of the ghetto began on May 1, 1943. See Krzysztof Skwirowski, *Świat zapomniany. Historia Żydów włodawskich 1918–1945* [The Forgotten World. History of the Jews of Wlodawa 1918–1945] (Włodawa: Muzeum Pojezierza Łęczyńsko-Włodawskiego, 2014), p. 134.

[62] See Archiwum Programu Historia Mówiona [Oral History Archive], The "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre in Lublin, Relacja Jerzego Filipa [An account of Jerzy Filip], rozmawiał [talked] Piotr Lasota, Chełm, March 30, 2022.

[63] See AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1370, Pismo dotyczące straży pożarnej [Memo regarding the fire brigade], March 7, 1941, p. 75.

Another document which portrays the alluded Holocaust – that is, that of the Jews who were trying to save themselves – is a 1943 notebook with minutes of meetings between the Rejowiec Commune and the local elected village heads (*sołtysi*). Dating back to March–May 1943, the minutes mention orders given by the Polish Police Chief: "Village heads must not put up people coming from other places. Instead, such individuals must be directed to the Municipal Authorities or straight to the Polish Police station in Rejowiec." The village heads had to "report immediately about bandit attacks in their communities […]. As soon as the bandits appear the police must be notified – the local rural police have to keep guard at night […] and when an individual of alien origin comes to the given community his identity must be checked and he must be reported to the local station." The Chief instructed "the village heads on checking the identity of aliens and various waifs and refusing them a place to spend the night […]. Such individuals should be escorted to the Polish Police station in Rejowiec." He specified that suspicious individuals should be "reported to the police station, and in urgent cases they should even be escorted there with help from the rural police."[64] Those commandments were repeated in August: "the Chief reminded the village heads yet again that there should be watches in the villages, which must immediately escort every strange and suspicious individual to the police station."[65] In November and December the Blue Police chief again gave instructions concerning the "night watch."[66]

After the recent publications of scholars from the Polish Center for Holocaust Research we know that those instructions resulted in apprehension, and occasional torture and escorting of the Jews in hiding to the Blue Police and the Germans. That was done by villagers, including village heads and night watchmen.[67]

In the Chełm archive there are plenty of 1943–1944 documents which include the expression "post-Jewish." Some of them regard the trusteeship

[64] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Rejowiec [Rejowiec Commune files], 21, Protokół [Minutes], March 26, 1943, p. 15; ibidem, Protokół, April 2, 1943, p. 16a; ibidem, Protokół, April 9, 1943, p. 18; ibidem, Protokół, April 16, 1943, p. 20; ibidem, Protokół, April 22, 1943, p. 21a; ibidem, Protokół, May 14, 1943, p. 26.

[65] Ibidem, Protokół [Minutes], August 6, 1943, pp. 49a–50.

[66] Ibidem, Protokół [Minutes], November 27, 1943, p. 74; ibidem, Protokół, December 17, 1943, p. 77; ibidem, Protokół, December 23, 1943, p. 78.

[67] See Barbara Engelking, *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day… Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942–1945* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem Publications, 2016); Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); *Zarys krajobrazu. Wieś polska wobec zagłady Żydów 1942–1945* [Outline of the landscape. The Polish countryside and the extermination of the Jews 1942–1945], eds Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011).

in Chełm and in the district. I have devoted a separate article to this matter.[68] Here I shall discuss only the most characteristic documents. The 1942/1943 budgetary expense ledger of the Rejowiec Commune Board includes several entries reading: "To the *Treuhänder* [German delegated trustee] – for the purchase of the house left by the deported Jews for fuel."[69] A similar book from the Wojsławice Commune records: "payment for firewood to the *Treuhänder* in Chełm," "payment to the *Treuhänder* in Chełm for firewood from post-Jewish houses for the Commune Board," and "payment to the *Treuhänder* in Chełm for the firewood for the primary schools in 1) Polish and Ukrainian school in Wojsławice, [2)] Polish and Ukrainian school in Nowy Majdan, and [3)] Polish school in Stary Majdan."[70] This is another instance when the expression "left by the deported Jews" is used with regard to something prosaic: to specify the firewood's origin. As one can see, sometimes it was not even stated who the given house had belonged to – now those buildings were the *Treuhänder's* houses or simply "post-Jewish houses". Similar expressions can be found in the reports on fire brigades' interventions. In his letter of May 12, 1942 to the Fire Safety instructor with the Municipalities' Union, signed by the fire department head, the Rejowiec Commune head of administration stated: "this is to notify you that on May 10, this year […] there was a fire in the Rejowiec settlement. The house left by deported Jew Harsztajn Szulim caught fire."[71] In the report dated September 16, 1942 the head of the fire brigade in Żmudź recorded: "The fire broke out at 11 o'clock [that day], spreading from the buildings of Jan Rogowski, who lost to the fire his house and barn, which used to belong to the Jew Lejb Rozemblum."[72] Reports of the fire departments in Chełm inform about fires "in the house owned by the *Treuhänder*" (one on October 20, 1942 and another one on January 23, 1943) and contain the following sentence: "Burning garbage was found in the house abandoned by the Jews [on Pocztowa Street]" (March 10, 1943).[73]

[68] Adam Puławski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędu powierniczego na przykładzie Chełma [The functioning of the office of trust – the example of Chelm"]," *Zagłada Żydów*. *Studia i Materiały* 13 (2017).

[69] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Rejowiec [Rejowiec Commune files], 36, Księga rozchodów budżetowych Zarządu Gminnego w Rejowcu na rok 1942–1943 [Rejowiec Commune Board's budgetary expense ledger for 1942–1943], November 7, 1942, pp. 8, 30a, 65a.

[70] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Wojsławice [Wojsławice Commune files], 27, Księga rozchodów budżetowych Zarządu gm. Wojsławice 1942/1943 [Budgetary expense ledger for 1942/1943 of the Wojsławice Commune Board], pp. 12a, 41a.

[71] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1401, Pismo do Instruktora Straży Pożarnych przy Związku Gmin [Letter to the Fire Safety Instructor with the Communes' Union], May 12, 1942, p. 53.

[72] Ibidem, Protokół [Minutes], September 16, 1942, p. 186.

[73] Ibidem, 1397, Raport pożarniczy nr 65 [Fire report no. 65], October 20, 1942, p. 96; ibidem, Raport pożarniczy nr 82 [Fire report no. 82], January 25, 1943, p. 110; ibidem, Raport pożarniczy nr 89 [Fire report no. 89], March 10, 1943, p. 116.

The alluded Holocaust – here: the void left by the murdered Jews – can be illustrated with numerous lists which until 1941 contained a lot of Jewish surnames, while after 1942 they included only Polish and Ukrainian ones. One example is a ledger drafted by controllers of the industrial and tax cards issued for 1941 and 1942, 1943, and 1944 in the Rejowiec Commune in Chełm county.[74] It must be remarked right away that Jewish surnames can also be found in documents produced after the extermination of the Jews. In the trusteeship practice this was connected with the legalism that has been noticed by Jan Grabowski and which guided both German and Polish clerks during the occupation, mostly when they sought to recover debts owed to the former owners by third parties or vice versa.[75] The same practice can be encountered in the municipal documentation. Of course, Jewish names can be found in such documents produced before the Holocaust. What I am referring to here is attachments to the budget, for instance, the tally of short-term debts taken up between October, 9 1939 and March 31, 1940,[76] the list of securities deposited (both in the fiscal report for 1941/1942 and that for 1942/1943),[77] the list of budget advances – sums remaining in the individual accounts as of March 31, 1942,[78] the list of third party deposits as of March 31, 1942,[79] the list of sums to be clarified – sums remaining as of March 31, 1942,[80] and the list of depositors

[74] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Rejowiec [Rejowiec Commune files], 54, Kontrola wydanych kart przemysłowo-podatkowych na rok 1941 i 1942, 1943, 1944 gm. Rejowiec powiat Chełm [Review of issued industrial and tax cards for 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944 in Rejowiec Commune in Chełm county].

[75] Jan Grabowski, "Zarząd Powierniczy i nieruchomości żydowskie w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie. 'Co można skonfiskować? W zasadzie wszystko' [The Trusteeship Board and Jewish property in the General Government. 'What can be confiscated? Basically everything']," in *Klucze i kasa. O mieniu żydowskim w Polsce pod okupacją niemiecką i we wczesnych latach powojennych 1939–1950* [Keys and Cash. On Jewish property in Poland under German occupation and in the early postwar years 1939–1950], eds Jan Grabowski and Dariusz Libionka (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2014).

[76] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1188, Zestawienie długów krótkoterminowych zaciągniętych od 9 X 1939 do 31 III 1940 r. [List of short-term debts taken up between October 9, 1939 and March 31, 1940], pp. 40–41.

[77] Ibidem, 1211, Depozyty walorowe (sprawozdanie rachunkowe za rok 1941/1942) [Securities deposited (fiscal report for 1941/1942)], no date, p. 116; ibidem, 1203, Depozyty walorowe (sprawozdanie rachunkowe za rok 1941/1942) (sprawozdanie rachunkowe za rok 1941/1942) [Securities deposited (fiscal report for 1941/1942)], no date, p. 269.

[78] Ibidem, Zaliczki budżetowe. Pozostałości na poszczególnych rachunkach na dn. 31 III 1942 r. [Budget advances. Sums remaining in the individual accounts as at March 31, 1942], p. 263.

[79] Ibidem, Sumy obce według stanu na dzień 31 III 1942 r. [Third party deposits as at 31 March 31, 1942], p. 271.

[80] Ibidem, Sumy do wyjaśnienia. Pozostałości na dzień 31 III 1942 r. [Sums to be clarified. Remaining sums as at March 31, 1942], p. 273.

as of March 31, 1942[81] (Jewish surnames can be found even in the tally "for April 1, 1942," which contains surnames of former municipal employees who belonged to the Pension Fund).[82] Importantly, the same Jews are included in the tallies produced when some, if not most of them, had already been murdered.[83] However, this budget documentation should be analyzed more closely. Attached to the budget of the town of Chełm, the list of debtors and creditors as at March 31, 1942 contains many Jewish surnames (the Jews were mostly creditors to the town).[84] A year later those surnames were absent from the list of debtors and creditors, as they had been replaced with the *Treuhänder*.[85] What happened between the production of those two documents becomes apparent when one looks at a similar tally for the years 1942–1943, on a monthly basis. For here too, individual Jews were listed as creditors. In the columns of the table for the months of 1942, beginning with April, the clerk recorded the sums which the town owed those individuals (these were the same sums as the ones included in the tally for March 31, 1942). In the first three months of 1943 the sums in the columns were substituted with the sign "–".[86] To us who possess suitable extra-source knowledge this dash means the death of the debtors and creditors, that is, the Jews listed.

It should be added that certain Poles accepted those 'changes' without reservations. Institutions such as the fire brigades in Nowosiółki i Niedziałowice[87]

[81] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1211, Deponenci według stanu na dzień 31 III 1942 r. [Depositors as at March 31, 1942], pp. 128–130.

[82] Ibidem, Wykaz [List], 1 April 1942, pp. 231–233.

[83] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1210, Wykaz sum obcych na dzień 1 IV 1943 r. [List of third party deposits as at April 1, 1943], pp. 155–156; ibidem, Depozyty walorowe. Stan na dzień 1 IV 1943 r. [Securities deposited as at April 1, 1943], p. 144; ibidem, Deponenci według stanu na dzień 31 III 1943 r. [Depositors as at March 31, 1943], pp. 163–164; ibidem, 1203, Depozyty walorowe. Stan na dzień 1 IV 1943 r. [Securities deposited as at April 1, 1943], p. 87.

[84] Ibidem, Dłużnicy i wierzyciele. Pozostałości na poszczególnych rachunkach w dniu 31 III 1942 r. [Debtors and creditors. Sums remaining in the individual accounts as at March 31, 1942], pp. 275–277. See also AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1211, Rachunek dłużników i wierzycieli na 1 IV 1942 r. [Calculation of debts and credits as at April 1, 1942], p. 219.

[85] Ibidem, 1204, Dłużnicy i wierzyciele. Pozostałości na poszczególnych rachunkach w dniu 31 III 1943 r. [Debtors and creditors. Sums remaining in the individual accounts as at March 31, 1943], pp. 167–168.

[86] Ibidem, 1203, Załącznik nr 3 do sprawozdań rachunkowych miesięcznych za 1942/1943. Dłużnicy i wierzyciele. Pozostałości na poszczególnych rachunkach w dniu 31 III 1943 r. [Attachment no. 3 to the fiscal monthly reports for 1942/1943. Debtors and creditors. Sums remaining in the individual accounts as at March 31, 1943], pp. 56–70. See also Puławski, "Funkcjonowanie urzędu powierniczego…" I referred to this documentation also in my comment quoted in Barczyński, "Ni szpadli, ni Żydów."

[87] In May 1943 the fire safety instructor for Chełm country submitted to the *Treuhänder* in Chełm "requests made by 1) the Voluntary Fire Brigade in Nowosiółki, Staw Commune,

or the Regional Association of Dairy Producers[88] were interested in obtaining the property appropriated from the Jews after their 'evacuation'. Similarly, the Turek Municipal Authorities leased out the fire station in Dorohusk from the *Treuhänder*.[89] There were also instances when ordinary residents were interested in empty stores located in a "post-Jewish building."[90] It is also known that representatives of the Chełm clergy wanted to buy real estate from the *Treuhänder*. In August 1943, on behalf of the Swierże parish, Chełm Dean Stanisław Niedźwieński negotiated the purchase of a "post-Jewish house and plot of land for the Roman-Catholic parish in Sawin."[91]

I shall use only one document to illustrate the last category of Holocaust prosaization that appears in the collection of the documents stored at the Chełm Branch of the State Archive in Lublin. It was produced during the war, but after the extermination of the Jews. Written on June 6, 1943 by the aforementioned dean, this document concerns the 'interested party' in the person of a Polish policeman. Two other Polish policemen from villages near Chełm who testified on his behalf stated i.a. that Kazimierz C. (I intentionally do not include his surname), "a Roman Catholic, married Maria B. on September 22, 1929." The subsequent fragment of the testimony is more noteworthy: "In early December 1942, when the anti-Jewish campaign began, the wife of Kazimierz [his surname is provided here – A. P], who was of Jewish origin, left her husband of her own initiative and went in an unknown direction." The policemen then stated the following: "Because at that time Jews were being hunted down and liquidated, the three of us state that there is no doubt that Maria […], the wife of Kazimierz

2) the Voluntary Fire Brigade in Niedziałowice, Rejowiec Commune for allocation of postwar buildings for fire stations." The instructor asked the *Treuhänder* on his own account for a speedy positive decision in this regard because the above mentioned fire brigades had no storeroom for their equipment. Consequently, the gear was falling into disrepair, while purchase of new one was out of the question (AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1362, Pismo do *Treuhändera* [Letter to the *Treuhänder*], May 18, 1943, pp. 14–15).

[88] On September 8, 1943 the *Grundstücktreuhänder* for Chełm county asked the town authorities to price eight plots on Pocztowa Street "for the Regional Dairy Association in Chełm." The said letter contains not only the addresses, but also the surnames of the Jewish owners of the plots, who had obviously been murdered long before that (see AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1258, Pismo *Grundstückstreuhänder* [*Grundstückstreuhänder's* letter], September 8, 1943, p. 118).

[89] See AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta gminy Turka [Turek Commune files], 5, Księga rozchodów budżetowych 1943 r. [1943 budgetary expense ledger], 7 June 1943, 1 October 1943, p. 41a.

[90] See, for instance, ibidem, 1254, Podanie [Application], 20 January 8, 1942, p. 48.

[91] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta instytucji wyznaniowych (dekanatu i parafii) powiatu chełmskiego [Files of religious institutions (deanery and parish) in Chełm district] (hereafter: AIW), 60, Pismo dziekana chełmskiego do księdza proboszcza parafii Sawin [The Chełm dean's letter to Sawin's parish priest], August 10, 1943, p. 79; ibidem, Upoważnienie [Authorization], August 12, 1943, p. 120.

[…], had been apprehended and liquidated." Thus, they concluded, "the marriage between Maria […] and Kazimierz […] should be recognized as legally dissolved, which means that Kazimierz […] is unmarried. We attest to the above statement with our handwritten signatures."[92]

The Holocaust was referred to here in a relatively unambiguous manner, but the reason for bringing it up is not so much prosaic as outright cynical.[93] A critical analysis of this source suggests that the ominous character of the anti-Jewish campaign was emphasized on purpose. First and foremost, it should be stressed that this is perhaps the only document from the Archive's Chełm Branch produced during the war which explicitly states that the 1942 German anti-Jewish campaign was aimed at their extermination.

The postwar documentation from the Chełm archive concerning the subject matter of this article requires a separate overview. For the purpose of these reflections let me remark on just a few aspects. There are documents which mention the Holocaust in an overt manner, for instance, the profile of a German living in Chełm, Jan Kirschner, who changed his name to Johan during the war. The document states: "In late 1942 he collaborated with the German authorities in the liquidation of Jews."[94] But it must at once be noted that such documents are few and far between. The death of Chełm's Jews in 1942 is most often mentioned in the postwar documentation concerning restitution of property, but these are unemotional official notes (mostly in notary deeds drafted immediately after the war concerning the sale of a given piece of real estate). They did not mention at all that the Jews died as a result of the mass murder committed by the Germans.[95] Let me quote a characteristic fragment of one such notary deed: "Those summoned stated that Chuma Erlich died in Chełm in 1926, leaving her daughter Małka Erlich as her heiress. Malka Erlich died childless in April 1942, with her bequest transferred to her father […] Gerszon Erlich, who died without a living heir in June 1942. His bequest was transferred to his natural brother Michał Erlich, who died in November 1942, leaving his son Boruch-Mordka Erlich as his heir, who has now appeared for the purpose of drafting

[92] Ibidem, Protokół [Minutes], June 16, 1943, pp. 50–51.

[93] On December 7, 1942 the vicar general of the Lublin Curia, Józef Kruszewski, told priests from the dioceses to check whether "people of ill" were not committing bigamy in conditions of war: "Aside a copy of birth certificate […] a statement made by two reliable witnesses should also be mandatory" (see AP Lublin O/Chełm, AIW, 58, Do Przewielebnego Duchowieństwa Diecezji Lubelskiej [To the Honorable Chaplaincy of the Lublin Diocese], November 7, 1942, p. 96).

[94] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [files of the town of Chełm], 1470, Raport [Report], December 20, 1949, p. 3.

[95] See, for instance, AP Lublin O/Chełm, Rejonowy Urząd Likwidacyjny w Chełmie [District Liquidation Office in Chełm] (hereafter: RUL), 737, Odpis aktu notarialnego z 31 VIII 1946 r. [August 31, 1946 notary deed copy], November 16, 1963, p. 5.

this deed."[96] This phenomenon in postwar Poland has recently been discussed in the collective work already cited entitled *Klucze i kasa. O mieniu żydowskim w Polsce pod okupacją niemiecką i we wczesnych latach powojennych 1939–1950* (Keys and money. On Jewish property in Poland under the German occupation and in the early postwar years 1939–1950).

In most postwar documentation there is a 'void' left by the Jewish population. "There is just a small handful of us," as Jewish survivors wrote in the August 31, 1944 memorial of the Jewish Committee of the town of Chełm sent to the Desk for Aid to the Jewish Population of the Presidium of the Polish Committee for National Liberation.[97] In the collections "Akta miasta Chełma" (files of the town of Chełm), which contains postwar documentation, one will not find Jewish members of the local government, municipal authorities, or municipal companies. Reports produced in the smallest administrative units (communes) show that at that time the Lublin provinces were practically "free of Jews". In many statistical documents what we see next to "Jews" is simply a dash, meaning n/a. Elsewise one may reads that there were "no members of Judaism" or "other minorities" (other than the Ukrainian one), etc. In the Chełm Branch of the archive there is relatively substantial documentation concerning Jews who returned to town after the wartime turmoil. A lot of the Jewish surnames appear in various documents concerning real estate (these are usually surnames of prewar owners who were murdered).[98]

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[96] Ibidem, 814, Odpis aktu notarialnego z 19 XII 1946 r. [December 19, 1946 notary deed copy], September 26, 1946, p. 7. Similar acts see ibidem, 820, Odpis aktu notarialnego z 20 VII 1946 r. [July 20, 1946 notary deed copy], May 30, 1957, pp. 6–7; ibidem, 840, Odpis aktu notarialnego z 11 VII 1946 r. [July 11, 1946 notary deed copy], January 19, 1961, p. 15; ibidem, 842, Odpis aktu notarialnego z 7 VIII 1946 r. [August 7, 1946 notary deed copy], June 22, 1957, p. 14 (there are more such notary deeds).

[97] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1614, Memoriał Komitetu Żydowskiego m. Chełm do Referatu dla spraw Pomocy Ludności Żydowskiej przy Prezydium Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego [Memorial of the Jewish Committee of the town of Chełm addressed to the Desk for Aid to the Jewish Population of the Presidium of the Polish Committee for National Liberation], August 31, 1944, pp. 5–6.

[98] See Adam Puławski, "Żydzi [Jews]," in *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny 1944–1956. Aspekty społeczne, gospodarcze, oświatowe i kulturalne* [The history of the Lublin region 1944–1956. Social, economic, educational and cultural aspects], eds Tomasz Osiński, Mariusz Mazur (Lublin: IPN, 2017), pp. 147–166; the entire "Rejonowy Urząd Likwidacyjny w Chełmie" [District Liquidation Office in Chełm] collections at the Chełm Branch of the State Archive in Lublin; AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1648, Wykaz nieruchomości 1944–1950 [1944–1950 real estate list]; ibidem, 1649, Księga Biercza podatków od nieruchomości za rok podatkowy 1946 [Biercza ledger of property tax for the 1946 tax year]; ibidem, 1650, Księga Biercza podatku od nieruchomości za rok podatkowy 1946 [Biercza ledger of property tax for the 1946 tax year]; ibidem, 1651, Księga Biercza podatku od nieruchomości za rok podatkowy 1948 [Biercza ledger of property tax for the 1948 tax year].

In the 1950s a slightly different formula was used in the procedure connected with post-Jewish (or abandoned) property – namely, it was written that the given Jewish owner (his/her first and last name was provided) "left Chełm during the 1939–1945 war period and his whereabouts remain unknown." A given "Certificate" (in the form of a printed blank with the surname of the owner filled in) pertained to a single individual.[99] The year 1960 saw the production of a document which is the quintessence of post-Jewish Chełm. It reads:

> The Presidium of the Municipal National Council in Chełm informs that the prewar owners of the real estate abandoned in Chełm at Trubakowska Street 17/19, that is, citizens: Szmul Lejba Orensztejn, Chaim Majer Lewin, Józef Orensztajn, Szmul Lejba Orensztejn, Dawid Orensztejn, Szulim Orensztejn, Szmul-Szaja Orensztejn, Szyja-Szloma Orensztejn, Maria vel Marianna Rabinowicz, widow Perla Zauheim, Estera Lewin, Maradla Berlinerblan, Sura Orensztejn, Gołda Orensztejn, Jankiel Orensztejn, Aurum Jasza, Geszel Orensztejn, Jankiel Bojman, Ichiel Bojman, Chana Orensztejn daughter of Szloma, Sura Orensztejn daughter of Szloma, Ruchla Orensztejn daughter of Szloma, Geszel Orensztejn son of Szloma, Zelik Orensztejn, Chana Ila Orensztejn daughter of Szulim, Hania Rotholc née Orensztejn, and Mordko Icko Orensztejn, who did not claim Szmul Zeliman Raport's inheritance, left Chełm during the 1939–1945 war period and their whereabouts remain unknown."[100]

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the character of some of these documents resulted from ordinary clerical routine, particularly in the case of fiscal documentation or the postwar deeds concerning restitution of property. Similar routine shows through the surviving sources produced during the war, ones which concern the prisoner of war camp in Chełm, Stalag 219 – the site of another German mass murder.[101] In the book of subscribers to the Chełm Municipal Waterworks' installations, which I have already quoted, one can find not only "SS Sobibór," but also much more frequent entries that continued to appear until the end of the German occupation in Chełm concerning services rendered to Stalag 319 or Lager A (the last entry is dated July 20, 1944).[102] The same can be said about

[99] There are plenty of documents of this type in the collections of the "Rejonowy Urząd Likwidacyjny w Chełmie" [District Liquidation Office in Chełm], see, for instance, AP Lublin O/Chełm, RUL, 692, Zaświadczenie [Certificate], March 25, 1957, p. 7.

[100] Ibidem, 1031, Zaświadczenie [Certificate], December 27, 1960, p. 4.

[101] More about the camp itself, see, for instance, Andrzej H. Rybak, *Stalag 319. Międzynarodowy obóz jeniecki w Chełmie w latach 1941–1944* [Stalag 319 International Prisoner of War Camp in Chelm, 1941–1944] (Chełm: Stowarzyszenie Rocznik Chełmski, 2009).

[102] AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1315, Księga Abonentów za instalacje Wodociągów Miejskich w Chełmie [Book of Subscribers to the Chełm

the remaining documentation in the Chełm archive concerning Stalag 319.[103] In other quoted documents, particularly those where the writer had to justify certain decisions, to which end he reported on what had happened to the Jews and also described their reactions. This was the case with, for instance, the reports on missing tools. Such routine became a useful way for silencing one's conscience. Let us bear in mind that even though these were official documents, they did mention illegal actions of the authors of those reports (for instance, the theft of tools). Nevertheless, the authors 'could not' write any words of sympathy towards the Jews, if only out of fear. The extermination character of the campaigns was mentioned in only one of the documents presented, but as we know it was cynically used to a very prosaic end: being deemed unmarried. Generally speaking, one gets the impression that aside from routine, fear, and cynicism, the factor that affected the content of the documentation discussed in this article was also that the extermination of the Jews was taking place 'outside' Polish society. Simply put, it was 'their' extermination and not 'ours'.

Translated by *Anna Brzostowska* and *Jerzy Giebułtowski*

Municipal Waterworks' Installations], April 9, 1942, May 23, 1942, November 24, 1942, December 7, 1942, April 1, 1943, July 9, 1943, August 14, 1943, September 21, 1943, January 21, 1944, February 11, 1944, March 22, 1944, March 30, 1944, March 31, 1944, April 28, 1944, May 31, 1944, July 20, 1944, pp. 3–4, 6–7, 20, 25, 38, 50–51, 53–54, 59, 66, 69–71, 73, 78–79, 81. See also "Plan zaopatrzenia wodnego dla m. Chełma" [Water supply plan for the town of Chełm] with a sketch entitled "Obóz Jeńców" [POW camp] (ibidem, 1304, no date, p. 3).

[103] This is documentation concerning fires: ibidem, 1330, Protokół nr 6 [Minutes no. 6], November 14, 1941, p. 55; ibidem, 1375, Rozkaz dzienny nr 169 [Daily order no. 169], June 16, 1943, p. 104; ibidem, 1384, Pismo Komendantury Stalagu 319 do Stadtkommissarza Chełma [Letter from Stalag 319 Headquarters to Chełm *Stadtkommissar*], June 8, 1943, p. 1 (the content of this letter is repeated in ibidem, Pismo Komendantury Stalagu 319 do Stadtkommissarza Chełma [Letter from Stalag 319 Headquarters to Chełm *Stadtkommissar*], June 8, 1943, pp. 2–3); ibidem, Pismo Komendantury Stalagu 319 do Stadtkommissarza Chełma wraz z notatką Stadtkommissarza [Letter from Stalag 319 Headquarters to Chełm *Stadtkommissar* with the *Stadtkommissar*'s memo], February 20–22, 1943, pp. 4–5; ibidem, Pismo Naczelnika Lazaretu I do Stadtkommisarza wraz z notatką Stadtkommissarza [Letter from the Head of Field Hospital 1 to Chełm *Stadtkommissar* with the *Stadtkommissar*'s memo], January 6, 1943, January 12, 1943, pp. 6–7; ibidem, Pismo Komendantury Stalagu 319 do Stadtkommissarza Chełma [Letter from Stalag 319 Headquarters to Chełm *Stadtkommissar*], November 19, 1942, pp. 8–9; AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [Files of the town of Chełm], 1397, Raport pożarowy nr 140 [Fire report no. 140], January 27, 1943, p. 164; ibidem, 1405, Wykaz pożarów w roku 1942 [List of fires in 1942], no date, p. 189; ibidem, Pismo Komendanta Zawodowej Straży Pożarnej do Kierownika Technicznego na terenie Generalnego Gubernatorstwa [Letter from Fire Department Chief to the Technical Head in the General Government], September 30, 1942, pp. 203–204. There is also a letter from the camp headquarters to Chełm *Stadtkommissar* requesting two maps of Chełm (AP Lublin O/Chełm, Akta miasta Chełma [files of the town of Chełm], 1410, July 31, 1943, p. 25).

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