

CHAD S.A. GIBBS

SURVIVAL AT TREBLINKA

GEOGRAPHY, GENDER, AND SOCIAL
NETWORKS IN JEWISH RESISTANCE



SURVIVAL AT TREBLINKA

George L. Mosse Series in the History of
European Culture, Sexuality, and Ideas

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SURVIVAL AT TREBLINKA

*Geography, Gender, and Social Networks
in Jewish Resistance*

Chad S.A. Gibbs

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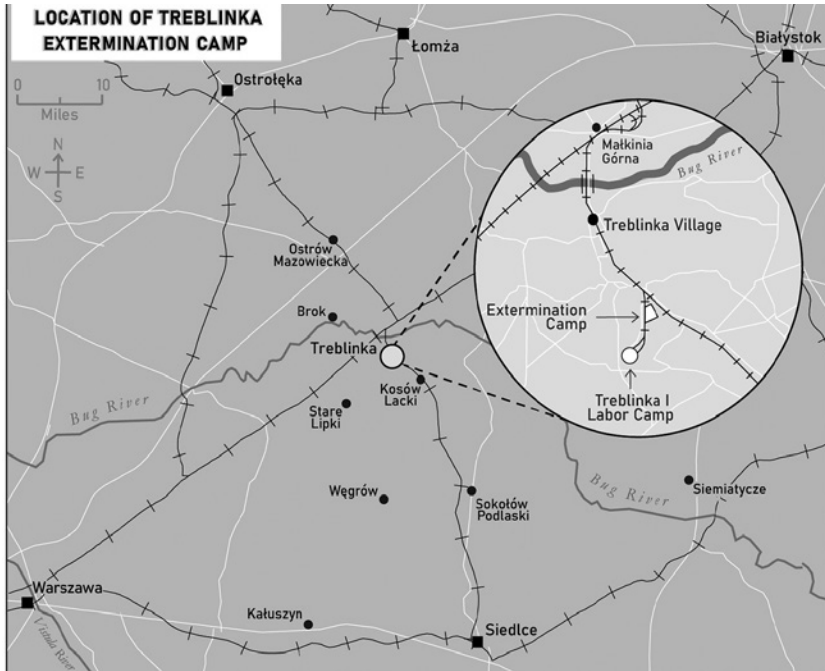
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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
Introduction	3
1 Space, Networks, and Escape: Camp Geography and Early Resistance Activities	16
2 Defending the Few: Forming and Preserving Spatial Social Networks	31
3 Taking Up Arms: Prior Plans, Resistance Placemaking, and the Revolt	54
4 “There Was No Women”: Reevaluating the History and Memory of Women at Treblinka	73
5 Surviving Treblinka: Finding the Few and Localizing Definitions of Survivorship	90
Conclusion	109
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	115
<i>Appendix: Survivors of Treblinka</i>	121
<i>Notes</i>	167
<i>Bibliography</i>	201
<i>Index</i>	211

Illustrations

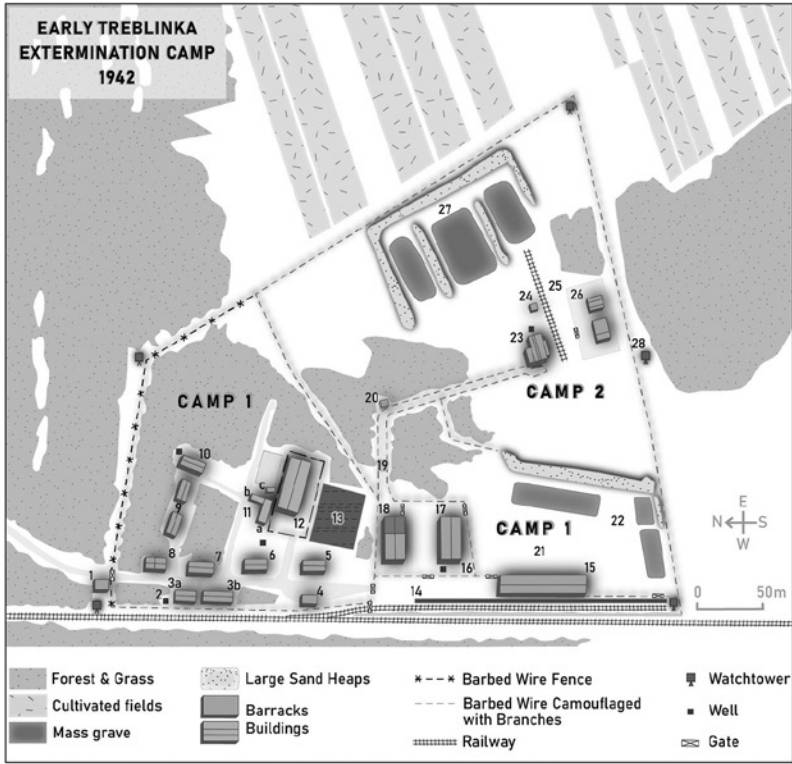
Location of Treblinka Extermination Camp	viii
Nazi German Extermination Camps	ix
Early Treblinka Extermination Camp, 1942	x
Late Treblinka Extermination Camp, 1943	xi
Duisburg Map	xii
Samuel Willenberg, <i>Western Oversight of the Camp</i>	xii
Chapter 2 Detail Map	32
Chapter 3 Detail Map	55
Chapter 4 Detail Map	74



Location of Treblinka Extermination Camp (Nuzhat Tabassum Nawshin, UW–Madison Cartography Lab)



Nazi German Extermination Camps (Nuzhat Tabassum Nawshin, UW–Madison Cartography Lab)



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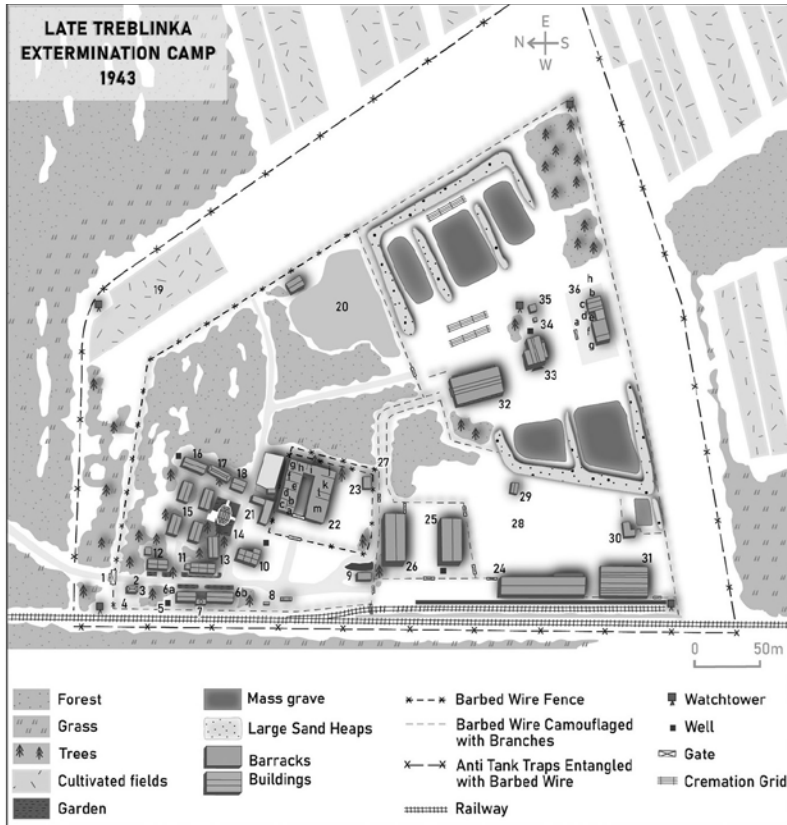
Camp 1

1. Guard House
2. Well
3. SS Barracks: a. Mess b. Sleeping Area
4. Garage
5. Food Store
6. Old Bakery
7. Storage Building for Stolen Valuables
8. Camp Headquarters and Commandant's Living Area
9. Ukrainian Barracks
10. Ukrainian Kitchen
11. Stables and Livestock Area
12. Hofjuden and Women's Barracks Building and Workshops
13. Vegetable Garden
14. Disembarkation Platform or Ramp
15. Storage Building for Items Stolen from Victims
16. Open Air Latrine
17. Male Prisoners' Barracks
18. Women's Undressing Barracks with Hair Cutting Area at East End
19. The Schlauch, or Tube - also called the Himmelstraße, or the Road to Heaven
20. Booth for Taking Valuables from Victims
21. Sortierungsplatz or Sorting Yard
22. Mass Graves

Camp 2

23. Old Gas Chambers
24. Narrow Gauge Railway
25. Fence around Camp 2 Barracks
26. Camp 2 Prisoner Barracks
27. Mass Graves
28. Watchtower

Early Treblinka Extermination Camp, 1942 (Nuzhat Tabassum Nawshin, UW-Madison Cartography Lab)



KEY:

Camp 1

1. Main Gate
2. Tyrolean Guard House
3. Armored Car
4. SS Relaxation Area
5. Well
6. SS Barracks: a. Mess
b. Sleeping Area
7. Armory
8. Fuel Tank and Pumps
9. Garage
10. Unfinished Foundations for New Bakery Building
11. SS Service Building
12. Camp Headquarters and Commandant's Living Area
13. Sleeping Area for Polish and Ukrainian Women
14. Zoo and Relaxation Area for SS
15. Ukrainian Barracks
16. Ukrainian Kitchen
17. Potato Storage
18. Goldjuden Building
19. Vegetable Garden
20. Lumberyard
21. Stables and Livestock Area

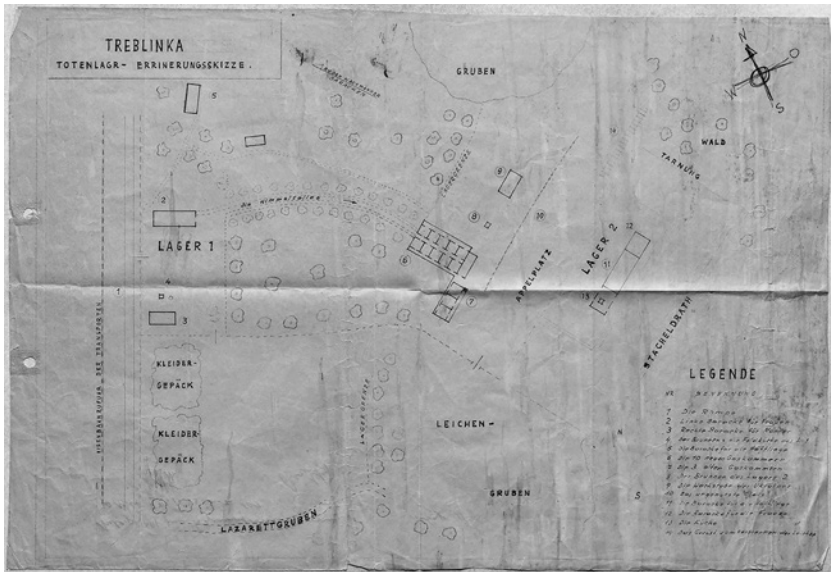
22. "The Ghetto" Barracks:
 - a. Jewish Kitchen,
 - b. SS Laundry,
 - c. Jewish Infirmary,
 - d. Kapo Sleeping Area,
 - e. Leather and Shoemaker Workshop,
 - f. Tailor Workshop,
 - g. Jewish Women's Sleeping Area,
 - h. Carpenter Workshop,
 - i. Blacksmith and Locksmith,
 - j. Tool Storage,
 - k. Common Sleeping Area,
 - l. Washroom,
 - m. Common Sleeping Area
23. Latrines
24. Storage Building for Items Stolen from Victims - In later phases the side of this building facing the Disembarkation Area was painted and decorated to look like a train station called Obermajdan
25. Storage Building (Formerly Male Prisoners' Barracks)
26. Women's Undressing Barracks with Hair Cutting Area at East End
27. The Schlauch, or Tube - also called the Himmelstraße, or the Road to Heaven

28. Sortierungsplatz or Sorting Yard
29. Latrine
30. Lazarett - Execution site disguised as a field hospital
31. Pferdestall, or "Horse Barn," also called Storage Barracks B

Camp 2

32. New 10-Room Gas Chamber Building
33. Old 3-Room Gas Chamber Building
34. Water Pump Shelter
35. Guard House
36. Camp 2 Prisoner Barracks:
 - a. Roll Call Area,
 - b. Brothel and Women's Sleeping Area,
 - c. Doctor,
 - d. Kapo Sleeping Area,
 - e. Washroom,
 - f. Men's Sleeping Area,
 - g. Kitchen,
 - h. Laundry Area

Late Treblinka Extermination Camp, 1943 (Nuzhat Tabassum Nawshin, UW-Madison Cartography Lab)



Duisburg Map (courtesy of Rhineland Abteilung of the State Archive of North Rhine–Westphalia)



Samuel Willenberg, *Western Oversight of the Camp* (courtesy of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw)

SURVIVAL AT TREBLINKA

Introduction

Anyone who came to fetch weapons had to give the password “Death!” To which the proper reply was “Life!” Death! Life! Death! Life! Cries of enthusiasm arose as the long-awaited rifles, revolvers, and hand grenades were handed out.

—SHALOM KOHN, “The Treblinka Revolt”

It is hard to imagine how anxious the prisoners of Treblinka must have been as dawn broke on August 2, 1943. Months of dashed plans and false starts had finally come down to a single moment. With the hour approaching, prisoners quietly came to the garage and camp kitchen to collect weapons hidden there by comrades who had stolen them from the SS armory earlier that morning. Always fearful of informants, each whispered the password “death” and received the response “life” as they were handed a weapon, similar to how American paratroopers shouted “thunder” and “flash” in the hedgerows of Normandy to identify friend and foe.¹ The use of a verbal countersign at Treblinka was meant to ensure that only individuals who were participants in the revolt plan would receive weapons or learn of their existence.

“At [2:00 p.m.] an order came through from the committee that from that moment [on] no Jew would be allowed to die,” recalled one of the survivors.² Treblinka’s revolt planners decided that the uprising would begin earlier if anyone’s life were in danger. That worry soon became a reality. Sometime before the planned midafternoon start time, Kurt “Kiewe” Küttner, one of the most hated guards in the camp, caught two prisoners in possession of cash. Everyone knew that the sentence for possessing money at Treblinka was death. Fearing that these two conspirators might die only moments before the revolt was to start, someone took a shot at Kiewe. The revolt had begun.³ Chaos reigned.

Intricate and carefully laid plans went out the window because of the premature start. Many prisoners had not yet collected their weapons, and others who had retrieved them were not in their assigned attack positions.⁴ Still, Treblinka burned, and around three hundred Jews fled the camp that day. Despite facing another twenty-one months of Nazi genocide, at least seventy of those men and women lived to see the end of the war.⁵ The people lucky enough to make it are among a larger group of Treblinka survivors newly acknowledged in this book.

Now, more than eighty years after that infamous August afternoon, recently discovered sources and novel research methods make possible a reassessment of Jewish resistance at Treblinka—both before and during the revolt. This book sheds new light on the revolt and prior acts of Jewish resistance at Treblinka, using the testimonies of revolt survivors, prior escapees, and those who passed through the camp, as well as a handful of bystander witnesses and even the utterances of former SS guards. When working with those guard statements and testimonies, however, *Survival at Treblinka* consciously keeps their voices in the background. The account of the revolt at Treblinka, as told here, is one provided mostly through the voices of the Jews who endured this place. Memory documents, memoirs, testimonies, and court statements are our best and very nearly our only sources through which to explore the internal resistance history of this extermination camp. Few documents remained after the Nazi destruction of Treblinka itself and of almost all relevant paperwork shortly after the uprising.⁶

Testimonies and written accounts by Treblinka survivors stress the irreplaceable importance of friends, relationships, or what I call social network-based assistance in helping people survive the moment of arrival at Treblinka and to stay alive inside the camp. Richard Glazar, a survivor of the revolt, makes it clear that the relationships he had with trusted friends saved his life. He also poignantly insists that no one survived Treblinka without help—no matter what they later recall.

Of course there were loners. They will tell you now they survived *because* they relied on no one but themselves. But the truth is probably—and they may either not know it, or not be willing to admit it to themselves or others—that they survived because they were carried by *someone*, someone who cared for them as much, or almost as much as for themselves. They are now the ones who feel guiltiest. Not for anything they did—but for what they didn't do—for what . . . and this cannot be any reflection on them . . . for what simply wasn't in them to be.⁷

Stressing the importance of networks, the writer Mark S. Smith asserts that “no member of the Jewish [work details] survived Treblinka without friend-

ship. Every survivor was helped by someone else—even though in many cases in the end that ‘someone else’ did not survive.”⁸ Glazar and Smith both highlight a network-based preservation of individuals inside the camp that history has not yet acknowledged.

Treblinka’s Jewish prisoners helped people they knew survive arrival at the camp and worked to keep those same individuals alive thereafter. Their actions at the point of disembarkation helped build a trusted and mutually supportive group of resistance plotters inside the camp. The intervention of Treblinka inmates in the occasional selections for work of those getting off the trains was a key building block of resistance networks inside this camp. *Survival at Treblinka* shows that Jews brought into Treblinka by prewar acquaintances and friends played an outsized role in the plotting of resistance and in the creation of fighting units on the day of the revolt. Restoring Jewish agency to the history of selection at Treblinka helps us understand the origins and further construction of resistance networks, or relationships of trust, at this place.

Treblinka’s Jewish inmates were subject to SS regulations and the barbed wire that controlled and surrounded their endangered daily lives. Owing greatly to the always evolving physical environment of Treblinka, geographies created by rules and camp infrastructure affected the formation and maintenance of prisoners’ social networks. The places and spaces occupied by the camp population influenced inmates’ actions as much as the ever-present power of the guards. Recognizing these mutually dependent factors, this book employs both social networking and geographic, or spatial, research. By looking at both prisoner relationships and the spatial or physical environment, we can reveal factors that shaped the history of resistance at Treblinka. This book draws out the connections between networks and access to geography by showing how Jewish prisoners at Treblinka carved out what I call “places of resistance” inside the camp. Building on the work of others who have written on spatial placemaking, this book locates important places for Jewish conspirators and shows how they used various deceptions to take control of geography.⁹

Survival at Treblinka also underscores the gendered nature of this same camp geography, resulting, once again, from rules applied by guards as well as from the actions of Treblinka prisoners themselves. Social networks, geographies, and gender beliefs held by those within the camp were largely responsible for the outcomes of prisoner perseverance, resistance, and final revolt strategies. Only by looking at all of these factors and how they influenced one another is it possible to see a more complete picture of what took place and how those events have been remembered to this day. In regard to women prisoners and knowledge of what women endured at Treblinka, attention to the gendered geographies of Jewish inmate lives allows this book to move beyond

the selective retelling of male survivors. Spatial analysis of testimony, as I show here, supports a recovery of women's histories long avoided by male survivors and historians alike.

What is least understood in this saga are the histories and contributions of women to resistance at Treblinka. Just one five-page chapter out of all the literature about this camp specifically addresses the conditions and lives of women held here.¹⁰ In those scant few pages, resistance by Jewish women and women's roles in revolt conspiracies are not topics of discussion. This book pays specific attention to the lives of Treblinka's Jewish women prisoners and their pivotal participation in resistance, while simultaneously addressing the ways in which women were—and were not—remembered by former male inmates and resistance conspirators. Looking at what these male survivors say and what they avoid saying in certain types of testimony and specific settings is, at times, just as revealing as or more so than the actual content of their statements.

The gendered nature of Treblinka geography is immediately apparent. From the moment of disembarkation at the camp, even those who did not long survive occupied different spaces according to their age and their sex. The camp kitchen, mentioned earlier, is just one example of a gendered place of resistance in its role as a distribution point for weapons before the revolt. Prisoner conspirators stored stolen weapons there in part because guards did not fear an outbreak of resistance from women. This book explores how such gendered beliefs on the part of guards rendered this place somewhat safer for prisoner conspirators. The same chapter also reveals the existence of a camp brothel at Treblinka that historians and survivors have long erased. Focus on this terrible location, and our knowledge of it, reveals much about the contributions of women prisoners in the final revolt and why survivor men have at times avoided telling their stories.

Exploring the gendered places and spaces at Treblinka brings this book into conversation with earlier works on women, sex, sexual violence, and masculinity during the Holocaust. Through a painful, but necessary, discussion of sexual servitude at Treblinka, this book adds to the historian Robert Sommer's analysis of Nazi camp brothels.¹¹ By discussing how male survivors remember or disremember the brothel at Treblinka, I also take up examinations of memory, storytelling, and Jewish masculinity while contributing more broadly to our understanding of women's lives and roles, the unique threats women faced, and the late Lawrence Langer's concept of "choiceless choices" during the Holocaust.¹²

In telling these stories and addressing their later erasure, this book reveals a more complete history of women's lives and resistance at Treblinka. Recover-

ing women's stories also makes it possible to build on existing scholarship by addressing archival silences and the gendered landscape of Holocaust memory.¹³ What emerges is a story in which Jewish women—despite being a small minority inside the camp—occupied pivotal places at the heart of resistance planning. Women prisoners resisted as individuals, in groups with other women, and alongside their male comrades who sometimes later chose not to remember their contributions or their very presence. By returning the actions of women in resistance and the saga of what they endured more generally to the record, we can capture a clearer vision of life and revolt at Treblinka.

For both women and men at Treblinka, it often required the actions of many to save one person. The fact that “every survivor was helped by someone else” is a starting point for this book, which uncovers the ways in which Jews facilitated this help and access to the spaces and places of the camp through networks of social groups and individuals.¹⁴ *Survival at Treblinka* shows where Jewish resistance at Treblinka stands in the wider scope of war and genocide under the Third Reich and offers an analysis of the construction of the camp, the system in which it operated, and the day-to-day functioning of the extermination center that prisoners had to overcome in any attempt at resistance or revolt.

Aktion Reinhard

Nazi authorities designed the Treblinka extermination camp and the other two Aktion Reinhard camps of Belzec and Sobibor to carry out the total annihilation of European Jewry and to leave no witnesses to tell the tale. These three camps held a distinctive position set apart from the wider “concentration camp universe,” reporting directly to Odilo Globocnik, Higher SS and Police Leader for the Lublin District, and, through him, to the Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler personally. The standard chain of camp command through the SS Inspectorate of Concentration Camps was not followed.¹⁵ The Reinhard camps contributed to Nazi German state finances by sending belongings stolen from their victims back to Germany, but they did not provide any labor income to the SS Main Economic and Administrative Department, as was the practice of concentration camps elsewhere.¹⁶ The purpose of the Reinhard camps was simple. Inside their small, wire-walled spaces, what Adolf Hitler and his fellow Nazi ideologues termed Europe's “Jewish Question” would receive its “Final Solution.” Using a system derived by trial and error over the previous years at places like Chelmno and the euthanasia centers, Nazi executioners transported Jewish victims by train at a rate of thousands per day and gassed to death almost all of them within hours of their arrival.¹⁷

The Reinhard system of murdering victims by carbon monoxide gas at set locations replaced the earlier mass shootings of Jews in the newly conquered

east that evolved from the outset of the German campaign against Russia on June 22, 1941. In what Father Patrick Desbois terms “the Holocaust by bullets,” the SS-Einsatzgruppen followed the German Wehrmacht as it moved into the Soviet Union, rounded up Jews, Communist Party members, Soviet military political commissars, and other so-called Enemies of the Reich and took them to areas near their places of origin and shot them to death in open-air massacres. Nazi forces murdered more than one and a half million Jews in this way before Aktion Reinhard even began.¹⁸

Nazi leadership soon discovered that even their most devoted ideological adherents found participation in the murder of hundreds or thousands of people per day by rifle shot physically and psychologically destructive. Men broke or became alcoholic, while efficiency was lacking, and plunder often fell into the hands of locals instead of Nazi German forces.¹⁹ The decision to end Einsatzgruppen activities in favor of Aktion Reinhard was partly in response to these issues, while the lack of secrecy and concern about the number of local witnesses also played a part.²⁰

Chelmno, the earliest of the extermination centers, began operations on December 8, 1941, using gas vans to kill victims, while the Einsatzgruppen operated further east.²¹ The historian Christopher R. Browning explains: “The development and production of the gas van constituted an intermediate stage between the mobile firing squad procedures of the *Einsatzgruppen* in Russia and the stationary gas chambers of the death camps in Poland in the Nazi attempt to murder the European Jews.”²² As policy and practices evolved, so did a cadre of trained professional killers.²³ Ninety-two of the 450 German SS troops employed in Aktion Reinhard camps came from the Nazi euthanasia program. These men “brought with them knowledge and experience in setting up and operating gassing institutions for mass murder.”²⁴ Individuals trained and experienced in the T4 Program “filled the key posts involved with the extermination methods, the planning and construction” of the facilities, and served in command positions.²⁵ The next stage in Nazi extermination designs would use the experience of these euthanasia personnel and the technological lessons learned from gas vans and early gas chamber experiments to multiply lethality and efficiency to an all-new level.

The Wannsee Conference took place on January 20, 1942, well after Nazi officials assessed all these steps, trials, and errors. The point of this meeting was the dissemination of a new plan for the Final Solution and the delegation of responsibilities to governmental departments that would take responsibility. Staatssekretär Dr. Josef Bühler, representing the Generalgouvernement of German-occupied Poland, requested that the Jews there be exterminated first. Poland held the largest concentration of Jews in Nazi-occupied territories not

already subjected to widespread shooting massacres like those carried out further east. German government officials estimated this population at 2,284,000 before deportations from the west swelled this number even further. Yitzhak Arad notes that Bühler's request "was in fact accepted" and that, even though Jews from eleven or more European states would eventually be brought to Treblinka, the operation targeted Polish Jewry first.²⁶

Treblinka embodied all the technical lessons that Nazi Germany had learned about genocidal lethality carried through to its ultimate expression with cold, factory-like efficiency. Just as the entirety of Aktion Reinhard was a result of lessons in the practice of constructing and operating prior Vernichtungslager, or extermination camps, Treblinka eventually represented the refinement of practices pioneered at Belzec and Sobibor. Belzec was constructed first, with ground broken November 1, 1941, and completion in early March 1942.²⁷ Sobibor came next, with construction starting in March and mass gassing beginning there in early May 1942.²⁸ Construction at Treblinka using local Jews as slave labor began in late May or early June 1942.²⁹ Because construction began after the other two Reinhard camps were already open, Treblinka's builders had the chance to learn from the operations at those two places. With this advantage and the later reorganization of the camp, Treblinka became what the historian Yitzhak Arad called "the most 'perfected' death camp" of Aktion Reinhard.³⁰

Treblinka opened under the command of Irmfried Eberl, a medical doctor previously employed in the T4 Program responsible for the murder of mentally and physically disabled individuals. The first victims arrived in Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto on July 23, 1942.³¹ Though a veteran of the murderous euthanasia program, Eberl quickly proved unequal to the task of organizing and running an extermination center on his own. Survivors and guards alike recall the period of Eberl's command as an era of woeful disorganization during which the camp received far more victims than it could kill on a daily basis and bodies piled up unburied along the rail lines leading to the facility and in the disembarkation area of the camp itself.³² Alerted to Eberl's failure to efficiently operate his post, Reinhard chief Odilo Globocnik and his deputy, Christian Wirth, visited Treblinka in August 1942 and relieved him of his duties on the spot.³³ Their dissatisfaction with Eberl stemmed from his failure to run the camp quietly and efficiently and the fact that he was not quickly sending goods stolen from the camp's victims to Berlin.³⁴ Wirth stayed on for a short period, reorganizing the camp before Hauptsturmführer Franz Stangl took over permanently as Eberl's successor. Prior to his assignment at Treblinka, Stangl worked at the Hartheim euthanasia center and, later, at Belzec, as well as doing a stint in command at Sobibor.³⁵

Eberl's disorganization threatened the very purposes of Aktion Reinhard. It was considered a failure if a commander could not secure the camp against escapes or if he allowed the bodies of transported prisoners to lie in the sun for days or weeks, a situation that created a stench that Stangl himself recalled as noticeable for miles before arrival at the camp.³⁶ The first commandant's failures threatened to reduce Aktion Reinhard to little more than a continuation of Einsatzgruppen issues despite the fact that its facilities were supposed to make the extermination of Jews into a managed, secretive, and profitable affair. Stangl's "talent for organization" and the subsequent construction of larger gas chambers soon put the camp back in operation at the level of efficiency sought by Globocnik and Wirth.³⁷ Treblinka murdered 312,500 Jews during Eberl's tenure with only three gas chambers. Under Stangl's leadership, and the brief end-stage command of his successor, Kurt "Lalka" Franz, the camp's death toll would reach as high as 925,000 using a new ten-room gas chamber building constructed in the fall of 1942.³⁸ The lethality of Treblinka far outpaced that at all sites of Nazi mass murder save for the massive, combined total of the Auschwitz complex. A majority of the Aktion Reinhard dead lost their lives at Treblinka, while Belzec claimed the second most victims at approximately 434,500, and Sobibor ranked third in the system with at least 170,000 killed, despite being the last to close.³⁹

The daily operations and physical layouts of the three Reinhard camps were remarkably similar in general description and overall function. Without, for the moment, taking into account the nuances of geographic change over time highlighted later, the Treblinka II extermination center, as opposed to the Treblinka I labor camp nearby, comprised three major sections called the Reception Camp, the Living Camp, and the Death Camp, as did Belzec and Sobibor.⁴⁰ Rail transports, normally made up of box cars loaded with somewhere between 80 and 120 persons each, were broken into sections of twenty cars and pulled up at the platform of the Reception Camp.⁴¹ Here, arrivals met between three and five SS guards, around ten Ukrainian guards, and twenty members of the Jewish slave labor force. Railcars were hurriedly and often brutally emptied by the guards, with people directed by the Jewish laborers into the camp through a gate at the center of the rail platform.⁴²

In Treblinka, as at other camps of the system, guards separated women and children from the men, with males sent to an open space at the right and women and children to a barracks building at the left of the reception square, where they would undress and have their heads shaved. People with disabilities, those who could not make the walk to the gas chambers, as well as individuals who had died on the train to the camp, would be taken to a fenced area called the Lazarett—German for field hospital. This location, a fenced-off area

with a small reception room marked by a red cross flag on the exterior that stood before an open pit continually in flames, was a site of execution by rifle shot for both arrivals and long-term prisoners. The Lazarett name and the use of the red cross medical insignia were ruses designed to forestall resistance by robbing victims of awareness or lulling them into a false sense of security.⁴³

Returning to the arrivals area, normal procedures saw camp staff and members of the Jewish workforce direct men to undress outdoors and then proceed—quickly and under brutal physical assault by guards—up the narrow green-fenced Schlauch, or tube, pathway that led to the gas chambers.⁴⁴ Another commonality with camps outside the Reinhard system was the use of a standard lie about arriving people's clothes being washed and the tube leading to showers intended to fend off disease before travelers resumed their journey east. In reality, of course, the clothes were collected for use or profit by Nazi authorities and the Schlauch—often sardonically referred to as the Himmelstrasse, meaning “road to heaven”—actually led to the gas chambers.⁴⁵

Standard practice was to kill adult men first, lest they catch wind of the danger to women and their families and attempt any mass resistance. Once the men were dead, the women and children would be sent up the path together. The whole process was repeated until the entire train was emptied.⁴⁶ These daily procedures also varied over time in response to changes in the built environment, rules imposed by guards, and—at times—the wider events of the war and the Holocaust, altering the prospects for survival of both arriving Jews and long-term slave laborers in the process. The effects of geographic and systemic change, as well as prisoner responses to these pressures, feature in later chapters.

Belzec and Sobibor employed near-identical systems and geographies right down to the use of the fenced path called the Schlauch to shuttle arrivals from rail platforms to their deaths in the gas chambers.⁴⁷ All Reinhard camps also lacked a selection experience anything like what a survivor of a standard concentration camp might remember. Each facility held only a small slave-labor force employed in the maintenance of the camp, the collection and sorting of victims' belongings, and the disposal of bodies. Though there were exceptions to these procedures, discussed later, large-scale selection of those thought fit for labor, a typical practice at places like Auschwitz, Majdanek, and elsewhere, was, in general, neither the purpose of the Reinhard camps nor a necessity for maintaining their small labor populations. This book shows that Treblinka prisoner intervention had much to do with the selection of the scant few individuals who might be removed from the line leading to the gas chamber. Survivor testimonies repeatedly mention the importance of prearrival relationships and, as mentioned earlier, the assistance of members of the slave labor

force in removing friends and acquaintances from the mass of daily arrivals moving up the Schlauch.

The Spaces and Places Ahead

Survivor testimonies are the only research sources available to help us understand prisoner perseverance, resistance, and revolt at Treblinka. Though this book is not the first to use many of these documents and recordings, it is the first to approach these survivor accounts within a combined framework of geographic, social network, and gender analyses.⁴⁸ Additionally, many of the sources or collections of testimony now available for research of this type did not yet exist when authoritative works on Treblinka reached publication.⁴⁹ Whether newly discovered or long known and widely published, Treblinka survivor sources are often fragmentary and always deeply personal in nature. The methods each historian uses to make sense of these narratives is of paramount importance.

Sources such as memoirs, oral histories, and most other forms of eyewitness remembrances are never perfect. Even if we set aside the frailty of human memory, there is little reason to expect that a single survivor's retained knowledge could reliably tell the whole story. No one survivor knew everything about the camp, few could even see all of it from the spaces they were able to traverse, and all wrote or spoke about what was most important to their own personal survival. When it comes to individual understandings of the revolt conspiracy, the issue of partial knowledge is even more pronounced by design. No one person was supposed to know everything about the revolt plan. That would be incredibly dangerous in the event of their interrogation and possible torture by German SS guards. The historian's approach to and synthesis of survivor materials are all the more important for these reasons.

As I conducted the research for this book, the methods of analysis grew to support the findings. First attempting to understand how Jewish prisoners formed relationships and used these bonds to support resistance, I turned to social network analysis. Next, seeking to clarify how these networks gained access to the camp and used the environment to their advantage, I looked at sources through a geographic lens. Finally, as I began to see some sources reveal more about the history of women at Treblinka, while others obscured their existence in the camp, I took up an examination of masculinity and gender. This multipronged analysis makes it possible to discover who knew whom at Treblinka, how those relationships helped the prisoners gain access to camp spaces, and—in the end—how the mostly male voice of survivor narratives and interviews has and has not remembered women.

In looking at each survivor source, this book asks what job the person had at Treblinka, where he or she was from, and what relationships and geographic access the source's origin and work detail likely provided. By knowing these things, the historian can discern whether the source's testimony about a given event comes from firsthand knowledge. When that seems unlikely, I consider whether the survivor in question could have known and communicated with those involved. In the event that recollections vary from survivor to survivor—which they frequently do—this type of analysis can help choose which narrator to foreground. *Survival at Treblinka* also asks why we have long known so little about the lives of women inside Treblinka. Having discovered that some male survivors knew women's roles in the uprising and the conditions they endured at Treblinka but refused to share these realities, in this book I make use of frameworks provided by the fields of gender and masculinity studies to understand and contextualize these cultivated silences.

From start to finish, this research is made possible by an expansion of the known Treblinka archive and the ongoing work to recognize as yet unheralded individual accounts of survival. An expansion of the Treblinka source base and the identification of 262 individual survivors has the potential to propel new studies of this place. For too long, historians have believed that only around sixty-seven people survived Treblinka. This view and the resultant consideration that too few sources existed for further research has chilled research on Treblinka. The new list of survivors here shows that much more evidence exists. As this book also stresses, the work of survivor recognition is far from complete. It is, in fact, a process with no expected end. In the recovery of voices and an acknowledgment of a greater historical source base through this new examination of survival, I hope that this book can launch new inquiry into Treblinka, its victims, and those who made it out alive.

Analyzing survival at Treblinka in a more nuanced and categorized fashion helps us to better understand how the camp changed over time and allows us to plot the boundaries of its power in ways that are replicable for other Holocaust sites. Such localized, or event-specific definitions of survivorship can also help define the spatial and temporal limits of certain experiences, places, or episodes during the Holocaust. All too routinely, we tend to flatten the experiences of Jews and other Holocaust victims who made it to 1945 under the single, sweeping term "Holocaust survivor." Though they all equally deserve recognition with these words as a title of respect, this book shows how the term lacks the capacity to recognize episodic perseverance and individual experiences. Calling an individual a survivor of the Holocaust should more often be a starting point, a door to further understanding the person's path to

1945. What's more, some specific individuals show that those who did not make it to the end of Nazi power alive might have still survived many places or events before meeting their final fate. A more episodic view of survivorship better recognizes the stories of these people in particular.

The analysis of Treblinka survival presented here further provides examples of how the term "survivor" is likely to be defined and redefined in the media over the coming years. As adult survivors and those who endured certain places or events leave us, journalists will categorize and define experiences for the purposes of obituaries and historical articles. The survivor generations, their descendants, and the public understanding of Holocaust history would be best served by prefiguring this coming wave of shortform analyses. Sparing a thought to how we conceptualize the experiences of survivors as they depart would save many from accidental slight while maintaining a clear and understandable narrative of the places and events they endured.

Survival at Treblinka builds a narrative of resistance at Treblinka and how it has been remembered over five chapters. Chapter 1 begins with an analysis of resistance at Treblinka with an exploration of the geographies that affected prisoner knowledge of the camp and how this fed into plans for resistance over time. Chapter 2 depicts Treblinka inmate perseverance and the growth of resistance possibilities as the camp evolved and prisoners formed their social networks. Chapter 3 continues the previous analysis of networks and adds emphasis on their methods of gaining access to space and place in the physical environment of Treblinka just prior to and on August 2, 1943. Building on this telling of the revolt and more, chapter 4 collects several threads of relevance to the study of women prisoners and further speaks to the erasure, or deliberate forgetting, of their roles in resistance by survivor men and, later, historians. Chapter 5 then turns to a discussion of survivorship and our knowledge of how many Jews made it out of this camp alive. This chapter also uses an analysis of the concept and definition of the term "survivor" to clarify and categorize the paths Jews took toward surviving this place. After the Conclusion, this book provides an epilogue of survivor names that I hope will open new paths for research while finally giving late acknowledgment of those newly included herein.

Against That Darkness

The book that emerged from Gitta Sereny's jailhouse interviews with former Treblinka commandant Franz Stangl has borne several titles. One of its German monikers, *Am Abgrund: Gespräche mit dem Henker*, can be translated as "Near the Abyss: Conversations with the Hangman."⁵⁰ A later English translation took the name *Into That Darkness: An Examination of Conscience*.⁵¹ Whatever the title, the book is propelled by Sereny's incisive, probing ques-

tions meted out over her hours of discussions with Stangl. These interviews were her attempt to make the longtime commandant of the second most lethal Nazi extermination camp examine his own culpability for mass murder. As many will know, not long after Sereny finally did get Stangl to open the door to his own guilt, he died in his jail cell. History is left to wonder whether it really was the reality of his own actions that killed him.

Sereny's book places Stangl's broken or completely absent moral core and his inability or refusal to see his own wrongs at center stage. What he did as commandant and his heartless insistence that he was just doing his job are the very darkness mentioned in her title. Gitta Sereny sat in a German prison with Franz Stangl journeying into the darkness and pushing for a confrontation with morality and guilt. *Survival at Treblinka* acknowledges Sereny's courageous encounter with the hangman and highlights an earlier confrontation with that darkness—Jewish resistance at Treblinka.

Throughout her book, Sereny uses the statements of several Treblinka survivors to correct and challenge the evasions of Stangl. Some of these same people, alongside their fellow survivors, had traveled to Dusseldorf, West Germany, several years before to testify against Stangl, putting him in a prison cell. *Survival at Treblinka* brings new attention to earlier resistance acts countering Stangl, the camp, and the Nazi regime's attempt to destroy the Jewish people and leave no traces or voices to tell the tale. Over the following chapters, I build a spatial understanding of interior camp life and then a view of how Jewish conspirators used bonds of trust to overcome rules, guard supervision, and physical obstacles in furtherance of their desire to revolt. Along the way, this book recounts the pivotal acts of Jewish women in those same resistance struggles. After revealing women's actions in resistance, I address why we have known so little about them and how that silence has endured over the years.

The very act of survival at Treblinka was a form of resistance. The purpose of this camp was the complete destruction of all who entered, regardless of whether they toiled for some time as one of its slave laborers. With that in mind, I conclude with my new list of 262 Treblinka survivors identified through painstaking research in oral histories, court documents, and archival collections on three continents. Theirs are the voices that make it possible to learn about this place and defeat the Nazi desire to erase it from history.

Space, Networks, and Escape

Camp Geography and Early Resistance Activities

Death in a Nazi concentration camp requires no explanation. Survival does.
—H. O. BLUHM, “How Did They Survive?”

Making it out of any Nazi camp alive required almost boundless physical endurance, ingenuity, and, above all, an immense amount of luck. Whether a person was put in a concentration camp, a factory camp, transit camp, or any other format among the thousands of installations strewn across occupied Europe and Germany itself, survival was never assured, and death was ever-present. Prisoners of Nazi Germany, be they Jews or others, faced starvation, the brutality of guards, summary executions, and the threat of epidemic disease. These sad realities of the more generalized camp experience make survival at Treblinka—or any other extermination camp—even more remarkable.

Looking at Treblinka geography through the eyes of Jewish survivors helps us understand the resistance choices they made. Maps and drawings created by survivors offer the best means to see the ground as they did. What is important in these and other sources is not just what survivors could map or draw correctly but also what they were forced to guess at or leave out entirely. The inaccuracies of survivor-drawn maps show what prisoners in certain roles and areas could not see or did not understand. Partial survivor maps and other fragmentary depictions of the camp, therefore, provide a rare chance to visualize Treblinka through the eyes of the Jewish prisoners themselves. What emerges is a clear indication of the need for social networks or relationships to overcome restrictions on movement and individual ignorance of the spatial environment. Multiple people had to work together to pool their knowledge of the camp.

Because the built environment changed so much over time, the timeline of camp history provided by the survivor Richard Glazar is of great importance. In his periodization of the camp, Glazar demonstrates the importance of space

and social networks. Glazar divided the history of Treblinka into four periods that were most often punctuated by spatial or social changes to prisoner life, though he was not always entirely aware of this. The final two sections of this chapter examine resistance acts leading up to the revolt, revealing how these set the stage for the eventual uprising or demonstrated the options available to Jewish prisoners over time. In profiling these early acts of resistance, we can show the impact of geographic restrictions, spatial knowledge, and the need to build bonds of trust for resistance ideas to become an active uprising.

The Treblinka revolt grew from a system of networked access to geography employed by the main plotters of what Jewish prisoners called their Organizing Committee. Survivor-drawn maps and drawings of the camp demonstrate the limited spatial awareness of individual prisoners. Even people who were deeply connected to revolt planning did not know much about camp spaces outside their own regular range of vision. As the built environment changed, so did the social networks prisoners created to overcome restrictions on the movement of individual prisoners. Showing how Jews understood the spatial environment over time helps explain why they took certain actions when they did and how the entire chronology of Treblinka resistance set the stage for eventual revolt.

Learning Spaces and Making Places: Resistance Meets Geography at Treblinka

At some point during either preliminary investigations or the trial itself, someone in the German prosecutor's office that was trying Kurt Franz and other former guards for their crimes asked one of their survivor witnesses to draw a map of Treblinka.¹ That witness produced what might be called a reliable or even a detailed sketch of one area that leaves out half the camp. Among the most notable omissions of what I call "the Duisburg Map" are the entire SS and Ukrainian guard living spaces and camp headquarters.² These pivotal buildings are mentioned only by the notation "to the guard barracks" with an arrow aimed in their general direction beyond the borders of the page.

Even within the areas depicted on this map, some places are clearly drawn from direct personal knowledge, while others appear to be guesswork at best. Tellingly, the mapmaker reliably drew the interior walls of the gas chamber building, though structures on the other side of a fence are just roughly sketched with no attention to interior spaces. All of this shows that the person who drew the Duisburg Map was held on the gas chamber side of that fence and had little to no personal interaction with areas beyond.

Treblinka survivor testimonies insist in a clear and unified voice that resistance required access to the entire area of the camp. They are also nearly as

uniform in their assertion that “relationships,” or social networks, facilitated this access.³ Because the spatial limitations imposed on prisoner life dictated the ways in which inmates could form social networks inside the camp, looking first at geography makes it possible to think about networks. Survivor-created maps, drawings, and models of the camp bear out these facts in visual clarity. As a historical source, the Duisburg Map reflects the knowledge its former prisoner creator could bring to resistance planning and the areas of access and institutional knowledge that would need to be filled in by others. In effect, what the map gets wrong shows how restrictions on the movement of Jewish prisoners impacted what each knew about this place. The most important thing survivor maps show is the fact that it would take more than one set of eyes to see all of Treblinka.

No architectural or other drawings of Treblinka survive from when the camp existed. All known maps of the facility come from survivor postwar sources or later researchers. Because of this, determination of a survivor-mapmaker’s range of vision, or their lived space and what they could see from it, allows the historian to make decisions about the veracity of the information they map out. The “social history” of Treblinka spaces, as the architectural historian Paul Jaskot and his colleagues term the lived experiences of geography, is revealed by what a former prisoner knew of camp geography and how the prisoner described this space. In the case of any Nazi camp, this social history was strictly regulated by the rules and expectations of prisoner existence dictated by guards.

Exact dating of the Duisburg Map does not exist, but it likely displays the camp as its author knew it on the day of the August 2, 1943, revolt. All other survivor, perpetrator, or court-created maps display the camp in its final form. It is logical to assume the author would draw the camp as he or she left it, rather than depict an earlier layout. The map and its legend display visual and institutional knowledge of Treblinka’s Camp 2, or Death Camp section, as known by a prisoner author. The map is unlikely to have been created by a guard, as it displays no knowledge of the SS and Ukrainian guard living areas other than the general direction in which they were located, and it gets much else wrong about camp geography overall. The inaccurate regions of the map make clear where the author could not personally go, a further mark against the idea of a guard as creator of the map. Treblinka’s German and Ukrainian staff possessed unfettered access to the entire area of the camp. They would certainly be able to remember their own housing areas, at the very least, and they would have greater knowledge of the camp in general than a prisoner with restricted access to space.

One of the strictest general rules at Treblinka was that no prisoner could ever return to Camp 1 after entering Camp 2, or the Death Camp section. The only documented exception to this rule was Jankiel Wiernik, an inmate of Camp 2 and a highly skilled carpentry and construction worker at Treblinka. No other prisoner of the Death Camp section was ever allowed to leave this part of the camp after entering.⁴ This restriction and the level of Camp 2 knowledge the map displays make a prisoner from this section the only logical source of the map.

The Duisburg Map sets this restriction, and the impact it had on Camp 2 prisoner knowledge of the entire facility, in bold relief. The division of prisoner life, knowledge, and communication between these two sections of Treblinka was an issue resistance planners had to overcome in order to coordinate their efforts. Information contained within the Duisburg Map's legend is also a compelling descriptive source of facility knowledge for a Camp 2 prisoner. The legend covers fourteen numbered structures or points of interest on the map. Of these fourteen items, nine display intimate knowledge of Camp 2 functions and interior geography. Numbered points eleven, twelve, and thirteen are of greatest importance. All three relate to the Camp 2 prisoner barracks structure. This building is not only shown in the correct location on this map; it is also depicted with interior walls and use of space information. It seems clear that the author had been inside this structure. The only buildings on the map with interior layouts depicted are in Camp 2. Legend item eleven, "Die Baracke für die Häftlinge," or The Barracks for the Prisoners, denotes not only the barracks building in general but also the specific center section in which male prisoners bunked. Number twelve, "Die Baracke für die Frauen," or The Barracks for the Women, also illustrates knowledge of Camp 2 realities. The author of this map knew that there were female prisoners in Camp 2, and he or she also knew the section of the barracks building in which they slept.⁵

Legend number ten points out the correct location of a Camp 2 structure and its use. The label, "Das Ungenutzte Gleis," meaning The Unused Rail Track, makes note of the abandoned status of this piece of Camp 2 infrastructure. The rail track's purpose was to transport the bodies of those murdered from the old gas chambers to the mass graves. Camp 2 survivors note that the track fell into disuse as the Germans decided that Jewish slave laborers working in two-man teams with stretchers moved corpses faster than they could by loading and unloading the railcars. A final item of note that highlights the author's knowledge of Camp 2 routines is the placement of the "Appelplatz," or Roll Call Square on the map. This area was a focal and dominant part of Camp 2 prisoner life. Each workday began and ended with prisoner formations

at the Appelplatz. Guards counted prisoners, doled out daily punishments, and gave work assignments here. It is unlikely that a prisoner would forget this location, though nothing about its physical character marked it out as a roll call area when it was not in use. The Appelplatz was only an open area large enough to hold all of the prisoners standing in ranks. The mapmaker's knowledge of this location is not an outgrowth of seeing the place, which could be any piece of ground large enough for the purpose; it is the result of witnessing or taking part in the daily drama of headcounts and punishments that mark out this place in memory.

The Duisburg Map depicts in intimate detail items integral to the everyday work, sleep, and regimentation of a Camp 2 prisoner. By displaying his or her knowledge of the rail line's abandonment, the exact rooms where prisoners of both sexes bunked at night, and the location where all Camp 2 prisoners lined up for roll call, the maker shows his or her own daily routine. For each aspect of the Duisburg Map that shows an intimate knowledge of Camp 2, however, there is an equally incorrect aspect of its depiction of Camp 1, an asymmetry demonstrating that the author had no lived experience in this area.

First and foremost, the Duisburg Map is entirely wrong about the layout of the Camp 1 prisoner barracks. Legend item number five, "Die Baracke für die Häftlinge," or The Barracks for the Prisoners, is both oriented incorrectly and drawn in an inaccurate shape, and it depicts the barracks at about half their actual size. The map also completely leaves out the fence that existed around this structure in all other maps created by postwar German courts or Camp 1 prisoner recollections. In this omission, however, the Duisburg Map is not alone. Jankiel Wiernik's scale model of Treblinka, created in the 1950s and entered into evidence at the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, also leaves out this fence. Wiernik's work assignment in Treblinka gave him access to Camp 1 that no other Camp 2 prisoner possessed, but his lived experiences did not imprint upon him the importance of this fence.⁶ His depiction of the Camp 1 barracks structure is correct in exterior form and general size, though he still neglects the fence. If the Camp 1 barracks affected Wiernik's daily life or that of the Duisburg Map's author, it is unlikely that both of them would have left out this barbed wire obstacle to their hopes for resistance.

The Duisburg Map leaves out not only the fence around the Camp 1 prisoner barracks but also most other Camp 1 structures in general. The entire SS and Ukrainian living area, as previously noted, is not depicted on this map at all. The map also displays a version of the arrival area that is equally interesting for what it includes and what it leaves out. Two large rectangular blotches labeled "Kleider-Gepäck," or Clothing-Baggage, mark this area on the Duisburg Map. These notations represent the mountains of stacked personal

belongings stolen from those murdered in the gas chambers, which Camp 1 prisoner work details sorted and piled in this area. Though this is a Camp 1 area, any Camp 2 prisoner would see this when arriving at Treblinka. All prisoners passed this point when they disembarked, regardless of where they were eventually assigned.

The fact that these piles appear in the mapped memory of a Camp 2 prisoner could also result from their size. Prisoners stated that these mounds occasionally rose to staggering heights.⁷ This would have meant that even though the Duisburg Map's Camp 2 prisoner-author would never have set foot in this area, he or she could have seen the top of these mounds over the sand berm separating the two camps and over the fence separating the Reception Camp as he or she arrived. The Duisburg Map's author was only one of the prisoners who included a notation of something they could see only parts of over Treblinka's fences and separating sand berm in their depiction of the camp. Camp 1 prisoner and Treblinka survivor Samuel Willenberg drew Treblinka from his perspective on the other side of the berm, including only items in Camp 2 that rose above the height of that obstacle.⁸ He shows a tall guard tower and an excavating machine used to remove bodies from the mass graves so that they could be burned. Both of these were taller than the berm and were visible from Camp 1.⁹ The intricate detail of Camp 1 depicted by Willenberg is in stark contrast to the vast open space shown where Camp 2 should be. This includes the buildings of Camp 2, aside from guard towers, none of which appear at all.¹⁰ As a Camp 1 prisoner, Willenberg was as ignorant of Camp 2 as the Duisburg Map creator was of Camp 1.

Willenberg's drawing and the accurate areas of the Duisburg Map are, in effect, depictions of the habitual range of vision of each creator. Wiernik's failure to depict the Camp 1 barracks fence in his model equally represents what he knew to be important for his own daily existence inside the camp. His access to space may well have allowed him to walk by that fence hundreds of times, though his lived experience never drove home its importance. Wiernik's exclusion of that detail was likely a matter of personal perceived importance. Wiernik's and the Duisburg author's mistakes illustrate the importance of social networks for prisoner resistance. The revolt planners would need not only prisoners with a combined range of vision intelligence over the entire camp but also individuals with intimate institutional knowledge of each space and place. In order to overcome awareness gaps and the regulated access to space of the average prisoner, Treblinka's revolt planners adopted strategies that networked individuals and groups, taking advantage of the combined spatial access and area intelligence that coordination made possible. As if working to overcome all of this was not hard enough, Treblinka prisoners also

had to contend with the changing construction of the camp and how the built environment itself affected networks over time. The importance of these changes and how they impacted prisoner lives and resistance ideas comes out in their own attempt to remember a timeline of events at the camp.

Richard Glazar's Spatial Timeline

Though Jewish prisoners and survivors did not always recognize it, changes to the environment sometimes led to changes in resistance ideas and possibilities. This reality makes it necessary to understand how the camp changed spatially and socially—or “the social history of the spaces”—to explore prisoner decision-making.¹¹ Even though it operated for only eleven months, from July 22, 1942, to August 1943, Treblinka underwent drastic changes in camp infrastructure and daily operations. The recollections of survivor Richard Glazar recounted in Gitta Sereny's *Into That Darkness* provide a picture of Treblinka's timeline divided into four phases.

Phase One: July–August 1942: The camp's early period under its first commandant, Obersturmführer Dr. Irmfried Eberl.

Phase Two: August 1942–Early 1943: The early rule of the second commandant, Hauptsturmführer Franz Stangl.

Phase Three: Early 1943–approximately May of that year.

Phase Four: Approximately May–August 2, 1943: The months prior to the revolt.¹²

Glazar arrived during Phase Two, along with most of what would come to be called simply “the Czech group” by fellow prisoners and guards alike.¹³

In terms of the built environment, the most important distinction between the first two phases and the last two was the construction of the single barracks structure that housed all Camp 1 prisoners after January 1943. Prisoners and guards referred to this structure as “the ghetto.”¹⁴ Before this development, ideas of armed revolt had no serious chance of success. Before the completion of the single Camp 1 barracks, most Camp 1 prisoners slept in a barracks building in the disembarkation area. Only a small, somewhat more privileged group called the Hofjuden, or Court Jews—a derisive nickname with deep historical roots in German-speaking Europe—had access to the places and spaces that a revolt required.¹⁵ Separation of the Camp 1 prisoner workforce, especially the segregation of prisoners with the greatest access to the camp away from the main body of slave laborers, made spatial networking across the whole camp impossible.

Survivor Kalman Teigman stressed the crippling nature of this separation, and the importance of the Hofjuden for later revolt strategies, in his testimony

at the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann: “When we [the other prisoner working groups] arrived at [the ghetto] and met the Hofjuden, they worked in the German quarters, they had access to all places. We knew that only with their assistance would we be able to accomplish anything, to get to a particular place, to escape or to carry out an armed revolt.”¹⁶ The combined housing of all Camp 1 prisoners in the ghetto barracks changed everything. In his interviews for *Into That Darkness*, as well as in his own book and in later oral history recordings, Glazar does not seem to realize this issue, but the move to the single barracks was also the dividing line between Phases Two and Three.

Phases One and Two offered no chance of camp-wide revolt because prisoners could not communicate with the group best able to access space. This does not mean that no resistance took place in these two phases; it just means that prisoners had to think of other means to counter Nazi SS intent. What they came up with at the time were personal or individual resistance plans, with group escapes also occurring as the largest forms of planned or networked acts. Looking at these early instances of solitary and coordinated resistance helps place the mindset, and even the morale, of Jewish prisoners in context. Widening the lens on Jewish resistance at Treblinka further dispels any lingering belief that the revolt was the only significant Jewish act against SS authority at Treblinka and begins to explain the timing of the uprising itself.

Early Resistance at Treblinka

Until quite recently, most Treblinka research had focused so narrowly on the events of August 2, 1943, that many resistance acts leading up to that day remained unexplored. This is at least in part because of the ways we have looked at the concept and prevalence of Jewish resistance in the years since 1945. As late as the 1960s, historians had not yet provided a clear-eyed analysis of Jewish resistance to the Holocaust.¹⁷ Even some mainstream works at the time leveled the accusations that Holocaust victims who did not participate in armed uprisings had all gone “like sheep to the slaughter.”¹⁸ The historian Michael Marrus credits Roger Gottlieb for expanding the understanding of resistance to include all acts contrary to the will and intentions of the Nazis that the individual responsible personally conceived of as resistance.¹⁹ Gottlieb’s interpretation of resistance opened the study to any act intended to disrupt the Nazis so long as this is what the actor intended. After widening the field of resistance study to include anything and everything intended to thwart Nazi intentions to kill all Jews, the need arose to categorize such an enormous variety of acts for ease of study.

Werner Rings’s *Life with the Enemy: Collaboration and Resistance in Hitler’s Europe 1939–1945* provides the framework for Marrus’s classification of various acts of resistance.²⁰ Rings names:

(1) Symbolic Resistance, or *I remain what I was*; (2) Polemic Resistance, or *I tell the truth*; (3) Defensive Resistance, or *I aid and protect*; (4) Offensive Resistance, or *I fight to the death*; (5) Resistance Enchained, or *freedom fighters in camp and ghetto*.²¹

These categories provide a useful structure for understanding resistance at Treblinka that includes early background acts, those that fed into revolt, and the revolt itself. They should, however, be slightly recast to better fit the study of resistance inside a Nazi extermination camp that leads to revolt.

Resistance Enchained, by definition, includes all acts contrary to Nazi intent carried out by populations entrapped within camps or ghettos. Because of this, it is not a separate category for the study of Treblinka prisoner actions but rather an umbrella term for everything they did. Of the remaining four categories, three predate or feed into revolt. Offensive Resistance at Treblinka consisted mainly of the revolt itself. Marrus and Rings do not believe that Symbolic Resistance, whether forms of protest or identity maintenance under threat, was open to the oppressed Jews of Nazi-controlled Europe in the same ways that it enabled some occupied non-Jewish populations to express themselves.

Protest, though, was not entirely closed to Jews at Treblinka. Samuel Goldberg, the Camp 1 laundry supervisor, recounted in an interview how the women of his work detail rose up to protest his replacement as their leader. For Goldberg, this change would have meant either immediate death or transfer to Camp 2, where the chances of survival were far worse than those for prisoners in the rather privileged position he held in Camp 1. As arguments over Goldberg's dismissal escalated to a fight between him and a Kapo and then caught the attention of an SS guard, the women of the laundry detail pushed themselves forward. The guard was about to order Goldberg hanged for striking the Kapo when the laundry women stated, "If you hang him, hang us all."²² Likely stunned by their boldness and unanimity, the guard even asked them why before changing his mind and leaving Goldberg alive and in his position as head of the laundry. While their daring and vocal rising, in some ways, fits the Symbolic Resistance category, it also straddles the line into Defensive Resistance.

European Jews, in general, and even individuals arriving at Treblinka, could and did participate in spiritual practices that fall more neatly under Rings's category of Symbolic Resistance acts.²³ Treblinka escapee Dudek Lewkowicz recalled the actions of the Piotrkower Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau as he and his congregants disembarked at the camp. Evidently fully aware of what Treblinka was, Rabbi Lau gave a short speech to the Jews of Piotrkow and Preszów about their impending martyrdom as they were unloaded at the ramp. He then led

them in the prayer and end-of-life confession of Viduy as guards rushed them all toward the Schlauch and the gas chambers. While many survivor testimonies mention Jews reciting Shema Yisroel on their way to death at Treblinka, Lewkowicz's recollections are the only known mention of the longer Viduy prayer that suggests the possession of a prayer book. Rabbi Lau, unsurprisingly, must have possessed one, and his speech and prayer display remarkable poise, calmness, forethought, and knowledge of what was to come next. He knew that he and his fellow Piotrkow and Preszów Jews would soon be killed, and he acted to prepare them for death religiously.²⁴

Rabbi Lau's actions drew the attention of Dudek Lewkowicz as he worked at the arrival area as they must have drawn the attention of other workers and guards. We would be hard pressed to find an example that better represents Symbolic Resistance through the actions of victims demonstrating that they remained who they were even under threat.²⁵ At Treblinka, Rabbi Lau's recitation of Viduy sits alongside the continuation of other Jewish religious traditions and rituals by long-term prisoners of the camp. Several survivors state that inmates often recited the mourner's Kaddish at night for those murdered each day.²⁶ Whether the recitation of Kaddish was an open deed that could have drawn the ire of guards or a solitary one performed under cover of darkness is immaterial. Prisoners knew better than anyone else in the world at that time the purpose of the Treblinka extermination camp. Continuation of Jewish religious practice while under threat of death for being Jewish is by its very nature a symbolic act.

Other than possible effects on prisoner morale, it seems likely that Symbolic Resistance at Treblinka did not enable or set the stage for later revolt. Polemic Resistance, meanwhile, came in two forms at Treblinka. Many individuals sent to the camp elected to commit suicide rather than work as a cog in the Nazi machinery of death. These actions, while they may have had some small effect on the efficiency of the camp workforce, did not save the lives of others. Determining the intent of individuals who took their own lives at the camp is difficult, to say the least. Many may have been acting only for themselves, while others may have taken this recourse as a display of their refusal to be a slave to Treblinka's extermination mission. Suicide at Treblinka brings to mind the head of the Warsaw Ghetto Judenrat, Adam Czerniaków. Ordered to arrange the deportation of Jews from the Ghetto, Czerniaków took his own life rather than obey Nazi orders.²⁷ While the sources do not exist to find the reasons behind suicides at Treblinka, we should be open to the idea that prisoners took their own lives for similarly polemic reasons.

The Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg's assessment of camp prisoners who elected to commit suicide in his book *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders* takes a

far more judgmental tone than do the recollections of Treblinka survivors. In a chapter entitled “The Unadjusted,” Hilberg calls suicides “the weary” and “those who had given up,” and he repeats some well-known in-camp monikers for individuals unable to persevere any longer, such as “Muselmänner” and “Gamele.”²⁸ Treblinka survivors from both sides of the Camp 1/Camp 2 divide mention suicide, but they do so in comparatively neutral or even quasi-reverential phrasing.

Far from being a deed that elicited the ire of survivors or judgments on the weakness of the individual, suicide was an action prisoners even helped each other take. Camp 1 prisoners Abraham Bomba, Isadore Helfing, and Richard Glazar all mention the quite normal occurrence of suicide in the barracks at night during Treblinka’s early phases.²⁹ “Half asleep, I heard some men hang themselves. We didn’t react then. It was almost normal,” remembered Glazar.³⁰ Camp 2 survivor Eliahu Rosenberg’s recollections of suicide even note the existence of prisoner unity and assistance in ending other inmates’ lives. “One asked the next to pull the chair from underneath him, so that he should not suffer, we helped each other.”³¹ Rosenberg’s use of the word “we” in this context demonstrates that he did not personally distance himself from these acts at all, even implying that he took part in them.

In the early phases at Treblinka, prisoners who took their own lives did so in an environment almost completely devoid of hope. Pivotal, for our understanding of Treblinka inmates’ mindset over time, survivor testimonies make no mention of suicides after the beginning of Phase Three. Concentration camp survivor and Holocaust historian Herman Langbein contends that changes in the psychological resistance picture for camp inmates can have an effect on decision-making: “If a person managed to become involved in a resistance movement, this meant additional risks for him, but such an activity also provided strong moral support by helping the prisoner overcome the paralyzing feeling of being helplessly at the mercy of an all-powerful, abysmally evil force.”³² Suicides at Treblinka either stopped or diminished greatly after January 1943, falling completely out of mention in testimony from this date on. As Langbein points out, this likely can be explained by the improved chances for other types of resistance at the end of Phase Two. As in the case of suicidal intent, however, it is doubtful this observation about the timing of suicides in the camp can ever be definitively proven.

It does not seem that anything else about Phase Three was responsible for changing this trend. It is also clear that guards did not come into the new ghetto barracks at night to stop suicides or patrol the premises more generally. The change then is most likely in the mood among prisoners. Spatial changes to the camp and newfound communication gave prisoners options and a ra-

tional ability to foresee some hope of escape from Treblinka, or at least the option to give their lives while fighting.

Before this change in conditions, suicide was a major means of resistance at Treblinka. Today's memorial architecture also bears subtle witness to this aspect of Holocaust history. There are now thousands of small brass plaques called *Stolpersteine*, or stumbling stones, set into the concrete and cobbles of sidewalks across Europe. Each of these memorials marks the last free residence of an individual victim of Nazi genocide.³³ Each *Stolpersteine* commonly begins with the inscription "Here lived" and then lists the name, birth date, death date, and information on the fate of the person it commemorates.³⁴ Most end with a notation like "Murdered at," followed by the name of a camp or mass-shooting site, though a significant number record the fates of individuals who died of suicide during the Holocaust. The final lines of these markers most often use the phrase "*Flucht in den Tod*," or escape into death.³⁵ The literal translation of this German-language phrase is a powerful and appropriate way to describe death by suicide at Treblinka. Forced to endure the conditions of this place and witness its purpose, some chose to flee toward that ultimate destination.

The inscription "escape into death" also perfectly aligns with the Holocaust historian Konrad Kwiet's description of suicide as "the most radical category of attempts to escape from the Nazi terror."³⁶ Though I think we should always view suicide as resistance at Treblinka, it is particularly important to our understanding of individual choices in the earliest days, when few other options existed. Kwiet further classified suicides in clearly polemic terms—as "an ultimate act of defiance," even though Marrus notes that, in general, "we are unlikely ever to identify a political motivation among the thousands of suicides and attempted suicides of Jews that historians have noted."³⁷ As time went on and relationships grew, however, more and more inmates began to plot paths for living escape from Treblinka through personal guile or the assistance of others, and a good many of them were successful in escaping. As suicides leave the testimonial record, planned group escapes rise, suggesting a correlation.

Escape: The First Planned Resistance

Planned, purpose-driven escapes stand out as the second type of Polemic Resistance carried out by Treblinka inmates. The intent of escapes from Treblinka was most certainly to save lives, and therefore this category of resistance action also straddles the line between Polemic and Defensive Resistance. Those who took opportunities to escape on their own or with friends, where the intent was simply to get out alive, committed a Defensive Resistance act.

Those who got out of Treblinka with the intent to warn the outside world fall into the category of Polemic Resistance. With specific relevance to escape plans by prisoner groups at the camp, Marrus states: “Some polemical resistance within the Jewish world consisted of persuading Jews of the reality of the Final Solution—telling the victims, against all experience and logic, that the German-organized deportations were part of an organized campaign of systematic mass murder.”³⁸ Treblinka inmates formed their first planned and networked conspiracies around acts of organized escape by selected prisoners with the expressed goal of warning the outside world about the reality of German plans to send Jews “to the east.”³⁹

Records contained in Emanuel Ringelblum’s *Oyneg Shabes* underground archive of the Warsaw Ghetto show that early Treblinka plotters actually succeeded in spreading the word about the fatal truth of Nazi intentions.⁴⁰ Treblinka escapee Abraham Krzepicki was the first individual to record his recollections of the camp after he returned to the Warsaw Ghetto. Though Krzepicki died in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, his testimony exists today because Rachel Auerbach transcribed it for the archive before he was killed.⁴¹

The testimony of Treblinka escapee Zenon Golaszewski perfectly describes the planned polemic intent of organized escapes in the early phases of camp operation. In his statement to the Düsseldorf prosecutor of the Kurt Franz trial, Golaszewski said:

I escaped from the Treblinka camp after a more than month-long stay. I was able to do this because the prisoners hid me in a railcar full of the clothing of those murdered at Treblinka. The escape was prepared and organized by a group of insiders. One selected me because I did not have a Semitic facial appearance. The escape plan was intended to teach comrades in the ghettos what kind of a camp Treblinka was, and furthermore to ensure there would be a living witness to this horrible mass murder.⁴²

The network of prisoners that assisted Golaszewski selected him to take part in their plan because of his looks and the possibility that he might be able to blend into the non-Jewish Polish population better than those with a supposedly stereotypical Jewish appearance. We can be thankful that Golaszewski survived the rest of the war and was later able to relay the intent of the plotters who helped him. His recollections for the court prove that Treblinka prisoners planned and executed acts of Polemic Resistance even when they had no hope of saving those left behind inside the camp.

To be certain, not all escapes were instances of Polemic Resistance intended to warn the outside world about the realities of Treblinka. Revolt survivor Oskar

Strawczynski stated that “small groups” would help men escape at this time and that, “about [thirty to forty] people escaped daily” in the early phases.⁴³ Many were simply the Defensive Resistance acts of desperate men seeking to save their own lives and whomever else they might have been able to take out with them. Escapee Ignac Litwak, for example, recounts no mission-oriented planning before his flight from Treblinka. He and his friends merely realized that they could hide in clothing piles at the sorting area until nightfall and climb the fence when no guards were on duty.⁴⁴ With so many murdered on a daily basis, the choice of whether to stay or go was a nonissue. However, Litwak’s unplanned escape was far less successful than that of Golaszewski. With no coordinated access to cash to bribe their way into hiding spots or purchase food, four of Litwak’s six fellow escapees died on the run.⁴⁵

The Litwak escape and several others like it are counterexamples to the power of coordinated resistance at Treblinka. Without the help of those with access to valuables, a plan to cover their exit, or a preconceived method of hiding on the outside, most of this escape group was killed. The repeated failure of spontaneous resistance acts like Litwak’s escape and other episodes likely had a strong impact on the desire of Treblinka prisoners to tightly script their later actions.

Treblinka survivors conclusively stated that escapes ended because of the move to the ghetto barracks.⁴⁶ The new structure stood in the middle of Camp 1, far from possible paths out of the camp. In addition to the distance created by its central location, the ghetto barracks stood behind an additional fence built for the express purpose of ending escapes. In places, this barrier was actually a double-fence obstacle with space between for nighttime foot patrols by Ukrainian guards.⁴⁷ The gate of the ghetto ring fence was locked at night, with guards patrolling only on the exterior. This meant that communication on the inside was not limited by fear of guards passing through the actual building at night, but prisoners also saw little to no chance of nighttime escape. Neither preliminary ideas nor the final revolt plan ever envisioned a late-night operation. Despite the possible benefits of the cover of darkness, the obstacles created by this new structure were evidently perceived to be so insurmountable that all plans included a start time prior to the final evening lockdown.

David Liebermann, one of the men who took flight with the last group to get out of Treblinka, also survived to tell his story. Liebermann snuck away from the old arrival area barracks in the dawn, preroll-call moments of an early January day in 1943 with the assistance and participation of three of his schoolmates from Czestochowa, Poland.⁴⁸ The camp’s final escape was such a memorable episode for those who stayed on that Willenberg and others recall it exactly as Liebermann does.⁴⁹ Liebermann and friends got out of Treblinka the

very day before inmates shifted to the new ghetto barracks that promised to make flight far more difficult. This was no coincidence, for Liebermann states that his accomplices timed the escape for that very reason.⁵⁰

Liebermann and his fellow escapees took motivation from construction at Treblinka exactly as Jaskot and colleagues found was the case for inmates of Auschwitz.⁵¹ It certainly helped that Treblinka's prisoners were the slave laborers forced to build the new escape-resistant barracks. The builders must have told others that the window of opportunity was closing and the time was now. For those who remained behind, the Liebermann escape was an object lesson in how crucially important construction and timing would be for later resistance. This would not be the last episode of Treblinka inmates taking advantage of construction at the camp. With escape no longer a viable option for resistance-minded prisoners, Treblinka inmates shifted the focus of their efforts after January 1943.

Conclusion

The January 1943 beginning of Glazar's Phase Three coincides with the opening of the ghetto barracks, the end of escapes, and the co-housing of all Camp 1 prisoners. Now able to call upon the entire Camp 1 population, Treblinka plotters immediately realized that these conditions compelled new thinking on resistance while providing them chances to consider actions beyond the symbolic or polemic. Phase Three prisoner resistance harnessed geographic changes to living arrangements meant to end escape and deployed them in service of far grander plans. The fact that the most resistance-minded prisoners were no longer leaving Treblinka via escape also helped grow the possible network of revolt plotters. Defensive Resistance acts were not new to Phase Three, but the changed geography of Treblinka gave plotters new opportunities and possibly a more optimistic prevailing mood from which to draw coconspirators. They fostered, expanded, and exploited spatially important social networks that enabled the eventual revolt.

Defending the Few

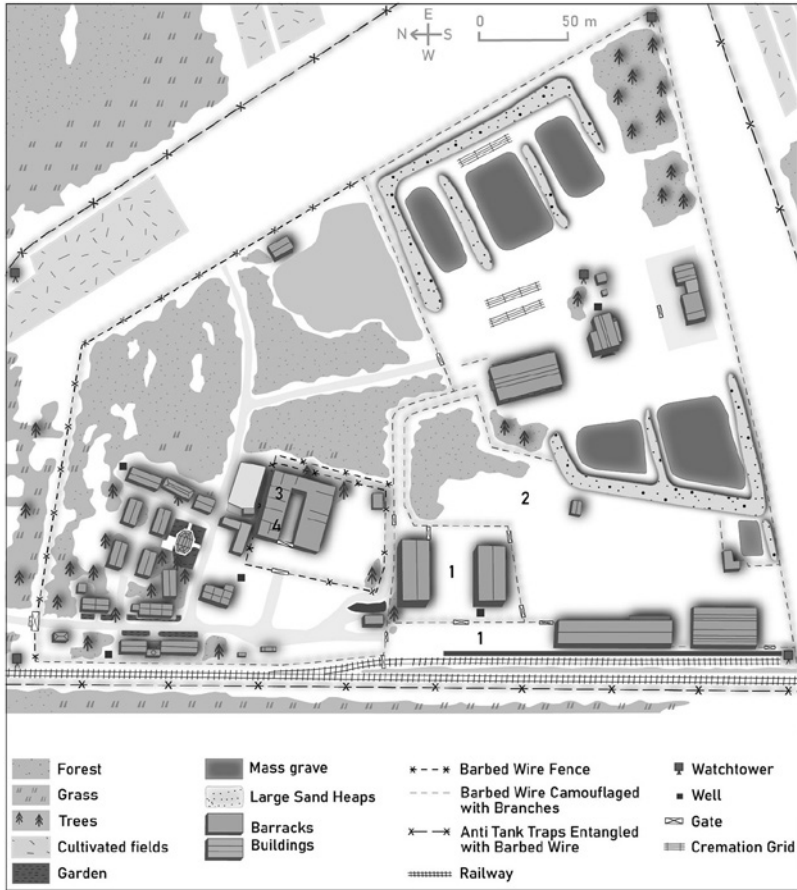
Forming and Preserving Spatial Social Networks

While undressing I saw Engineer Galewski of Warsaw, a friend of mine, among the workers. Galewski asked one of the [SS guards] to assign me to the worker's brigade. . . . I never saw my traveling companions again, after a few minutes I understood everything. I felt resentment against Galewski, due to whose intervention I was still alive. . . .

. . . I complained to my friend and reproached him for having saved me. His answer was unexpected: "I did not save you to keep you alive," he whispered, "but to sell your life at a higher price. You are now a member of a secret organisation that is planning an uprising and you must live."

—SAMUEL RAJZMAN, quoted in House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Escaping Treblinka to warn others was the most effective thing a single person could do. Nazi authorities designed the Aktion Reinhard system to kill Jews with the help of secrecy and ignorance of what transport really meant. Those boarding trains in the early phases of Treblinka's existence might have been told they were going east for work or being otherwise relocated. Robbed of truth, they were also robbed of agency and any chance to resist. Escape plots aimed at smuggling out individuals and groups so that they could spread the truth became the main strategy of early resistance planning. The goal of these escapees was to give agency back to those for whom it might not be too late. Working to save lives by spreading the word was a form of defense. If successful, this warning could help people decide what to do in the face of deportation orders, spur resistance in the towns and cities, or—as some hoped—instigate outside action to stop the killing. As time went on, however, Jews held inside Treblinka moved beyond individual or small group actions and turned their thoughts to more than defense.

**KEY:**

1. Arrival Area 2. Sortierungsplatz or Sorting Yard 3. Tailor's Shop 4. Laundries

Chapter 2 Detail Map

Prisoner planning eventually came together around the goal of revolt, though early dreams of armed resistance were little more than fantasy. As networks, bonds of trust, and relationships grew across the camp, though, these ideas gained viability. Defensive Resistance episodes grew from early-phase escapes to include the very prisoner-to-prisoner assistance that helped inmates build and preserve social networks that were later called upon for the revolt.

Individuals drew assistance from networks of coworkers in the various work details at Treblinka as well as support from those they knew in life prior to arrival. This meant that birthplace or pre-deportation origins had much to do with the networks that formed within the camp. People from Warsaw (both those native to the city and others later forced into the Ghetto), for example, tended to work with and sleep near others from the city. The same was true for the camp's significant Czechoslovak and Czestochowa, Poland, populations.¹ In a place where trust was paramount to survival, preexisting relationships were of the utmost importance for social networks at Treblinka.

Networks based on pre-Treblinka origins and relationships based on prisoner work assignments were safeguarded by inmates. The need to protect individuals and to preserve the secrecy of planning at times led to actions against informants or fellow prisoners deemed unreliable. These deeds, some violent, provide a bridge between the defensive, or less-aggressive, actions taken to persevere within Treblinka and the ultimate armed offensive of August 2, 1943. Prisoners used bonds of trust to gain control over Treblinka geography so that they could save lives and further resistance as well as launch an eventual revolt.

Origin Networks and Surviving Arrival

People unfortunate enough to arrive at Treblinka, no matter what their place of origin, were unlikely to survive. The thousands of daily arrivals at the camp yielded only a tiny number of replacements for the permanent workforce, and the ever-lethal selection process became even more restrictive as time went on.² Histories of Treblinka have neglected the role Jewish prisoners played in this process and the effects their interventions had on the formation and maintenance of social networks within the camp that were based on prewar or pre-camp relationships.³ Successful methods of survival at the point of selection shifted with changes to SS guard routines over time. These changes affected strategies for individual or group selection survival as the camp evolved.

Phases One and Two witnessed mass killings not only of arrivals but also of the supposedly permanent workforce, prompting Richard Glazar to remember them as a "period of utter arbitrariness where one SS might select a man for work and an hour later, he might be dead, sent 'up' by another."⁴ The total disorganization at Treblinka in this early period was at least partially a result of the lack of a stable workforce, a condition that contributed to the dismissal of the first commandant, Dr. Irmfried Eberl. The replacement commandant, Hauptsturmführer Franz Stangl, reorganized the camp in such a way that methods of arrival selection and almost every other aspect of prisoner life changed dramatically by early 1943.⁵ Most important for those already inside Treblinka, the new commandant's reorganization measures prompted the

move to the ghetto barracks at the start of Phase Three, in January 1943. For individuals arriving from this date on, Stangl's reorganization meant fewer chances for survival as a result of a more tightly controlled accountability of permanent workers.

During all of Glazar's phases, new arrivals disembarked from railcars at the camp and met several German SS guards, their Trawniki helpers, and roughly twenty Blue Commando Jews. The "Trawniki guards" were one-time Soviet soldiers recruited into German service from POW camps and most often referred to as Ukrainians in the sources. These men made up the majority of the Treblinka guard population. Jewish prisoners of the Blue Commando and another similarly tasked group called the Red Commando were responsible for moving people in the gate and giving them orders such as where to undress and where to place their belongings.⁶ In Phases One and Two, the camp's permanent workforce was barely marked or differentiated from new arrivals in any consistent or failsafe manner. Treblinka prisoners were never issued uniforms, and, as Glazar points out, the SS arbitrarily killed members of the workforce at such a rate that the Germans could not possibly tell new arrivals from established inmates. Prisoners used the anonymity granted them by high turnover and lax monitoring by the SS to save others even while under constant personal threat of death.

Blue Commando prisoner workers had the additional assignment of cleaning out the boxcars of arriving trains after disembarkation. This detail drew its name from the blue patches (eventually armbands) that they wore on their clothing.⁷ One early-phase lifesaving technique was to quickly instruct a friend or acquaintance spotted getting off the train on how to look like an experienced worker. Eliahu Rosenberg remembered a man approaching someone he had arrived with and telling him, "Moshe, grab a broom and save yourself!"⁸ The mere act of holding a broom and appearing to have a job made one less likely to be pushed toward the gas chambers.⁹ Rosenberg is not the only survivor to mention the passing of brooms as a sort of macabre baton relay of survival in the early days of Treblinka. What's more, Eddie Weinstein and his companions in Treblinka's early workforce were well aware of the personal risk involved in saving others. "Indeed, every time we passed our brooms to newcomers we reduced our own prospects of survival—but we took the risk anyway."¹⁰ In addition to the broom-passing method, Treblinka's experienced prisoners were also adept at hiding groups of arriving men in the heaps of clothing they were sorting.

Traversing a gated fence to the right of the camp arrival area, prisoners reached a large open section called the Sortierungsplatz, or sorting area. In the early phases of the camp, one or two hundred men—already undressed by

orders of the SS—would run back and forth between the piles of clothes at the Sortierungsplatz and the train platform square where new arrivals undressed. These men gathered the clothes of the camp's most recent victims and delivered them to where the permanent workers would sort them for shipment to Germany before being sent off to the gas themselves when this work was completed.¹¹ Many realized their position in this naked group was incredibly dangerous, and they sought ways to escape the fate they sensed awaited them. Some hid among the piles of clothing, while others were recognized by friends and pulled into a work detail after being hurriedly dressed. Still more volunteered for any assignment the Germans handed out, even if they did not know what it was.¹²

Over time, the SS grew wise to these techniques and became increasingly brutal in their reprisals. Weinstein recounted that after one quite full day of “broom-sharing and other ruses” designed to hide new arrivals, the evening roll call number was a full two hundred men higher than guards expected.¹³ The SS response was the immediate slaughter of the same number of men with complete disregard for whether they were long-term residents of the camp or arrivals that had been snuck in that day.¹⁴ This act demonstrates the brutality and wholesale murder of inmates that kept the camp's population from gaining any stability in its early months.

Prisoners lost many of their lifesaving methods to increased oversight as Stangl's reorganization and reconstruction of the camp took hold, though they benefited from these changes in other ways. In Phases Three and Four, it was simply no longer possible to hand off a broom or falsify a roll call number in order to hide arrivals among the existing population. By Phase Three, prisoners wore assigned numbers pinned to their clothing, and SS as well as Ukrainian overseers were more likely to recognize a new face in the crowd as time went on.¹⁵ Though loss of anonymity would hurt prisoners' ability to smuggle in new arrivals or escape unnoticed by the guards, the same factor would also increase inmates' knowledge of one another and the ability to form lasting bonds. Survivor Kalman Teigman said that before stabilization of the camp's working population, inmates “did not know one another” and found it impossible to trust or conspire in such ever-changing conditions.¹⁶ A more static population offered better opportunities for planning large-scale resistance, with Glazar referring to the new conditions as the “first spark” of the eventual conspiracy.¹⁷

Stabilization put an end to prisoner ruses that could save whole groups of new arrivals and complicated—but did not eradicate—individual rescues. Alfred Galewski saved at least four people at the point of selection using his position as Camp 1 Jewish prisoner Lagerältester, or Camp Elder. Recalling the

experience of his own deportation to Treblinka, survivor Samuel Rajzman stated that after arriving, he “never saw any of [his] traveling companions again, after a few minutes I felt resentment against Galewski, due to whose intervention I was still alive.”¹⁸ Rajzman and Galewski knew each other from life in the Warsaw Ghetto before the latter was sent to Treblinka, one of the earliest transports to the camp.¹⁹ Galewski used his authority as Lagerältester to pull Rajzman from the arrival line and told him later: “I did not save you to keep you alive but to sell your life at a higher price. You are now a member of a secret organization that is planning an uprising, and you must live.”²⁰ Of four survivors who note having been directly saved by him, Rajzman is the most direct about Galewski’s reasons. Not only did the Lagerältester save his life; he went so far as to tell him exactly why he had done so. Galewski did not merely hope to prolong an acquaintance’s life within the hell of Treblinka; he planned to use this man he already knew and trusted in resistance.

In his position as Lagerältester, Galewski wielded his influence with the SS to save lives as often as he could. Galewski had the persuasive power to point out a man and tell the SS arrivals overseer that he possessed a skill the camp needed and should therefore be saved. He successfully pulled Rajzman from the gas chamber line by telling the SS he could work as the translator they wanted. In the case of Morton Mattel, Galewski used his personal influence with the SS to save him by telling the guard that Mattel was his brother. A worker who recognized Berek Rojzman as he arrived saved him by asking for Galewski’s help in getting him into the workforce.²¹ Each one of these men would later take part in the revolt at Treblinka.²² What Galewski said to Samuel Rajzman makes it clear that the creation of a trustworthy group of individuals he could call on to resist was his reason for saving their lives.

Aside from Galewski, certain entire work groups had the opportunity to save individuals from selection even after Phase Two ended. The Red and Blue Commandos were best located to help save lives during the performance of their duties in the arrival area. The Blue Commandos worked at the point of disembarkation, moving people into the camp and then cleaning empty trains before their departure. The Red Commandos were their counterpart on the inside of the fence at the arrival square. The Reds gave men orders to go to the right to undress outdoors and sent women to undress inside the left barracks. While the SS had selected as many as two hundred men to move the clothing of those who were gassed to the sorting area in the earlier phases, by Phase Three this was also the job of the Red Commandos.²³

Red Commando member Alfred Boehm saved Samuel Willenberg from selection when he arrived at Treblinka. Boehm was a young man Willenberg had known and befriended in his school days in prewar Czestochowa. Wil-

lenberg was born and raised in Czestochowa, while Boehm was born in Germany and forced into Poland with his family as Nazi discrimination escalated in the 1930s.²⁴ Willenberg had defended the younger Boehm against the anti-semitic attacks of local Poles in his neighborhood, and Boehm repaid the favor by saving his life at Treblinka. As Willenberg undressed, he got Boehm's attention; Boehm confirmed his old friend's identity and told him to tell the German guard he was a builder.²⁵ With construction an almost ever-present feature of Treblinka life, this was a skill the SS were always on the lookout for as transports arrived. Willenberg had no experience as a builder, but the ruse worked all the same. Lagerältester Galewski assigned him to the sorting detail at first and would later move him to where he could be of the greatest use to the plans for revolt. Willenberg's young acquaintance was also Galewski's "servant," with this relationship giving Boehm chances to introduce the two men and convince Galewski of Willenberg's trustworthiness.²⁶ Through Boehm's actions, motivated by a prewar personal connection, Willenberg survived his arrival, met a key conspirator, and later became an indispensable member of the resistance organization.

Lifesaving actions by Galewski and others with access to the arrivals area as part of their work assignments succeeded in bringing motivated and trustworthy coconspirators into the Treblinka slave labor force. Though the SS arbitrarily selected many as replacements for the people they murdered, those brought into the camp by fellow prisoners had an outsize impact on future events and constituted a disproportionate percentage of the pivotal participants in the revolt.

Willenberg recounts being told after his arrival in the camp that the reason so many individuals from Czestochowa were there was the mass killings of prisoners in the early phases, in addition to fate. The SS selected two hundred men from his home city because they arrived the day after the mass execution of an equal number of prisoners.²⁷ In this terrible example, the SS created the original population of Czestochowa Jews who went on to select individuals they knew from arriving transports as often as they could. Willenberg himself arrived later on a transport from Opatow, but he survived as the result of a relationship forged in Czestochowa. The same effect is visible in the camp population of individuals from Warsaw.

As these populations arrived at the camp, the Jews of both cities gained beachheads, of sorts, inside the camp, and these later expanded and sustained themselves by saving others. In the end, a combination of SS actions, the cold reality of Polish rail geography dictating the population centers from which Jews would be sent to Treblinka, and the actions of Jewish inmates created tightknit prisoner communities originating from Czestochowa and Warsaw.

These inmates endured alongside a small but significant Czech population and a handful of individuals from other Polish cities.

Work Detail Networks

For resistance to grow into full-scale revolt, the inclusion of work details with greater access to places and spaces of importance throughout the camp was necessary. Access to various areas within the camp came with the duties of each work detail at Treblinka. Prisoners risked death for being outside the spaces that their dictated routines required. The Reds and Blues had access to the areas where new arrivals disembarked and disrobed before making their way up the *Himmelweg* to the gas chambers. This access is the reason that these work groups and Galewski—with nearly unlimited access to Camp 1 geography as Lagerältester—were the only ones to have had a chance to save new arrivals, though the presence of coconspirators in only these areas was insufficient to plan a rebellion. A revolt would require the involvement of each and every work group in order to gain geographic access to all of the resources and areas without which no logical plan could proceed. Work assignments sometimes tightly coincided with an individual's place of origin, but this was not always the case. Since both origins and work assignments held equal sway over prisoner social networks, conspirators needed control of both in order to plan their revolt.

In testimony read into the US Congressional Record in 1945, survivor Samuel Rajzman offered a breakdown of Treblinka slave labor details. His recollections of these groups were mostly correct yet incomplete.

Group I: Classifying the new arrivals, carrying clothes and baggage to the storerooms.

Group II: Sorting stolen clothes and loading them on cars going to Germany.

Group III: Sorting, packing, and counting money, foreign exchange, gold, and valuables.

Group IV: Craftsmen, such as shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, masons, and locksmiths, and those who worked in the shops.

Group V: Barbers.

Group VI: Dentists.

Group VII: Porters who carried corpses to the oven.²⁸

According to Rajzman, “Groups I to V were strictly separated from groups VI and VII.”²⁹ Groups I–V worked in Camp 1, while VI and VII were toiled in the Death Camp, or Camp 2. Rajzman underscored the separation of Treblinka's two sides, stating, “Even the slightest communication with them was made

very difficult in order to prevent the crews that did not work directly in the [gas chambers] from learning how the mass murder was being carried out.”³⁰

Rajzman’s much-simplified list of work details is supported and expanded upon by other survivors. His Groups I and II consisted of the Red and Blue Commandos. Survivors and guards alike almost always referred to Group III as the Goldjuden, or Gold Jews. SS guard Franz Suchomel was in charge of the Goldjuden during most of the time Treblinka operated. He was a Sudeten, or Czech-born German Volksdeutscher, who spoke Czech in addition to German and who deliberately staffed this detail with Czech Jews who arrived at Treblinka in substantial numbers after October 1942.³¹ Survivor Richard Glazar was one of these Czech arrivals, but he was not a Goldjude inside the camp. Given their ready access to money and valuables and their ability to traverse much of Camp 1, the Goldjuden were important to plans for revolt. Any attempt to bribe Ukrainian guards or buy subsistence supplies from local Poles required their assistance for provision of currency or precious metals collected from the belongings of the murdered.³²

Likewise, the Tarnungskommando, or Camouflage Commandos, was crucial to planning for its ability to exit the camp during its work cutting branches in the nearby woods for maintenance of the fence. The men of the Tarnungskommando—the group with the most diverse assortment of individual origins of any important work detail—routinely took advantage of lax German supervision and easily bribed Ukrainian guards in order to trade with local Poles for food while they were outside the wire. This group, though not mentioned in Rajzman’s description of work details, offered Treblinka’s inmates an outside supplement to their meager rations that they shared at the most difficult moments of the camp’s existence.³³ This practice of sharing among Tarnungskommando might well be partially explicable by the group’s diversity. Members of the Tarnungskommando shared what they “organized” or gained through “speculation,” as prisoners called trade in illicit food and goods, with their bunkmates.³⁴ They, as others, bunked near individuals from their hometowns and thus shared out their goods with these friends.³⁵ Since the Tarnungskommando had such diversity in origin, members ended up sharing their gains across Treblinka’s origin network divides.

Testimonies often refer to Rajzman’s Group IV as the Hofjuden, or Court Jews. Just as in the case of the Goldjuden, the Hofjuden were important to revolt planning because of their privileges and access to places other groups could not traverse. Hofjuden work assignments as builders, maintenance workers, and technical specialists made their presence in most of Camp 1 above suspicion from the guards. This group’s necessity as technical specialists also granted them a stability of tenure from the earliest days of the camp that

was a luxury unheard of for the clothing sorters and arrival area workers in the other groups.³⁶

The Hofjuden first consisted of those earliest arrivals forced to build the original camp structures in preparation for the beginning of gassing operations on July 23, 1942.³⁷ Because of this, not only did they have the most freedom of movement within the camp because of their duties as specialists; they also possessed the greatest institutional knowledge of camp operations because of their geographic access and low rate of turnover. Any group or individual plotting resistance was aware that inclusion of the Hofjuden would greatly improve their chances. With the outset of Phase Three and cohousing of all Camp I workers in the single ghetto barracks building, the Hofjuden came into effective and continuous contact with other groups. Not only did the new barracks allow for communication between groups; it also seems that it fostered a feeling of common destiny among prisoners regardless of assignment or privileged status.

Oskar Strawczynski, himself a Hofjude, and Glazar agree that prior to this move the more privileged prisoners were not interested in ideas of resistance or revolt.³⁸ Strawczynski believed that they saw themselves as distinct from the common prisoner workforce, even “thinking Treblinka was somehow theirs,” and that they reckoned their survival was made more likely by their obeying SS rules and laying low.³⁹ The move to the ghetto barracks erased both a geographical and a psychological division between the Hofjuden and others. Isolation from the larger workforce gave the Hofjuden a feeling of distinction and separation from the common fate, while co-housing in a single barracks removed this mental barrier. Glazar mentions that the terms “Hofjuden” and the more openly derisive “better guests,” again in reference to more privileged prisoners, lost favor, as did the wearing of the yellow triangle pinned on their clothing or armbands that had marked their status in earlier months.⁴⁰ From the moment the single ghetto barracks was open, the names of Hofjuden begin to appear on survivors’ lists of plotters and individuals important to resistance. Not only did they become involved in revolt planning, but their locations of access also came into the revolt network. Plotters held meetings in the workshops where the Hofjuden toiled, and plans immediately changed to include several of their number in the uprising.⁴¹

The access to camp geography possessed by the Hofjuden was importantly strengthened by women prisoners among this group. In a 1961 interview, survivor Bronka Sukno told German prosecutors that she had complete freedom of movement in Camp I as a worker in the tailor’s shop.⁴² This location inside the ghetto barracks also functioned as a meeting place for prisoner conspirators, as described by Moyshe Klaynman.⁴³ Since she was able to sit in on or

overhear these meetings and also to move about the camp in her work, Sukno and other women in similar details were strongly positioned to aid resistance. Despite this, Rajzman did not mention women in his description of work details and the camp population. As later chapters explore, Rajzman is far from alone in the omission of women from his recollections.

Samuel Goldberg, the laundry supervisor, led a detail of between twenty-four and thirty-three women employed in the Camp 1 laundries.⁴⁴ Sonia Lewkowicz was a member of these laundry details and a revolt survivor. Her testimony and that of Goldberg indicate that the laundry details—the largest group of women in Camp 1—had less regular access to this space than did Sukno and other tailors.⁴⁵ This did not mean, however, that they were unable to contribute to resistance. The return of washed uniforms and personal items meant that women on the laundry details could move between the ghetto barracks that held the laundries and the SS and Ukrainian living areas. This ability gave these women the chance to observe guard routines and, of particular importance, pick up information on their plans to go home on leave.

There were likely around forty women in Camp 1 at most. In addition to the larger laundry detail and the handful of specialists in the tailor's shop, women also worked in the kitchens in this area of Treblinka.⁴⁶ As these roles indicate, the work assignments held by women in Treblinka were of a traditionally gendered nature. Women worked in stereotypically feminine occupations, never being assigned to the various male-coded trades like Strawczynski's tinsmith's shop or even the unskilled sorting details. The jobs women held at Treblinka and the access to space these jobs gave them underscore Tim Cole's statement that "Holocaust landscapes were gendered landscapes."⁴⁷ At Treblinka, as elsewhere, that meant consciously designed places of women's presence and of women's absence, though we will see later how these gender norms created opportunities for resistance.

Regardless of their work detail, women slept in the same ghetto barracks building as the men, just in a separate bunking area close to the workshops. A group of roughly thirteen women also worked in kitchen and laundry facilities of Camp 2 from at least February 1943 on.⁴⁸ Bronka Sukno and Sonia Lewkowicz were both eventually transferred to this section of the camp before the revolt.⁴⁹ It seems that transfer to Camp 2—though it was meant to be punishment, according to Lewkowicz—had much to do with their ability to make it out alive. There are no known survivors among the women held in Camp 1 on August 2, 1943.

Both men and women socialized and shared information according to their work assignment during the day and afterhours and according to where they were located in the barracks at night. While colocation of all prisoners in a

single barracks complex meant that prisoners could choose to communicate across work detail lines in their off hours, neighborly bunking area bonds remained cliquish according to pre-Treblinka life. Glazar recalls that when the new barracks opened and prisoners were allotted a lunch hour at this location, they generally chose to spend this time according to their home origin groups as well.⁵⁰ Czechs had their own area of the barracks and took lunch around their own, just as did Czestochowa and Warsaw prisoners. Hofjuden, because they were first drawn from local villages in small numbers and their numbers expanded with later arrivals, lacked tightknit origin networks by Phase Three, but they were likely able to replace this support structure with long-term work and personal relationships made possible by their longer tenure within the camp.

Prisoner work detail assignments and individual origins sometimes coincided, as was the case for the Reds and the Blues; however, this was not always the case. Prisoners from Czestochowa, for example, sometimes worked together, though some individuals important to the conspiracy worked separately or with groups pulled from other home origins. Warsaw Ghetto deportees, by far the single largest origin network, appeared in almost every work detail in varying numbers. There were enough individuals from Warsaw for this origin group to possess internal divisions along former socioeconomic lines, exacerbated by persistent language barriers. The Reds, multiple survivors recall, came from the “Warsaw underworld,” or—more likely—were the poorer residents of the city and the Ghetto.⁵¹

The Blue Commandos were, alternatively, drawn from people of a different background. Survivors describe this group as being made up of relatively better-off young men who had spent their lives in religious study and dressed according to Orthodox or Hassidic standards prior to their arrival. Survivors recall the demeanor of the Blue Commandos as “pleasant,” almost genteel, in comparison to the affect of the more streetwise Red Commandos.⁵² The notable Camp 1 Czech population, though only ever roughly twenty-strong, was also divided across the Tarnungskommando, the Goldjuden, and various sorting details at one time or another. In the end, a conspiracy needed to include both work detail networks and home-origin relationships if it was to offer the strongest bonds, enable communication ability across language and social barriers, and have the greatest chance for success in the final outcome of armed resistance.

Planning the final step toward successful rebellion would require leadership capable of bridging the gaps between work detail and hometown relationships in order to create a unified plan of action that had complete access to camp geography. This sort of coordination, however, could hardly occur under

threat from within. Given the importance of individual relationships developed across work and origin networks, prisoners took drastic, violent, and sometimes lethal action to defend them.

Preserving the Networks—Violence Between Prisoners

Prisoners at Treblinka so profoundly relied upon the networks and relationships they created and maintained inside the camp that they took serious and sometimes violent actions to defend them. The greatest danger to prisoner life at the camp was of course the German SS, though certain fellow inmates also posed a threat. While brutal Kapos posed an immediate peril to prisoners of the large-population concentration camps that possessed a true labor function, this was not the foremost concern inside Treblinka. A sense of shared fate among the uniformly Jewish population—especially after they were cohoused in a single barracks—meant that the German SS did not gain much success in their preferred divide-and-rule tactics. Individual reactions to the pressures of life inside Treblinka varied greatly. Prisoners fearing for their own lives might inform on the resistance plans of others as a last resort or even as a more prolonged strategy of singular survival. The exact motives of individuals who chose to speak to the guards are unknown. Even if they had survived, these people would have been unlikely to recount such an act in a personal written account or interview. The desperation of their situation, however, makes an understanding of their psychological state and decisions possible—if not entirely sympathetic.

In Treblinka, Kapos and other prisoner supervisors were not, for the most part, the enemies of their fellow inmates, or “no less cruel than the Germans or Ukrainians,” as one author has said of them.⁵³ With prisoner leaders like Alfred Galewski actually involved in resistance, informants were the most feared danger from within. Survivor testimonies make mention of informants quite frequently, even if they personally had little or nothing to do with addressing the issue. Primary witness statements by survivors who helped deal with internal threats to the security of prisoner networks exist in some quantity and display a surprising level of openness. Statements by former SS guards also occasionally speak of the dangers that informants posed for prisoners and what they knew of how inmates dealt with these threats.

The issue of aggressive or even brutal acts between victims of the Holocaust remains a particularly emotional and difficult aspect of this history. Some historians shy away from or even omit instances of prisoner-to-prisoner violence inside the camps and ghettos of Nazi-controlled Europe. Christopher R. Browning reminds us not to render the oppressed as two-dimensional characters so sanitized that we discard any mention of their less-heroic or even

morally objectionable responses to persecution. For Browning, “One of the saddest ‘lessons’ of the Holocaust is confirmation that terrible persecution does not ennoble victims.”⁵⁴ He goes on to conclude that “we must be grateful for the testimonies of those who survived and are willing to speak, but we have no right to expect from them tales of edification and redemption.”⁵⁵ Though he leaves room for the rare perfectly virtuous hero or heroine, Browning also takes pains to represent the reality of victims’ options and the sometimes uncomfortable outcomes of what Lawrence Langer called their “choiceless choices.”⁵⁶

Browning’s study of the Starachowice factory slave labor camps revealed several testimonies describing the revenge killings of nineteen former camp leaders and their associates by fellow prisoners aboard trains on the way to Birkenau.⁵⁷ Had these functionaries of the German slave labor system met their end inside the factory camps it might be easier to reconcile their deaths as a form of defensive homicide. Coming as they did on the train to Birkenau, however, we can hardly call these killings anything other than acts of revenge. The Treblinka testimonial record reveals both instances of retribution like those carried out by the one-time inmates of the Starachowice factory camps and episodes of the preemptive silencing of informants.

While Starachowice prisoners were not alone in their recollections of violence directed against privileged, prominent, or leading inmates, Treblinka lies outside this now archetypal view of German-appointed prisoner leaders. In a video testimony, survivor Isadore Helfing stated, “We didn’t have bad Kapos there in Treblinka.”⁵⁸ Many of Treblinka’s Kapos, *Vorarbeiter* (foremen), and its *Lagerältester* actually occupied prominent roles on the revolt Organizing Committee.⁵⁹ The Nazi systems of divide and control in the camps described by Herman Langbein and Nikolaus Wachsmann, for the most part, could not exist at Treblinka. The singular purpose of an extermination camp built to destroy European Jewry left fewer prisoner divisions for the German SS to exploit. Langbein and Wachsmann agree that very few Jews received prominent positions in the concentration camps unless there were no political or German criminal prisoners to appoint instead. At Treblinka, the population was entirely Jewish. Though some testimonies speak of the arrival of as many as three transport columns of Romani victims, all agree that none of these unfortunate people survived their arrival at the camp.⁶⁰ This meant that aside from national divisions between Czech Jews and Polish Jews, Treblinka’s prisoner population was, for all intents and purposes, a homogeneous group.

With no German criminals or politicals to place in desirable positions, the SS appointed what they saw as workable Jewish leadership. They found the most success with the appointment of German or Austrian Jews. Survivor

testimonies that make mention of the Viennese oberkapo (and later kitchen Kapo) Karl Blau do so with the unanimous insistence that he was an informant and a willing accomplice of the Germans.⁶¹ Barrack supervisor Kuba is also mentioned as an informant. But these individuals stand out as exceptions to the general rule here.⁶² As it happened at least, the revolt would have been impossible without the assistance and leadership of most of the Kapos and especially Lagerältester Alfred Galewski.⁶³ When the rare testimony speaks ill of leaders other than Blau or Kuba, they are showing not a unique understanding of the truth but rather a unique misunderstanding of the real motives shared by the majority of Treblinka's prisoner leaders.

In order to keep their positions, Kapos and other leaders of Treblinka had to make the Germans feel at ease with the trust placed in them. This sometimes meant appearing to beat a prisoner when a member of the guard observed an infraction or appearing to act cruel in some other fashion.⁶⁴ All but a few prisoners, however, spoke of knowing the reality of this ruse even at the time. The rarer survivor who believed that the prisoner leaders at Treblinka were in league with their German and Ukrainian tormentors is more likely to have been an individual poorly connected to revolt planning, or even a person personally under suspicion of being an informant.

Survivor Joseph Siedlecki provided one of the only statements of a primary witness who insisted that all prisoner leaders were in league with camp guards. Siedlecki, however, admitted he had no involvement in resistance.⁶⁵ While the uniquely disconnected—and by some accounts distrusted—Siedlecki is the only survivor to paint all of Treblinka's prisoner leaders with the same unflattering brush, a few others made pointed accusations against individual leaders credited as part of the resistance organization by the majority.⁶⁶ As pointed out previously, however, the cellular structure of the revolt planning organization meant that no single prisoner was supposed to be aware of the identities of all the planners. Consequently, survivors who believed a certain leader was a willing German stooge might have been outside that leader's planning cell and therefore had no idea of their resistance participation.

The purpose of the cellular organization employed by Treblinka prisoner resistance planners was to counter the very real threat of inmates divulging information under torture or in exchange for some form of compensation. Former prisoners are not the only sources on the dangers posed by individuals within their own ranks. SS guard Franz Suchomel told author Gitta Sereny that "there were Jewish informers, employed by Küttner, and Jews died because of them—that is true."⁶⁷ Suchomel even went on to tell of specific informers who met their ends at the hands of Jews. He told Sereny that "the notorious Koppowa Paulinka gave away at least six Jews to Küttner. After the revolt she

was found, with her head shattered, on the path where she had tried to escape to [Camp 2]. And they dealt with one other informer too.”⁶⁸ Even as he recounted stories of prisoner-to-prisoner killings, however, Suchomel retained a degree of deference to inmate actions. He said, “I know that [Christian] Wirth sometimes boasted that he even got Jews to kill each other.”⁶⁹ That was not what went on in Treblinka in Suchomel’s eyes. This former SS guard even explained how prisoners would kill only informants. His insistence on this fact to Sereny drew a line between what he remembered and the bragging comments of his one-time SS superior.

The killing of other accused informants occurred well before the possible acts of revenge against Paulinka and the unnamed second individual on the day of the revolt. If Suchomel’s recollections are to be trusted, their deaths have the most in common with Browning’s account of retribution taken by Jews leaving the Starachowice camps. As such, these two killings stand at one end of a spectrum of deadly prisoner defensive acts for which the demise of a man named Kronenberg represents the other.⁷⁰ Samuel Willenberg recounts how, at the behest of Lagerältester Galewski, he acted to speed the death of the ill and endangered Kronenberg before he could reveal the plans of Treblinka’s Organizing Committee. Kronenberg, a one-time Lvov journalist, was an early resistance participant who was highly regarded and trusted by Galewski and others. As such, he was privy to planning for the coming rebellion and the identities of several prisoners preparing to take part.⁷¹

Kronenberg fell ill during the spring 1943 typhus epidemic that ravaged the prisoner workforce, and “Kiewe” Küttner selected him for execution at the Lazarett, a common SS practice with prisoners no longer able to work. In his weakened state, Kronenberg began to offer details of the revolt conspiracy in exchange for his life as he was dragged away. Fearing Küttner would believe his confession and that it would lead to the deaths of other prisoners, Willenberg and Kapo Kurland of the Lazarett detail acted to speed his death by forcing Kronenberg quickly into position over the mass grave. Because of the language barrier, the Ukrainian guard did not understand what Kronenberg was offering in exchange for his life and shot him before Küttner could learn more.⁷²

Kronenberg’s death, hastened by his erstwhile colleagues in resistance but actually carried out by German and Ukrainian perpetrators, stands at one end of the spectrum of acts taken by prisoners against informants. Not only did his fellow prisoners not personally end his life or set it in motion but also Kronenberg himself would not have offered information were it not for the typhus infection that weakened him and made him desperate. At the opposite end of the spectrum from Kronenberg’s example, however, prisoners took a decisively active role in the demise of others who more willingly chose to aid their oppressors.

Testimonies reveal that prisoners used the SS themselves to remove informants and what they saw as unreliable fellow inmates from their ranks. Survivor sources describe the killing of informers in language that hints these acts were, to some degree, commonplace. Richard Glazar describes how Kapos used German selections for Camp 2 in order to permanently remove questionable prisoners.

“Well, kapo, who are the laziest ones here? Go get them!” Kiewe [Küttner] acts as if the selection were being made by kapos and foremen. They follow him reticently. The kapo hesitates, almost imperceptibly, in front of one man; he looks another over more carefully. Kiewe whips both of them out of the ranks. They are not among the reliable. Of course Kiewe doesn’t know that. The kapos and the foremen, however, know only too well. This is how, with SS help, the slaves in this part of Treblinka silently mete out their own stern justice.⁷³

Well attuned to the operations of the camp, as full participants in resistance, Treblinka’s prisoner leaders used SS actions to full advantage. Küttner intended to sow discord among inmates by making them do the selection. In this event, however, prisoners used his designs for the exact opposite purpose. Not only was prisoner unity not impacted by these selections; they served to strengthen the whole by removing the most unreliable individuals.

In addition to making use of SS demands, Treblinka prisoners also engaged in both spontaneous and planned acts of internal violence. Glazar explains how this “stern justice” at times masqueraded as work accidents: “It does not only happen when selections are made for the death camp. Sometimes, during the chaotic operations out on the sorting site, help doesn’t arrive in time. No one can really know how much of an accident it might have been, or how much it might have been the result of one person’s revenge, or the revenge of the entire group.”⁷⁴ In this passage, Glazar opens the possibility that groups of prisoners may have planned retaliatory violence against others.

Samuel Willenberg takes this assertion further, describing withdrawal of mutual support from suspects, prisoner courts, and death sentences for those convicted, practices that reinforce Primo Levi’s “Law of the Lager.”⁷⁵

Later, the group decided to execute the traitors, spies and informers among the inmates. The men of the underground achieved significant results in carrying out this task. The executions would be carried out cautiously, secretly and without arousing any suspicion. The frequent cases of suicide among the prisoners helped camouflage the executions. Almost every one of us had a dose of cyanide or some other poison on hand [for ourselves] in case of trouble. Many people in

the camp committed suicide by hanging themselves, but then cases of suicide in a state of nervous collapse were common even among people who were free and lived in relatively good conditions. Therefore the underground employed a unique stratagem: they would give the execution of an informer the appearance of a case of suicide, and as a rule the SS men did not realize what had happened. The executions were carried out only after a rigorous investigation of the activities of the traitor or informer. We had to be convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that the accused was indeed guilty as charged. In many cases the traitor was first warned and given a chance to turn over a new leaf. If the warning did not help, a court was convened and meted out the death sentence. Thanks to the liquidation of such informers, the lives of many prisoners were saved, and a certain solidarity was preserved among the inmate population. I recall the case of a certain Hermann, a stooge of the Germans who for a long time had been informing the camp authorities of everything that was going on among the inmates. He gathered around him a group of petty informers and talebearers. Either directly or through these individuals he was informed about who owned gold or silver, who was planning to escape, who was engaging in barter or organizing the smuggling of food into the camp. Due to Hermann's informing, many prisoners lost their lives. Among his victims was a Jew from Czestochowa, Działoszyński, a very worthwhile person and an excellent comrade.

We had no pity on suspected informers during the famine period, when we would distribute equal shares of the foodstuffs obtained from various sources. We did not help them in their hard labor and paid no attention to them during punishment drills. The traitors were abandoned and isolated. One of our kapos, a man named Rakowski, knew very well that we were liquidating the informers and secretly gave his consent to this. It happened that the doctors in the *Revier* [prisoners' clinic] played a certain part in the liquidation of dangerous characters. If one of the traitors fell ill, camp headquarters were notified of the fact, and he would be ordered killed by a bullet or by an injection of poison.⁷⁶

Willenberg's frank list of internal prisoner violence is compelling in its honesty and deeply telling in its wording. His use of "we" in his discussion of the executions, in addition to the tone of this entire section, suggests that he was personally involved. Glazar seems to describe Willenberg as muscle brought into the conspiracy for his physical strength and mental toughness, so his involvement in the rough business of dealing with informants is indeed in character with descriptions of him by others and makes him the best available source to explore these actions.⁷⁷

The fact that prisoners used suicides to provide cover for their system of justice is a smart—even if unsavory—use of circumstances to advance resis-

tance and protect social networks. In this instance, prisoners not only took advantage of a common horror of the Treblinka experience but also possibly simultaneously provided cover for their change in psychological outlook as resistance planning gained momentum. Once Camp I inmates were cohoused in a single barracks structure, coinciding with the beginning of Phase Three, the mention of suicides disappears from survivor testimonies in these later periods. Even if only mildly attentive, the SS might have noticed this change in their slave labor force. Küttner, the one guard with experience as a jailer in prewar life, might very well have been the first to spot this difference and become suspicious of the newfound optimism among the oppressed. With prisoners occasionally rooting out an informant and presenting his death as a suicide, however, the Organizing Committee not only concealed these acts of violence against SS collaborators but also kept Küttner and other guards or distrusted prisoners from gaining a general awareness of a changed prisoner mindset.

Returning to the matter of informants, at one point in his testimony Willenberg states—quite matter-of-factly—that, “thanks to the liquidation of such informers, the lives of many prisoners were saved, and a certain solidarity was preserved among the inmate population.”⁷⁸ In the end, nothing Willenberg says on this matter is more telling: prisoners killed fellow Jews, but they did so in order to preserve life and protect their plans for revolt. “Solidarity,” for Willenberg, is the same force Glazar calls “relationships,” and both define what I call “social networks.” His use of the word “liquidation” is a tragic instance of the victim adopting the language of the perpetrator, and one that Lawrence Langer ably places in context. “The victim was forced by circumstances not to adopt SS *values*, but to be swept along by the rule of staying alive in the deathcamps [*sic*] that regularly saw one man’s death become another man’s means of survival.”⁷⁹

Forces beyond the control of any prisoner or group created the world in which all had to endure. Their individual reactions to the physical and psychological world behind the wire varied from person to person. Some chose death by their own hands, some looked for any opportunity to escape, and still others came together to plan a revolt. Individuals who made the “choiceless choice” to inform on fellow Jews in the hope of personal survival created a situation that forced still more choiceless choices by those their actions endangered. It should be no surprise that prisoners felt that informants had to be dealt with. Still, inmate actions were, for the most part, regulated and proportionate. Even the lives taken on the day of the revolt, as recalled by Suchomel, might have been acts of self-defense. What did Paulinka and the other person killed that day know about escape plans? Could they have divulged where

prisoners were headed after they fled the camp? This is as plausible a question for us as it was for those who took violent actions to silence them as they fled the camp. What we cannot know about those possibilities and—even more—what we cannot understand of the desperate circumstances in which inmates lived makes any judgment of their deeds inappropriate.

Resistance Network Placemaking

Social networks defined by work assignments and prisoner origins were the primary tools of resistance coordination. Jewish prisoners sometimes violently defended those networks while using these same relationships to gain access to space. Treblinka resistance hinged on communication with prisoners who possessed access to important spaces throughout the camp and the ability to create and control what I term “places of resistance” as they prepared for revolt. A focus on places of resistance and how prisoners used networks to redefine the social meaning of spaces at the camp in their favor reveals how Jews managed to gain a level of control over Treblinka geography.

In his book *Holocaust Landscapes*, Tim Cole describes how Nazi genocide remade the geography of Europe. Cole outlines the ways in which victims and perpetrators dramatically altered the social meanings of both “macro-geographies” and “micro-geographies.”⁸⁰ In explanation of what this spatial focus can do for our understanding of history, Cole points out that “the Holocaust was not simply something that happened at particular times and in particular places. It was also a place-making event that created new places—ghettos and camps—within the European landscape, or reworked more familiar places—such as rivers or roads—into genocidal landscapes.”⁸¹ The Nazi creation of thousands of camps and ghettos is a powerful example of the macro-geography of the Holocaust. The same is true for the entire region of Timothy Snyder’s *Bloodlands*.⁸² Mass murder indelibly redefined the very meaning of whole swathes of Eastern European territory. For those aware of these histories, the social meanings of what were once the Polish Kresy or the Pale of Settlement can never revert to what they once were—genocide and Vernichtungskrieg have irrevocably altered and *emptied* the landscape.

At the micro-geographic scale, the changes wrought by the Holocaust are no less dramatic. We should think of how certain ancient placenames are now imbued with meanings their creators could have never imagined: Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Birkenau, Buchenwald, Dachau, Hartheim, Ponary, and, of course, Treblinka. These places are now metonyms for euthanasia, mass shooting, and annihilation by poison gas. For those who heard these words in 1920, however, they were simply the names of castles, fields, forests, and small rail stop towns. Each place acquired new meanings through the horrible crimes of

the Third Reich. As Cole points out, however, it was not only perpetrators who could change the meanings of spaces.⁸³

Jewish resistance defines what we imagine when we hear the term “Warsaw Ghetto” as much as our thoughts of German killers. Cole speaks of hiding and bunker creation—and much else—in his focus on the minute levels of resistance placemaking. The resistance conspiracy at Treblinka, meanwhile, takes this small-scale analysis down to the level of certain distinct buildings, rooms, or even the area around one important door.

At Treblinka, conspirators even changed the meanings of certain spaces in the minds of German guards. Placemaking by prisoners at Treblinka is the process by which they used relationships and clever strategies of deception to create a place of resistance, or a localized version of what Cole terms “spatial strategies of survival.”⁸⁴ In one example, prisoners wrested back a degree of control over life and death by finding means to limit German entrance into a structure called the *Pferdestall*—German for horse barn, also called Storage Barracks B. The *Pferdestall* never actually functioned as a horse barn or living accommodation; the name comes from its design and normal use in other camps. At Treblinka, the official use of this structure was to store clothing taken from victims. Control of this building and the SS-sanctioned prisoner infirmary enabled conspirators to both safeguard sick comrades and hasten the removal of distrusted informants. Because of the interconnected ways in which Jewish prisoners used them, these two locations combined to form a single place of resistance.

The infirmary and *Pferdestall* took on positions as places of resistance through inmates’ ability to control their uses and meanings. Lagerältester Galewski secured permission from the SS to create an infirmary in the main housing barracks with allowance for fifteen inmates to recuperate there at any one time. Galewski used his position as an intermediary who was afforded some level of trust to convince the Germans that a system of recuperation rather than the killing of sick prisoners would lessen turnover in key roles and increase the efficiency of the camp.⁸⁵ It seems, however, that neither side of this bargain intended to use the official infirmary as a true place of healing.

From its creation, SS guard August Miete began sweeping the barracks infirmary for prisoners he considered too ill to work. Miete routinely marched those he selected from the infirmary bunks to a place of execution. The predictability of his actions made it possible for prisoners not only to protect those they hoped to save but also to use him against their internal enemies. Individuals whom resistance members wanted gone could simply be left in the infirmary—some of them incapacitated due to injections given by inmate doctors—while sick members of the prisoners’ conspiracy were instead hidden

under the sorted clothing in the Pferdestall and allowed to recuperate there during the workday.⁸⁶ Samuel Willenberg also points out how prisoners could even hasten the removal of an individual from the sick bay by informing the SS of his condition, thereby bringing about one of Miete's rounds on their own schedule.⁸⁷ Dr. Irena "Irka" Lewkowski was one of four prisoner doctors who may have helped drug informants so that they would appear ill enough for Miete to select them on one of his rounds.⁸⁸

Prisoners controlled the safety of the Pferdestall as an actual place of recuperation by leveraging German SS fears of lice and typhus—a preoccupation owed in no small part to Nazi propaganda labeling Jews as carriers of lice and vectors of the disease. Lagerältester Galewski strengthened protection of this place by using his position to constantly remind guards that the clothing stored in the Pferdestall was infested with lice, giving them a reason to avoid the building rather than patrol it as normal.⁸⁹ Several survivors speak of the Pferdestall and its use as a hiding place for the sick as well as for resistance planning and covert communication during the daytime hours. In a statement given in 1962, survivor Bronka Sukno explained that her job in the tailor's shop gave her the ability to move freely between the shop and the Pferdestall, among other areas.⁹⁰ Moyshe Klaynman, the supervisor of the tailor's shop, confirmed this and told of his own ability to move back and forth between these spaces at will.⁹¹

Tailors like Sukno and Klaynman needed access to the clothes stored in the Pferdestall to gather materials for items they were forced to make for German guards. This exploitation of the goods stolen from those killed in the gas chambers by guards was common at all three Aktion Reinhard camps. Terrible as these practices were, they provided Jewish prisoners with certain opportunities for resistance and survival. Treblinka survivor Eddie Weinstein successfully hid in the Pferdestall for as many as seventeen days with a bullet wound to his arm inflicted by a Ukrainian guard on the way to Treblinka. Despite a conspicuous inability to lift his right arm, Weinstein survived in this place of resistance until he was able to escape from the camp with the help of others.⁹² Weinstein's survival in the Pferdestall came early in the existence of the camp—long before the establishment of the official infirmary at the suggestion of Galewski. This timing indicates that the creation of the infirmary as a location for healing may not have been Galewski's intent—prisoners already had an area to recover in the Pferdestall.

At this place, women prisoners helped remove informants and carried information to the Pferdestall that could have warned of impending visits by the guards or other changes during the daytime hours. While some work on Treblinka already points out that Dr. Lewkowski took part in resistance,

Bronka Sukno's ability to act as a courier between the *Pferdestall* and the prisoner workshops on the other side of the camp has not been recognized.⁹³ Moyshe Klaynman and other survivors further confirm that women working in the tailor's shop could enter the SS barracks to collect or drop off clothing.⁹⁴ The importance of their ability to watch this space and report on the comings and goings of the guards can hardly be overstated, though their actions are rarely mentioned by male survivors and later historians.

Conclusion

By leveraging social networks based upon prewar relationships and personal bonds forged on the work details of Treblinka, Jewish prisoners worked to create places of resistance capable of protecting coconspirators. At the same time, inmates acted against informants to further safeguard those involved in resistance, blunt the power of guards, and retain their precious and fragile control of space. While luck and the timing of uncontrollable events were as important as ever, sources demonstrate that access to space, resistance placemaking, and the ability to call upon networks of trust were the paramount differences that separated small-scale escapes, vague desires to fight, and what became the final revolt.

In chapter 3 I analyze abandoned plans for rebellion and then go on to describe the events of August 2, 1943. Highlighting the differences between previous revolt schemes and the eventual uprising shows what prisoners thought was necessary for success. This picture of prisoner plans outlines the ways in which Jews created further places of resistance and shows how these endeavors, including women's irreplaceable, yet often silenced, participation in the revolt, supported the uprising.

Taking Up Arms

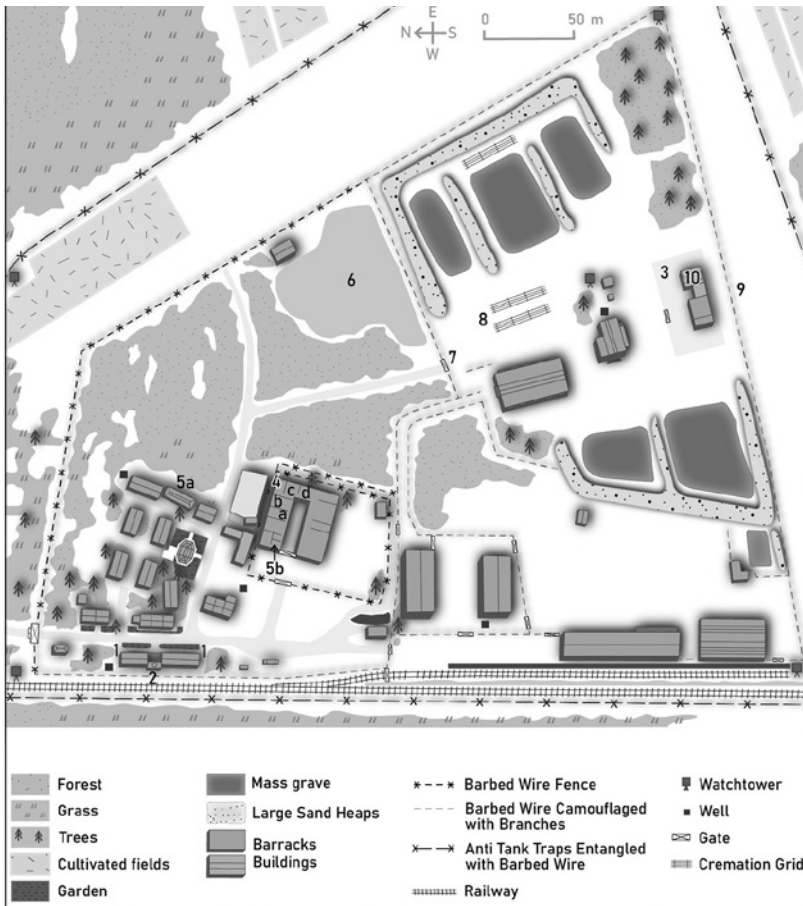
Prior Plans, Resistance Placemaking, and the Revolt

The August 2, 1943, prisoner rising was an armed revolt because Jewish men and women on both sides of the Camp 1 and Camp 2 divide found means to steal weapons from the guards. These acts were the very foundation of Offensive Resistance at Treblinka. In Camp 1, inmates accomplished this by breaking the lock of the SS armory and then creating a key for themselves when they were called upon to fix it. In a series of events that display the full strengths of relationships and the creation of networked access to space, revolt planners moved conspirators near the SS armory, rendered the lock inoperable, and created a spare key—all without attracting the notice of guards. The ways in which they did so were nothing short of genius.

As in other ruses explored previously, Treblinka resistance planners gained access to the area around the SS barracks and armory by maneuvering trusted inmates into the spaces required for revolt planning. In other words, Jewish leaders engaged in what scholars call placemaking with the help of their trusted coconspirators. To secure the armory key, prisoners leaned on the assistance of a group of “cleanup boys” allowed in the area. Though all agree that these young men and children were involved in one way or another, there are several differing survivor accounts of how prisoners managed to acquire the key. Richard Glazar’s memoir contains one of the most detailed examples.

One day little Edek dashed by the door of the munitions depot and shoved a metal fragment into the lock. . . . Only a few of the Court Jews had access to this area: the singer, Salwe, little Edek, the younger cleaning boy Heniek, approximately fifteen years old, the other cleaning boy . . .

When the [Jewish prisoner] locksmiths in the workshop again checked to see why the key would not fit into the lock, one of them hit it with his hand and screamed, the key fell from the workbench to the ground, one, two men bent



KEY:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SS Barracks 2. Armory 3. Camp 2 Barracks 4. "The Ghetto" Barracks Workshops: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leather and Shoemaker Workshop, b. Tailor Workshop, c. Carpenter Workshop, d. Blacksmith and Locksmith | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Weapons Stash Locations for Revolt <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Potato Storage b. Kitchens 6. Lumberyard Area near East Gate 7. Gate between Camp 1 and Camp 2 8. Camp 2 Body Burning Area 9. Fence behind Camp 2 Barracks 10. Brothel |
|--|--|

Chapter 3 Detail Map

over to get it, bumped into each other, felt for the key, and the others stood around and watched. Everyone was shouting and chattering incomprehensibly in Yiddish and by the time one of them stood up, key in hand, exclaiming [*shoy'n*], great! The imprint of the key had already been made [*shon shoy'n*] right under the watchful eyes of the SS.¹

Glazar's memories of this moment show prisoner discussions of resistance as a spatial problem and make clear the importance of relationships. Furthermore, he is far from alone in his recollection of how prisoners acquired this key.

Shalom Kohn also told of how the door was removed from its hinges and brought to prisoner workshops in the ghetto barrack for repairs. Kohn additionally recounted how the locksmiths distracted the guards and took an imprint of the key, though he was not aware that other Jews had jammed the lock in the first place.² Survivor and former cleanup boy Yaakov Miller's account of the key mirrors that of Glazar and Kohn, though, like Kohn, he did not have knowledge of how inmates broke the lock.³ Eugen Turowski, another Camp 1 revolt survivor, stated that he was one of the locksmiths who made this key. Turowski did not complicate the statements of Glazar and Kohn, though he unfortunately added very little explanation in his testimony during American court proceedings against former Ukrainian guard Feodor Fedorenko.⁴

The detailed and mutually supportive nature of Glazar's and Kohn's accounts of how prisoners procured the armory key sets them apart from other survivor memories. Though enormously helpful in reconstructing many aspects of Treblinka resistance, Samuel Willenberg, Oskar Strawczynski, and Samuel Goldberg differed on how inmates gained access to the armory. Strawczynski and Willenberg both stated that the key was created as prisoner builders first constructed the armory. Goldberg, meanwhile, did not explain when or under what circumstances the key was made, but he did mention the work of the two Jewish locksmiths.⁵

Conducting research in survivor testimony almost always requires that historians weigh contradictory statements and make judgments in the absence of conclusive evidence. Memoirs, meanwhile, are documents of a personal and necessarily limited nature. They focus on the life of their writer and display the issues inherent to all memory sources. Oral history recordings conducted well after the events in question are limited by the frailty of human memory, the effects of time, and the similarly limited perspective of the interviewees. All these issues are compounded by the cellular nature of the Treblinka revolt conspiracy. By its very design, no one—other than the select few members of the Organizing Committee—was supposed to know everything.

I work through these issues by testing the memories of survivors against the geography of their lives and by comparing multiple witness statements. In the case of the armory key, the detailed and corroborating accounts of Glazar, Kohn, and Miller stand out. Goldberg's account, while in some ways unique, does also detail the work of the two prisoner locksmiths. Regardless of the discrepancies of some survivor sources, they are unanimous on the existence of a key and its singular importance. Beyond this, weighing the accounts of Glazar, Kohn, and Miller against their access to space, what we know about their social networks, and the strength of their recollections overall provides strong reason to accept their version of events.

In the sections to follow, these spatial and social analytical tools underpin descriptions of the lead-up to and the day of the August 2, 1943, revolt. The previous chapters span Richard Glazar's first three phases of camp chronology and three categories of Jewish resistance to Nazi intentions. This chapter's discussion of the planning and execution of Offensive Resistance bridges the time periods of Phases Three and Four. I also explain what caused Richard Glazar to recognize that a fourth phase of camp life had begun. Just as he neither placed descriptive names on his time periods nor provided any direct explanation of why Phase Three began when it did, Glazar did not pointedly state a reason for the beginning of the fourth and final era of camp operations. His recollections correctly pinpoint shifts between periods in the camp timeline that he could both perceive in real time and preserve in his later memory, but he stopped short of indicating to his reader or interviewers how he could tell that things had changed. This chapter addresses the last division in Treblinka's timeline, as previous chapters explained the changes to the camp environment that caused Glazar to recognize a third phase of camp operations.

Glazar's gut feeling of a change in camp life, as before, is supported by other testimonies and written sources. This chapter explains how prisoner leaders on the Organizing Committee turned the relationships that Glazar found so pivotally important into spatial access and coordinated action. Treblinka's Jewish inmates accomplished this by harnessing networks first used in defensive survival efforts to create offensively minded places of resistance. Bringing all of this together in secrecy, of course, was no small task.

Plans for Offensive Resistance came and went during Phase Three with various challenges, tragedies, and unforeseen circumstances forestalling the revolt. Institutional knowledge, weapons, resistance placemaking, and—of highest importance—trusted individuals, all had to come into concert. Glazar's Phase Four, again without his direct realization of the fact, began when

these factors came together under leadership capable of brokering the connections and creating the places of access necessary for the task.

Survivor testimonies that attempt to date the start of planning for a full-scale revolt vary greatly. One says that planning dates back to November 1942, while another states that prisoners only began this process in April 1943.⁶ Understood in the light of compartmented information, this explains why William Schneiderman—a man who was present for the entire period the camp operated—said that he had only a vague knowledge that planning was taking place, but knew nothing of the revolt in advance and simply escaped out of luck on the day itself.⁷ Revolt planning of any serious or realistic type cannot predate January 1943. Before the move to the single “ghetto” barracks, prisoners could not communicate, and they lacked access to the physical tools required for revolt planning and execution. Phases One and Two of Glazar’s periodization of camp life also lacked the stability of inmate tenure and the established trust among fellow prisoners that enabled later planning. In addition to these issues, individuals and small groups still managed to escape quite regularly during this period, drawing off possible resistance members in the process.

Beginning in January of 1943, Phase Three’s relatively stable inmate population, lack of escape potential, and newfound ability to communicate provided a realistic footing for thoughts of an uprising. From this point on, the prisoners of Treblinka hatched schemes to destroy the German SS and their Ukrainian helpers that showed logical promise as opposed to merely emotional desire. I do not mean to deny that some prisoners may have wanted to rise up from as early as November of 1942. However, it is hard to view these early ideas as examples of actual plotting with a reasonable level of networking or geographic access for success.

I next analyze three designs for revolt or resistance crafted in the run of Phase Three that predate the final form of the Organizing Committee and the plan for revolt. Each of these schemes was a source of frustration, motivation, and learning for the plotters of Treblinka resistance. Exploring these plans reveals what they lacked in comparison to the final design and contextualizes the choices, places, and tactics employed in the ultimate revolt.

Phase Three Revolt Plans and Committee Members

Glazar devotes a chapter of his book to an early strategy of action prisoners called “Plan H.”⁸ Under consideration by planners in February and March 1943, this scheme was the first full-scale effort in a series of failures prior to August 2. Looking at the structures and people involved in this plan and two successor attempts allows us to compare them to the final revolt and reveals what elements of the ultimate plan were missing. Plan H dates from Phase

Three after the barracks move and included at its highest level Lagerältester Galewski, the Slovak Jewish former military officer Zelomir “Zelo” (formerly Zoltan) Bloch, the Kapo Kurland of the Lazarett, and the Warsaw-born agronomist engineer Sudowicz.⁹

Galewski of Warsaw contributed connections to this origin network as well as extensive institutional knowledge and relationships to other groups and work details acquired through his position as Lagerältester. Bloch’s inclusion granted this version of the Organizing Committee deep and trusted connections to the Czechoslovak prisoners that included members of the diverse *Tarnungskommando* with its extensive geographic access, the *Goldjuden* with their possession of valuables, and his own valuable military leadership experience. On the day of the revolt, each prisoner was to have a stash of cash or precious metals on hand for the purposes of buying food and shelter once on the run. Clothing sorters could illicitly gather some items in the process of their work, but in Camp 1, the large sums required for so many prospective escapees could come only from the *Goldjuden*. Finally, thanks to Engineer Sudowicz’s access to geography and personal connections as one of the *Hofjuden*, the committee had the ability to traverse important spaces and connections to pivotal networks that the final revolt plan would feature.

Rounding out this group, Kapo Kurland’s position on the Organizing Committee requires a different kind of explanation than other members. Kurland’s occupation as Kapo of the three-man Lazarett detail, which possessed access to only that one location, cannot explain his position on the Organizing Committee. His work assignment in Treblinka alone, hellish as it was, provided no benefit to resistance planning. Survivors, however, uniformly laud his strength as a person and the fundamental respect for him shared by all.¹⁰ His position as a leader of resistance must be owed to these factors. Kurland lent a moral gravitas to the committee that no other prisoner could provide. Precisely because all inmates understood the horrors of the job he and his assistants performed and the stoic way in which they carried it out, he became a sort of thought leader or emotional lightning rod at Treblinka. Kurland’s presence was a human representation of the reasons to rebel. Others on the various iterations of the committee brought tools and resources to the table—Kurland embodied the motivation.

Even with all of its numerable strengths, however, the promise of Plan H collapsed when Bloch and another conspirator named Adasch, or Adolf, were sent to Camp 2 as punishment and a typhus epidemic simultaneously disabled or killed many individuals the committee had counted on for support.¹¹ Plotters also worried that Bloch’s banishment to Camp 2 had more to do with the SS discovering their plans through informants than the supposed offense for

which he and Adasch were punished.¹² Concern that the secrecy of the plan was compromised effectively destroyed the effort after their transfer. However, Bloch and his companion's loss from Camp 1 turned out to have fortuitous consequences that neither the SS guards nor the prisoners of either side of Treblinka had planned or imagined. Survivors from Camp 2 explain that his arrival there helped weld that group into a fighting force and provided detailed knowledge of Camp 1 planning not otherwise possible to communicate across the divide.¹³

Bloch's presence brought the full planning knowledge of the Organizing Committee up to that point over to resistance-minded prisoners in what Rajzman called Groups VI and VII of Camp 2.¹⁴ Jankiel Wiernik's testimony recounts how drastically Bloch's arrival changed the resistance-planning picture on that side of Treblinka. After a short period of time acclimating to his new surroundings and taking a measure of whom he could trust in his new environment, Bloch opened up about the Camp 1 conspiracy and participated in the creation of a "committee" at the head of a "secret organization" in Camp 2, mirroring the group on the opposite side of the fence.¹⁵ This new group consisted of Bloch, Wiernik, and at times as many as three others.¹⁶

Prior to Bloch's arrival in Camp 2, prisoners succeeded in using various ruses to communicate small pieces of information between the two sides of Treblinka. First and foremost, they took advantage of the language barrier between the mostly Ukrainian Trawniki guards and themselves by speaking and singing messages to each other in Yiddish as they passed on the way to work locations. They additionally used Yiddish to make it seem as if they were shouting at prisoners from their own camp, when in reality their intended audience was nearby members of the opposite camp workforce.¹⁷ Taking into account the great similarities between spoken Yiddish and German, these tactics could not be used with total confidence around German SS guards, who might be able to understand much of what the prisoners were saying. The similarities of the two languages and the threat of German ears severely limited the utility of these communication strategies. Long-winded explanations of how to form a cellular resistance organization or what the main body of plotters in Camp 1 had in mind was also out of reach for these strategies.

Bloch's arrival represents a drastic change to the communication picture as a result of the wealth of recent planning information he carried with him. As a prior member of the highest level of the Camp 1 Organizing Committee, he knew details of the revolt plan that were impossible to communicate in short winks and nods to passing Camp 2 prisoners under guard. The Yiddish communication strategies and short sentences of information passed in song could not convey the depth of information Bloch possessed. After the fortuitous accident of Bloch's arrival in Camp 2, future versions of resistance planning in

Camp 1 could count on prisoners on the other side of the berm understanding the basic realities of their intentions. Wiernik's position as a construction foreman allowed him regular access to Camp 1, where he could at least communicate that Bloch was alive and that a sister conspiracy was on track in Camp 2. Furthermore, Glazar relates that he and others received word of Bloch's survival in Camp 2 on two occasions, with Yiddish used as code to confirm that all was ready in Camp 2 as late as July 31.¹⁸

The Jewish camp physician Dr. Julian Chorazycki led the first version of the Organizing Committee that could count on support from Camp 2 and showed serious potential for success. His death on April 19, 1943, however, dashed hopes for this short-lived plan. Chorazycki swallowed poison to protect other members of the conspiracy when deputy commandant Kurt Franz discovered him in possession of cash intended for use in bribing guards and buying shelter and supplies on the run.¹⁹ After the loss of Bloch and Chorazycki, Galewski might have stepped up to lead the effort, as he eventually did, but he was struck down by typhus at the same time. As Galewski languished in the prisoner infirmary that he had earlier secured permission from the SS to create, Kapo Rakowski of the Red Commandos took over as Lagerältester.²⁰

Rakowski's brief turn as Lagerältester paralyzed full-scale revolt planning. Many recent members of the Organizing Committee were dead, battling illness, or permanently lost to Camp 2, while Rakowski alone lacked the personal network necessary to carry out a revolt. Additionally, as an individual new to the position and possibly unaware of its powers, Rakowski seems to have been incapable of or unwilling to attempt to use his status as Lagerältester to create places of resistance as Galewski eventually would. The final plan leveraged the powers of Treblinka's highest-ranking Jewish prisoner-leader to move individuals and groups to key locations for the moment of the uprising. Rakowski's long-term position in the Red Commandos did not prepare him to understand the powers of his position as camp elder, nor did it grant him a wide range of relationships with individuals that he could call upon as Galewski later did. Survivors Tanhum Grinberg and Oskar Strawczynski agree that Rakowski focused instead on a smaller-scale group escape in which he hoped to free himself and as many as fifteen others.²¹

Rakowski's time as Lagerältester came to a tragic end when the SS discovered cash or gold that he planned to use to bribe Ukrainian guards in his area of the Kapo barracks room.²² As in the case of Dr. Chorazycki's discovery in possession of cash, the revelation cost Rakowski his life. He was taken directly to the Lazarett and shot.²³ With Bloch, Dr. Chorazycki, and now Rakowski all gone, Galewski and Kurland were the only prisoners remaining in Camp 1 consistently named as revolt planners. The SS reinstated Galewski as Lagerältester

in May or early June 1943, coinciding with the beginning of Glazar's Phase Four.²⁴ Having persevered as camp elder from the very earliest days of Phase One, he knew full well how to leverage this position after his return. From that point on, Galewski and the final version of the Organizing Committee moved forward with what would become the revolt launched on August 2, 1943. Though Glazar does not spell this out, the return of Galewski moved Treblinka into its fourth and final phase.

The Phase Four Committee and the Treblinka Revolt

The Organizing Committee that coalesced in June of 1943 consisted of Lagerältester Galewski, Kapo Kurland, Kapo Moniek of the Hofjuden, Rudi Masarek of the Czech group, and possibly a second Hofjude, engineer Sudowicz of Czestochowa.²⁵ Sudowicz's participation in the revolt is not in doubt, though not all accounts place his name on the final list of top-level revolt planners.²⁶ It may be that Kapo Moniek replaced Sudowicz as the primary representative of the Hofjuden at the highest level of organization while he remained in position as an integral part of the fighting units and as the representative of his home city network. These revolt planners would take advantage of their strong leadership positions and connections to both individuals and groups in order to create important places of resistance with trusted, well-connected prisoners in place to exploit them.

This committee found power in Galewski's position as Lagerältester, Kurland's continued role as a motivating force, and Masarek's military experience as well as his possession of deep connections to the Czech prisoners that essentially replicated the previous role of Zelo Bloch, as well as Sudowicz's and Moniek's connections to the Hofjuden. Home origin networks were represented through Galewski's ties to Warsaw, Sudowicz's position as a member of the Czestochowa group, and Masarek's representation of the Czechs. Finally, Kapo Moniek's inclusion heightened the representation of the Hofjuden. Jankiel Wiernik provided the conspiracy with an avenue of communication to Camp 2 prisoners, now organized under their own committee that continued to include Bloch as a leader with military experience on that side of the fence.²⁷ The ideas advanced by this group were nearly identical to Plan H; however, they benefited from a more realistic expectation of organized participation by prisoners on both sides of Treblinka with Bloch then in Camp 2.

Describing the final plan of the revolt now scheduled for August 2, 1943, Samuel Willenberg stated:

Now the plan was simple: on a day when a maximum number of Germans were on furlough and a minimum number of Ukrainians were in the camp, the servant

boys would unlock and empty the arsenal. They would move the weapons to predetermined locations in the camp, the first being the potato kommando [*sic*] area opposite the Germans' huts and the [Camp 1] structures. . . . The boys would move the weapons and distribute them to prisoners throughout the area.²⁸

Willenberg's sketch of the revolt plan is mostly correct, though it lacks a few pertinent details. He lists several places from which stolen arms were to be distributed, but he omits the Camp 1 kitchen. Other survivors stated that they were to pick up a weapon from the Jewish women who worked there.²⁹ While Willenberg may have been unaware of the kitchen as a place for arms distribution, he was not alone in leaving out the actions of women prisoners at Treblinka.

At the kitchen and other sites of resistance placemaking, planners leveraged the participation of prisoners the German SS and Ukrainian guards did not view as significant threats to security. This included both the so-called cleanup boys who had access to SS living areas and secured the armory key, as well as Jewish women held in both Camp 1 and Camp 2. In the main area of Treblinka, the gender biases of guards offered women the ability to access a greater area of the camp and even to enter the SS barracks itself.³⁰ They were therefore in a strong position to keep tabs on the guards and could offer a safe place to store weapons at the kitchen, since it was less likely the guards would launch a search of their work area.³¹

Prisoners knew that German SS guard furlough rotations took place on Mondays.³² Beyond individual prisoners noting the comings and goings of their own personal work detail supervisor, this piece of intelligence required the institutional knowledge of the Hofjuden, women who cleaned the SS barracks and did their laundry, and members of the tailor's detail in order to choose the correct day for maximum effect.³³ A further reason to choose a Monday for the revolt was the fact that it was SS laundry day, giving women prisoners from the camp laundry facilities a reason to be in the SS barracks area.³⁴ Galewski's regular interactions with the SS as Lagerältester also acquainted him with guard leave schedules. Moniek and Sudowicz could add to this intelligence given their positions as Hofjuden. In addition to the Germans absent on leave, guard manpower was further eroded on August 2 by the decision of SS deputy commandant Kurt Franz to take a party of roughly twenty Ukrainians to the nearby River Bug for a swim.³⁵ While this drawdown in the number of guards was certainly fortunate, no survivor notes whether they knew in advance that this was to occur. We should assume that they did, given the fact that these conditions took away such a significant number of the approximately 140 total guards.³⁶

The east gate adjacent to the lumberyard and the daily working area of the Tarnungskommando, with Glazar, Willenberg, and Shalom Kohn as members, was one of the best possible escape routes. Only one guard tower directly covered this gate, which faced open territory and an adjacent forested area that offered cover from pursuing guards. The east gate and lumberyard location, given networked access through numerous members of the conspiracy present there on the day of the uprising, became a place of resistance that was especially important for escape on the day of the revolt. Camp 2 inmates, now integral to the conspiracy, could also tie down the guards from their area during the flight of Camp 1 prisoners to the east.

A simultaneous uprising in Camp 2 not only prevented reinforcement of this gate but also provided another primary exit route. The gate separating Camps 1 and 2 was open on the day of the revolt, as was normal in the course of the average workday.³⁷ Some prisoners from Camp 1, particularly the Hofjuden present around the barracks as the fighting began, took a southerly escape route through this gate, across the Death Camp section of Treblinka, and over the fence behind the Camp 2 barracks. Use of this route by Camp 1 prisoners further highlights how important it was to include Camp 2 inmates in the revolt plan.³⁸

Treblinka's normal work routines in Camp 2 during the summer of 1943 confronted prisoners in this area with a problem that had to be solved before they could possibly take part in a revolt at the scheduled time. In the hottest months of the year, German guards split the Camp 2 workday into morning and evening portions, with the prisoners locked in their barracks enclosure during the hours of peak daytime heat. This, of course, was not due to any kindness on the part of guards. Work did not proceed at midday in Camp 2 because the task being carried out at this time was the exhumation and incineration of bodies buried at the camp over the previous eleven months. The choking inferno of these fires along with the heat and humidity of a Polish summer was too much even for the Nazis. This meant, however, that prisoner leaders had to find a way to get out of the barracks and move conspirators to important places throughout Camp 2.

Survivor Eliahu Rosenberg wrote that Camp 2 prisoners overcame this obstacle by offering guards a detail of thirty volunteers who would continue the work of burning bodies through the midday heat in exchange for doubled lunch rations.³⁹ Historian Yitzhak Arad states that resistance planners in Camp 2 also "initiate[d] additional jobs in order to create as large a group as possible outside the barracks that afternoon" to be ready at the appointed time.⁴⁰ Always looking out for their own priorities, guards accepted the exchange of food for an additional work shift and did not question the supposed need for other transfers of inmates.⁴¹ What they failed to realize, however, was that the

thirty volunteers were all members of the resistance conspiracy and that the point of this offer and other worker transfers was to position coconspirators for the uprising or, in other words, to create places of resistance in Camp 2.

Returning to Camp 1, the next major obstacle that had to be overcome on the day of the revolt was the matter of access to the SS armory. Already possessing a key to the structure, planners created a means to get prisoners into this place with the help of the cleanup boys allowed in this area. These young men snuck into the armory, removed weapons, and distributed them throughout the camp, creating the very possibility of armed resistance as opposed to mass escape or an almost certainly suicidal unarmed bullrush of the guards. This small, trusted group was, in effect, the lynchpin of the entire revolt in Camp 1.⁴² These “boys,” as they are always called, were all twenty-two or younger.⁴³ They had varying home origins, but all owed their positions on the cleaning detail to Lagerältester Galewski. Seventeen-year-old Jerzyk of Warsaw not only personally entered the armory and removed weapons and grenades; he is also a strong individual example of network survival.

When Jerzyk’s transport arrived at Treblinka, a member of the Red Commandos that he knew from life in the Warsaw Ghetto pulled him aside. The unfortunately unnamed Red who spotted Jerzyk asked Galewski to save him from selection through his influence with the SS. Galewski did so and then placed Jerzyk under a Czech foreman in the sorting groups, who in turn asked Willenberg to train and watch out for him.⁴⁴ Though little of this portion of camp history is directly dated in testimonies, it must have taken place before February 1943, as Willenberg moved from sorting to the Tarnungskommando at or around this time.⁴⁵ Sometime between February and the August revolt, Jerzyk was reassigned as a cleanup boy around the SS barracks.

Not only did Galewski choose the members of this cleanup detail; he also suggested its creation to the SS in the first place.⁴⁶ In addition to Jerzyk, Galewski also assigned the previously mentioned Alfred Boehm to the cleaning detail.⁴⁷ Boehm knew Willenberg in Czestochowa and saved him from selection when he arrived at Treblinka. Boehm’s assignment when Willenberg arrived was divided between working in the arrival area and as Galewski’s personal “servant.”⁴⁸ Boehm was a trusted confidant of Willenberg and Galewski, and his proximity to both men explains how they came to know each other so well despite different home origins and different duties within the camp. Before the barracks move, Boehm’s sleeping quarters were behind a curtain partition, with Galewski in the arrivals area barracks where the three men would visit in the evenings.⁴⁹

When the prisoners moved to the new barracks, Galewski made Boehm one of the original cleanup boys and gave him the job of pushing a baby

stroller used to transport trash away from the SS and Ukrainian living areas. With access to the entirety of Camp 1, Boehm could hide items stolen from the SS in his stroller under the trash he collected in the course of his cleaning duties.⁵⁰ On the day of the revolt, Boehm distributed the arms Jerzyk had taken out of the armory in precisely this manner.⁵¹ The conspirators' access to these areas and the existence of the cleaning detail created a place of resistance around the armory itself. The Organizing Committee successfully included this location in its routine areas of access by creating a work crew with a need to be present there in the performance of its duties. As in other instances of resistance placemaking, the Lagerältester's participation in the conspiracy made these assignments possible and put them above suspicion from the guards.

The ultimate revolt plan also took advantage of Galewski's ability to assign prisoners with military experience to areas and work details where they could best help with the revolt. Survivors testimonies, including a few from individuals who had no military experience, mention the importance planners placed on veterans and their abilities to lead tactically or handle weapons.⁵² Many revolt leaders, from Galewski himself to Zelo Bloch, Rudi Masarek, and Dr. Julian Chorazycki, also had or may have had military backgrounds.⁵³ In at least the final plan of the revolt, planners included military veterans in the various fighting groups and assigned them to use the limited number of stolen weapons available. Though sources have not emerged to confirm whether earlier versions of the revolt conspiracy also included the employment of veterans in this way, it is compelling that at least fourteen men with military backgrounds survived the revolt. Though not a large number, it still represents just over 20 percent of known revolt survivors.⁵⁴

When things came together in the final revolt plan, conspirators had complete communication across Treblinka, full organization of prisoners in both Camp 1 and Camp 2, access to necessary places through their trusted networks, and prisoner-veterans with weapons skills ready to take up the arms stolen by their comrades. The planned date of the revolt took advantage of construction work going on in front of the armory to create access to that location.⁵⁵ This building work also brought Wiernik from Camp 2, granting the conspiracy its avenue of communication to resistance plotters in that section of Treblinka.⁵⁶ Not only did the activity of men working around the structure create a helpful distraction for the removal of arms by the cleaning boys; it also allowed Galewski to place more individuals near the armory at the right moment. Morton Mattel, a person Galewski had known in Warsaw and had personally saved from selection, worked as a cement mixer at the armory

on the day of the revolt. Mattel, in his work capacity assigned by Galewski, was able to use his horse-drawn construction cart to participate in arms distribution after the boys got the weapons out of the armory.⁵⁷ The use of distractions and changes to the routine caused by construction as a mask for resistance access to space mirrors Paul Jaskot's discoveries in his research on escapes at Auschwitz.⁵⁸

The timing of the revolt on Monday, August 2, brings us back to the first page of this book. The uprising was originally scheduled to take place at 4:30 p.m. before some emotional decision-making. The cleaning boys removed arms and began distributing them at 2:00 p.m., with work crews instructed to collect them shortly before four.⁵⁹ Taking a weapon from one of the drop points used by the cleaning boys and Mattel required conspirators to use the password "death" and receive the response "life."⁶⁰ Wiernik was told during his work on construction materials in the lumberyard in the morning that the revolt was to occur that day. He in turn relayed this information to others in Camp 2 during their lunch period around their barracks.⁶¹ With no transports arriving, the Reds, the Blues, and the Tarnungskommando were all working on materials for construction projects in the lumberyard located on the east side of Camp 1.⁶² The placement of additional work details near the east gate was another intentional boon to possibilities for escape. Galewski helped create a place of resistance in the lumberyard near the east gate by securing the permission of the SS to send the Red and Blue Commandos there to help the Tarnungskommando prepare construction materials.⁶³

Through the involvement of multiple prisoner networks or details, the lumber storage area became a well-connected place of resistance and a prime avenue of survival. Access to this place for some was a result of the network connectivity of the Tarnungskommando that was normally present in the lumberyard. Planners strengthened this place of resistance by moving additional prisoner conspirators with the help of Galewski's authority. The Lagerältester also moved Samuel Rajzman to this place of resistance under the same pretense as he did for the Red and Blue Commandos. A sizable number of those who survived either were members of these details or took the east gate escape route when fighting broke out and thus owed their lives to this creation of spatial access by Galewski and the committee. As with other placements of revolt participants, construction yet again provided prisoners with the opportunity to be in a part of the camp less traveled by guards and far closer to a favorable route of escape than they otherwise would have been.

Without construction, the Tarnungskommando would have been in the lumberyard that day, but the Reds and Blues and Rajzman would have had no

reason to be there. Placement of these work details near the gate—and the personal intervention of Galewski to move his friend Rajzman to the same area on the day of the revolt—shows that this was an intentional creation of spatial access for the revolt that provided a ready and convenient avenue of escape. Rajzman stated:

This was the only time since my arrival in Treblinka that I was transferred from my regular, daily place of work. I had always worked in one specific place, but that day I was supposed to be with my group at one of the watchtowers that surrounded the camp. I didn't know where I would be stationed. Only two or three people knew the exact arrangements. So Galewski went to "Kiewe" [Küttner] and told him that he didn't need me for polishing eyeglasses, so I should go with a group of branch cutters [the Tarnungskommando]. . . . At one o'clock I was there, and that was the place where I was supposed to be stationed for the uprising. They brought me two hand grenades and two or three revolvers, that was all.⁶⁴

Rajzman's account stresses the compartmentalization of revolt planning information right up to the day of the uprising and the great influence Galewski had on the outcome of events. Rajzman, like Jerzyk, Mattel, and others, survived arrival at Treblinka, gained placement in a fighting group, and was positioned in an advantageous place of resistance through the efforts of the Organizing Committee, made possible by connections to prisoner networks.

Despite all that the Organizing Committee did to prepare for that day, one questionable choice and circumstances beyond their control fractured the plan. Glazar states that the leaders of the revolt (he spoke in the plural here) put out word around two in the afternoon that no prisoner would be allowed to die from then on. If any inmate was in danger, the revolt would be triggered immediately.⁶⁵ When SS guard Kurt "Kiewe" Küttner caught two of the conspirators in possession of valuables just prior to four o'clock, prisoners began the fight immediately. An SS-appointed barracks elder and well-known informant named Kuba tipped off Küttner.⁶⁶ The cellular design of the revolt Organizing Committee meant that these two unnamed men could not have given up the entire plot, but the emotional decision not to allow the killing of any more prisoners before the revolt was already common knowledge. Even though this incident took place close to the intended time of the uprising, the early start still meant that not all prisoners had collected their arms or made it to their assigned positions when the fighting began. The outcome of this snap decision was chaos.

The Organizing Committee's hopes for unity of action and their plan for the uprising were the first casualties of the fighting. When the shot rang out, prisoners managed to set only the wooden structures of Camp 1 on fire as they scattered in every direction.⁶⁷ Setting the camp alight was made possible by the help of a prisoner normally employed to dispense disinfectant from a backpack-mounted sprayer. On the day of the revolt, survivor Samuel Rajzman stated, inmates switched out the normal contents of his backpack with gasoline provided by another prisoner who worked at the garage.⁶⁸ Tragically, the brick-built gas chambers themselves were not destroyed.

While some Ukrainian guards may have died in the fighting, others fled, laid low, or even surrendered rather than actively engage in combat with the prisoners.⁶⁹ The result was that most, if not all, of them lived out the day. In Camp 2, one or two Ukrainian guards were either killed or put out of action by Zelo Bloch and others at the well. Once Bloch heard the shot from Camp 1, he led a small group in an attack on these guards, disarmed them, and threw them down the well.⁷⁰ Whether these guards survived is unknown. Bloch himself then moved the fence behind the Camp 2 barracks and covered the escape of his comrades with a rifle taken from the guards at the well. It is likely that by the time Bloch arrived at the fence to cover the escape, other Camp 2 prisoners had already made a hole in the fence with butchering tools taken from the kitchen area.⁷¹ Bloch did not survive the day, but Sonia Lewkowicz witnessed him kneeling by the fence firing at the guards as she hastily made her way out of the camp.⁷²

The one or two rifles taken by Bloch and his group at the well were not the only arms available to Jews in Camp 2. Much like the Camp 1 cleanup boys, a group of women in Camp 2 became the indispensable lynchpins of armed resistance on the Death Camp side of Treblinka, though their actions have not been recognized by historians—or many survivors. The testimonies of survivors Elisha Rosenberg and Szlomo Helman reveal the existence of a site of coerced sexual exploitation, or what is often termed a camp brothel, in this section of Treblinka.⁷³ While Rosenberg's statement details the setup of this place and describes how Ukrainian guards as well as some senior Kapos exploited the women held in this place, Helman revealed how these unnamed women provided the lion's share of arms available to Camp 2 prisoners on the day of the revolt.

Recalling that day, Helman stated, "Our girls, meanwhile, distracted the Ukrainians who had put down their rifles back in the waiting room" in the Camp 2 prisoner barracks building.⁷⁴ He further recounted how Moyshe Shnyder ran into this waiting room and attempted to flee with eight rifles

these women secured. Shnayder was killed, though the number of Camp 2 testimonies that speak of prisoners firing on the guards seems to indicate that these weapons made it into the hands of others. This “waiting room” does not appear on any existing map of Treblinka. However, a women’s barracks room, Kapos’ rooms, and a doctor’s room adjoin in the same section of the Camp 2 barracks. Although all Helman mentioned was a “waiting room,” there is no other conceivable purpose or reason for a waiting room that guards would use inside Treblinka—especially in the extermination area.

Szlomo Helman also recounts how Zelo Bloch and his group ambushed Ukrainian guards near the well. Without the other sections of Helman’s statement, however, this is the only previously explored source of weapons (other than knives) for the revolt in Camp 2. Helman and Rosenberg’s combined revelation of a brothel highlights the pivotal participation of women in the revolt. The wording used by Helman is also important. He, a member of the resistance conspiracy, calls the women forced to endure the Camp 2 brothel “our girls.” Though this could mean “our” as fellow Jews or fellow prisoners, the need for coordination between these women and, at the very least, Moyshe Shnayder indicates that it is more likely these women were part of the conspiracy, included in “our” as coconspirators, individuals fully aware of their role and what was to happen on the day of the revolt.

These eight additional rifles made it possible to pin down the guards and enabled the escape of prisoners from Camp 2, as well as those who fled in this direction from Camp 1. Despite the number of weapons in the hands of prisoners from both sides of the fence and the existence of sources to the contrary, not one member of the German SS died in the frenzied confusion of that afternoon.⁷⁵ Only Kurt “Kiewe” Küttner, the target of that first fateful shot, was wounded during the fighting. The prisoners of Camp 2 fled through the south fence behind their barracks under the protection of Bloch and others, continuing in that direction through the forest.⁷⁶ Many Camp 1 prisoners near the ghetto barracks at the moment of the uprising followed this same path.⁷⁷ Members of the Tarnungskommando and the other groups the Organizing Committee managed to place in the vicinity of the east gate escaped by that route.⁷⁸ Willenberg recalled that the failure to silence the guard tower on that side of the camp led to death by machine gun fire for many fleeing prisoners as they attempted to climb over the barbed wire entangled tank traps of Treblinka’s outer perimeter.⁷⁹

Sadly, the Organizing Committee itself had no survivors that day. According to survivor Leon Perelstein, Galewski made it to a concealed position in the woods outside the camp, only to lose hope and commit suicide rather than fall back into German hands as he feared.⁸⁰ Galewski’s reasons for taking his

own life, if this source is correct, are impossible to determine with certainty.⁸¹ He might have preferred death to renewed captivity inside Treblinka, but he also could have been concerned that he knew too much about prisoner plans after escape to be taken alive. Whatever the reasoning for his decision, he lost his life—as did so many others—to the terrible force of evil that was Treblinka.

Conclusion

At the moment the first shot rang out, Jews set Treblinka alight and made for the fences. Fully prepared or not, none wasted any time in making good on their plans for escape. In Camp 1, those positioned around the east gate, mainly the Tarnungskommando, the Reds, and the Blues, as well as others placed there by Galewski, took this path out of the camp. In Camp 2, the shot triggered Bloch's attack on the guards near the well as others grabbed rifles taken with the help of women at the brothel and worked to pin down the guards. All of this took place while still more prisoners cut the fence behind the barracks to the south in order to prepare a way out to the south. With the gate between both camps open as it was during the workday, many Camp 1 prisoners fled through Camp 2 and took this southerly escape path. Bronka Sukno and Sonia Lewkowicz, both prisoners in Camp 2, escaped in this direction. Though it appears others did get out as well, they are the only two confirmed women survivors of the Treblinka revolt.

While estimates vary, as many as three hundred to four hundred Jews may have fled the camp during the uprising.⁸² Former commandant Franz Stangl told Gitta Sereny that only about 105 Jews out of around 840 in the camp remained alive inside after the fighting.⁸³ The revolt made it possible for many prisoners to see the world beyond the fences even though a great many of those people did not live out the day or long make good their escape.

It is impossible to know how many more prisoners might have survived if the informant Kuba had been dealt with as others were or if prisoners had not made the emotional decision to start the revolt early. Galewski and the other fallen planners and fighters of the revolt gave their lives in an organized act of violent Offensive Resistance that enabled the flight of others, provided a measure of eventual justice for the perpetrators, and led to the preservation of historical facts the Nazis wished to erase. What's more, they and all other participants in resistance at Treblinka took control over the course and even the ending of their own lives. Whether or not they lived out the day, we should recognize their efforts and view even death in resistance as a successful act of agency and control over one's own fate—one among many things the Holocaust attempted to take from all Jews.

Despite the importance of resistance acts by women in both Camp 1 and Camp 2 revealed here, very little attention has been paid to their efforts in existing studies of Treblinka. Men who survived the camp were also often reluctant to discuss the lives of women or their roles in the uprising and earlier preparations. The next chapter takes an unsparing look at these issues, including further exploration of sex and sexual violence at Treblinka and the brothel that became an indispensable, yet barely remembered, place of resistance in Camp 2.

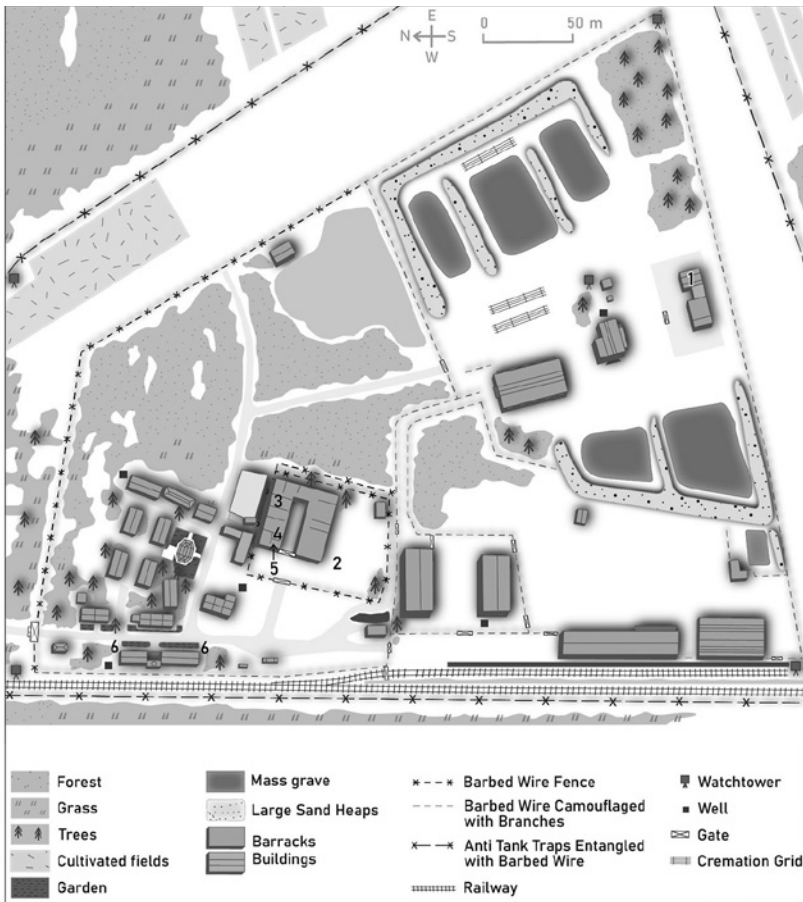
“There Was No Women”

Reevaluating the History and Memory of Women at Treblinka

Years after the fact, Treblinka survivor Yaakov Eisner told of a conversation with a woman who also survived Treblinka but wanted desperately to find a way out of bearing witness against the former guards. Recalling this moment for his oral history interviewer, Eisner said the woman feared she would have to admit she “lived with a German” if she appeared in court.¹ She was by then married with children and feared that if her testimony revealed all she had endured in open court, her husband would leave her and take the children. Eisner wrapped up his story by telling how he helped this unnamed woman get letters from two doctors stating that she was too ill to travel for the trial.

Jewish women who survived Treblinka may have avoided telling their stories for a variety of reasons, though Eisner’s interview highlights one that is particular to their wartime and postwar experiences as women. Women who survived the Holocaust not only endured the deep and lasting traumas of those events as did their male peers but also faced the danger of latter-day judgment on the part of loved ones and society at large. Of course, men too were victims of the sort of sexual violence and coerced relationships that could dissuade women from bearing witness, though this was neither routinely assumed of them nor a frequent basis of character assassination in postwar life. This is also not to say that men were always willing voices of this history. Many men never came forward or did so only briefly near the end of their lives. For men, however, the choice to speak out had more to do with the emotional weight of reliving their own traumas than with the possible assumptions of their audiences.

This chapter identifies and analyzes the reasons we have long known so little about women’s actions in resistance at Treblinka. Earlier chapters have already revealed a wide range of women’s coordinated resistance activities, from their successful group protest at the attempted removal of their foreman

**KEY:**

1. Brothel
2. Camp 1 Barracks
3. Tailor Shop

4. Laundry
5. Kitchen
6. SS Barracks

Chapter 4 Detail Map

in the laundry, to their pivotal work as couriers and observers, the revelation of a Camp 2 brothel, and their provision and distribution of weapons for the revolt. Also mentioned previously is the often unhelpful silence of male survivors when it comes to the lives of women at Treblinka. To understand the lives of Jewish women at Treblinka, their roles in resistance, and their later disap-

pearance from the record, this chapter also focuses on how men discuss women in their early written sources.

Looking again at the Camp 1 kitchen demonstrates the roles of women prisoners in resistance and how their actions were and were not remembered in male survivor oral histories. Following this, a renewed focus on the Camp 2 brothel provides an opportunity to confront the ways in which historians themselves have at times avoided chances to provide a more complete picture of the lives of women at Treblinka. Events that took place at the kitchen and the brothel, as well as our knowledge of them in the present, are entangled with the effects of gender bias. Belief in normative gender roles not only helped keep these places safe from the suspicions of guards but also worked to conceal the very existence of women at Treblinka in both the later testimonies of male survivors and historical texts. A focus on the time and type of Treblinka sources also shows that men recalled the presence and actions of women at Treblinka differently as the number of years since the Holocaust increased and as the storytelling format changed. This chapter later returns to the oral history recordings of male survivors to focus on how their statements prompt a reconsideration of archival silences and the gender dynamics of Holocaust memory and history.

The Scarcity of Women’s Sources and Parsing the Recollections of Men

Even after more than eighty years of research, writing, and oral history collection, Bronka Sukno and Sonia Lewkowicz remain the only two confirmed women survivors of the Treblinka revolt.² As many as eight more women passed through the camp and made it out alive that day, though it is not certain that any of them were in Treblinka long enough to comment on life and resistance at this place.³ The resulting scarcity of historical sources created by women means that research must be carried out almost entirely in sources created by men. The most challenging issue presented by the overwhelmingly male voice of Treblinka sources is the tendency to deny the presence of women at the camp or to judge and distort their actions. What’s more, the men who do speak of women often tend to exclude their names, making it nearly impossible to identify more women survivors.

In the same oral history interview recounting the story of this woman who was in the camp but did not want to testify, Eisner also, quite stunningly, states that there were no women prisoners in Treblinka. He made that assertion only *after* he described the dilemma faced by the woman survivor he knew in postwar life.⁴ In that denial, Eisner’s oral history highlights two of the reasons we know so little about the history of women prisoners at Treblinka

and their participation in resistance and revolt. The first is their own understandable reluctance to relive these events, and the second is their later erasure by many of the male survivors they lived and fought alongside.

For his part, Yaakov Eisner's failure to name the woman he described was an act of protection. Naming her could have done the very damage that she sought to avoid by staying away from the trials. As other voices show, however, the tendency of male survivors to leave women unnamed in their recollections cannot always be explained in this way. The erasure of women from Treblinka resistance history and from places of resistance at the camp—or at least the silence of many men as to their contributions—is a topic to which the succeeding sections return in one form or another. In the next, I turn to the earliest memoirs of male survivors and how these present the history of women at Treblinka.

Recollections of Women in Men's Early Memoirs

Of all the sources created by men, their early memoirs mention women's lives and acts in resistance and what happened to them at Treblinka in the most detail. Of course, that is at least in part because these are the longest sources created by these men, but there are other factors at play. A comparison between men's memoirs or other writings and more recent oral histories shows that men were much more open on the written page and in the years immediately after the Holocaust. While later sections take up an analysis of oral histories and how the process of their creation can affect Holocaust survivor storytelling, focus on the contents of the earliest memoirs uncovers a range of stories about women as well as recollections of sexual relations and sexual violence that is absent from later sources. Manuscripts that are sometimes called “forest accounts,” those written in hiding as the war still raged and the Holocaust still threatened, are the greatest examples of this phenomenon.⁵

Moyshe Klaynman's forest account is a truly unique firsthand source of life inside Treblinka. Writing as early as 1943, Klaynman penned his recollections as a four-act musical drama.⁶ Klaynman's writing is further distinctive for his extensive focus on the women who lived and worked around him at the Camp 1 tailor's shop. His memoir includes a woman named only as *dos meyd*,” or the young woman, who appears on twenty-five of its seventy-two pages—by far the greatest inclusion of women in any extensive source penned by a male survivor.⁷ What's more, Klaynman's *dos meyd* character is not a mere subject of his story; she is a protagonist in his telling and a participant in the resistance conspiracy.

Dos meyd sings most of the songs that set the tone of Klaynman's memoir, and she puts questions to the character that represents Klaynman himself in

ways that move the narrative. In a prime example, *dos meydll* is present for conversations about the danger of informants and what prisoners should do about this threat. As previously covered in detail, Treblinka prisoners acted to eliminate those who collaborated with the German SS and Ukrainian guards to protect the revolt plan. Offering her ideas on what to do about this problem, *dos meydll* asks “*der forarbeter*,” or the foreman—Klaynman’s character—“could some people take the informers one night and hang them? We could say that they did it themselves.”⁸ By suggesting that resistance organizers kill informants in the barracks at night and conceal their acts as suicide, *dos meydll* shows just how involved in resistance strategy she is and her deep awareness of planning problems. Her acts in resistance, however, do not stop at this incredible exchange.

Klaynman spells out the entire plan for the day of the revolt in a further conversation between his *der forarbeter* character and *dos meydll*. In this exchange, the reader learns all that Klaynman knew about what the Organizing Committee hoped to accomplish on August 2 and how *dos meydll* contributed information through her ability to enter the SS barracks.⁹ However, this same exchange also demonstrates how misogynist thinking constrained the roles of women in resistance at Treblinka. *Dos meydll* asks Klaynman how she can be of help on the day of the uprising, and he states that she will need to prepare the other women for what is to come and keep them calm. Klaynman’s character tells *dos meydll* that women get disturbed at the sight of blood and that he will need her help to keep the other women of the work details from becoming hysterical by having them look away and shelter themselves as men carry out the attack.¹⁰

Klaynman, it appears, sincerely believed that women in an extermination camp still needed to be protected from the sight of blood and acts of violence. He displays a kind of paternalist thinking that is entirely out of sorts with the realities of life for anyone of either sex inside Treblinka. Historian Justine Meberg’s research on depictions of women is instructive for how we might parse Klaynman’s recollections and those of others in this regard. Meberg explains both how male military authorities tended to “[write] women . . . out of the narrative” when describing combat and how a deeply ingrained “logic of protection” shaped men’s thinking on women even in circumstances where this was entirely out of keeping with the realities of warfare experienced by both sexes.¹¹ The routinely brutal, murderous, and exploitative conditions of life inside Treblinka serve to place this kind of thinking in even greater relief.

While Klaynman did not write women out of the narrative—as his fellow survivors spoke them out of it in later interviews—he did pen a dramatic representation of Treblinka in which men acted on a logic of protection that was

far beyond their true capabilities in the camp. His musical memoir further demonstrates that the world in which Klaynman found himself did nothing to break him of a belief in contemporary gender norms that had little place in camp realities. In this tendency, Klaynman was not alone. Treblinka survivor Oskar Strawczynski's forest account further displays how thoughts on propriety and morality were largely unchanged by pressures of life inside Treblinka.¹² Where Klaynman at least wrote of women in resistance, Strawczynski most often mentions them in conjunction with his judgments of their social interactions while granting women no role whatsoever in the planning or execution of the revolt.

Oskar Strawczynski's existence as head of the tin shop and one of the so-called Hofjuden at Treblinka placed him in regular contact and proximity to women prisoners living and working in Camp 1. Strawczynski's long and relatively privileged tenure inside Treblinka also gave him the ability to observe the duties and off-hours routines of the prisoners he called the camp's "aristocracy."¹³ He is mostly correct in his statement that around thirty Jewish women lived and worked near him in Camp 1, though his descriptions of how they lived also deserve some attention.¹⁴

After reporting the number of women prisoners and describing their jobs in the laundry, kitchen, and craft-making and noting that one was employed as a doctor and one as a dentist, Strawczynski speaks of their actions in an angered, moralistic tone. He states that "The women did not work hard," before adding that "they dressed luxuriously and behaved disgracefully" in the camp.¹⁵ His following passages make it clear that the behavior he found most disgraceful was their sexual relations with other prisoners and even guards. Strawczynski states that five women had husbands in the camp and places them beyond reproach, but he also recalls that the remaining women all had "admirers" among the camp's leading prisoners and spent their free hours partying, drinking, and using obscene language. His ire continues with the statement "They, our Treblinka women, were not squeamish even about Germans or Ukrainians."¹⁶ While he does not explain exactly what he means in his reference to women and their interactions with the German and Ukrainian guards, Strawczynski's statements here should make us recall the woman Yaakov Eisner knew and why she sought to avoid testifying in court after the war.

Strawczynski's position gave him the ability to attend or observe late evening performances by the Warsaw musician Arthur Gold and the orchestra that German guards formed around him. Gold and his band, sometimes accompanied by a mixed sex choir, would play for the guards when ordered and sometimes continued thereafter inside the ghetto barracks workshops with an audience of—as Strawczynski describes—leading male prisoners, their "girl-

friends,” and sometimes “bored Germans.”¹⁷ One of these so-called girlfriends was in a relationship with Kapo Rakowski of the Reds, who was for a time Lagerältester. Though Strawczynski never mentions her name, Richard Glazar names this woman as “Cescha,” or, most likely, Tchechia Mandel.¹⁸ In fact, Strawczynski mentions the name of only one woman in his writing. He recalls the shooting death during the revolt of “Maniele,” one of the married women whom he describes more respectfully.¹⁹

Strawczynski’s judgment of his fellow prisoners for their sexual relations did not stop at women, though the tone of his writing demonstrates that he held women to a different standard and was particularly disappointed in their actions. He calls one male prisoner “corrupt and debauched” and labels another a molester of women.²⁰ Strawczynski also names Kapo Jurek of the Red Commando as a rapist, saying, “This brute would not hesitate to take aside a girl, already naked, on her way to the bath. Promising to save her, he would do the worst, and then push her back into the line.”²¹ In these passages, Strawczynski shows a greater willingness to confront the sexual violence of fellow prisoners than do many other sources.

Strawczynski’s memoir makes clear that he could not—at the time in which he wrote—grasp the tenuous and additionally imperiled position of women at Treblinka. For him, the moral code of the outside world still applied despite all that he had experienced or seen at Treblinka. Strawczynski castigated women for behavior that we should view in the light of Lawrence Langer’s “choiceless choices” or seek to clarify as forms of instrumental sex or sex for barter and a means of personal survival. Strawczynski and other skilled male prisoners could find a degree of safety in their roles. Women employed in easily replaceable jobs like those in the laundry or kitchens had no such luxury. Just as the wider prisoner conspiracy sought power in the cultivation of relationships or networks, it can be logically assumed that women did the same in their decisions to attach themselves to individuals able to provide food or safety through their own much more secure and powerful positions in the camp. Strawczynski, however, is not the only survivor to address these relationships.

In his memoir written just after the war, though edited and published some four decades later, the tone and content of Richard Glazar’s recollections show how the presentation of men’s memories of women, sex, and sexual violence changed over time.²² Glazar, too, was a member of what Strawczynski called Treblinka’s “middle class” of prisoners, often able to observe and interact with women and the men closest to them in the camp.²³ In his memoir, Glazar speaks of relationships between women and men as well but does so without including the darkest violent realities recalled by Strawczynski or the moral judgments of his fellow survivor. Recalling the same nights of music and what

Strawczynski called "partying" in the barracks, Glazar wrote that as the musicians played,

The others stand around the workshop tables. Sometimes a few of the women join in. It's said that, here and there, a few even find moments in which to satisfy their most personal desires. I find this hard to believe. In Treblinka these feelings are the first to be burned out, even before the rest of our bodies. Anyway, where would people get together now that the women are living in separate quarters?²⁴

What Glazar says here is interesting for several reasons: first, because he wants to imply that sexual desire is quelled by the conditions of life in the camp and, second, because he confirms that women once did live in the same area as men.

Even after the move to new quarters of which Glazar speaks, women in Camp I were still only on the other side of a wall in the same building as men. Given the fact that all were locked into this structure at night with little or no immediate guard supervision, this wall would have mattered little to what went on at night. As to his wonder about where liaisons might take place, the answer is likely the same shops he also describes. In a later section of his memoir, Glazar states that men and women relaxed outdoors together on hot nights and that women would "parade arm in arm with their men around the assembly site."²⁵ Clearly, there was no need to conceal the existence of prisoner-to-prisoner intimate relationships from guards or other inmates. These two areas of Glazar's recollections indicate that desire was not "burned out" of many and that he was, at some level, aware of connections between other men and the women of Treblinka.

In these contradictions between an end of sexual desire and recollections of intimate displays, Glazar's memories turn a corner toward the sort of silence that would come to characterize later accounts of Treblinka by men who survived the camp. Other memoirs, including one written by a man who later gave an oral history that contradicts his earlier account, further display how men's recollections of women changed, becoming less detailed or even nonexistent over time. To draw out the silences and evasions of these later sources, the next two sections focus on places of resistance at Treblinka and how the actions of women were of paramount importance at each. Sources by male survivors and later historians have, at times, worked to conceal or evade discussion of women at these places or at Treblinka entirely. The latter issue is most apparent in any analysis of oral histories.

The Camp Kitchen and Male Silence

Exploration of women’s roles in resistance at the camp kitchens returns us once again to the day of the revolt and plans for the distribution of stolen weapons just before the appointed start of the fighting. Renewed focus on this place of resistance and its role in the uprising further provides a prime example of how the later testimonies of men sometimes erase women from both the history of Treblinka and the planning of resistance. Taking on these issues also moves us from the analysis of early postwar sources to the later, and often late-life, interviews of male survivors.

In one such oral history interview recorded in 1999, survivor Abram Kolski states that he was supposed to collect a weapon from the camp kitchen a couple of hours before the revolt. He explains that arms intended for his work detail were stored there after other prisoners had stolen them from the SS armory with use of the secretly acquired key.²⁶ What Kolski does not say—at this or any other time in his interview—is that Jewish women staffed this kitchen.

In fact, Kolski never mentions women prisoners in his oral history at all, though we know that work details in the kitchen and in the German, Ukrainian, and Jewish laundries, as well as in the tailors’ shop in the main section of the camp, were either entirely or partly staffed by Jewish women.²⁷ Revolt survivor Sonia Lewkowicz worked in the German laundry.²⁸ Each of the laundries was quite near or inside the barracks, with the washing facility servicing the German SS adjoining the kitchen. Bronka Sukno, the other woman to survive the uprising, worked in the tailors’ shop in the same building near both the laundry and the kitchen. In total, as many as forty Jewish women worked in Camp 1. From at least January 1943, a further thirteen to twenty women were working and housed near the gas chambers and burial pits. The latter group includes those held in the Camp 2 brothel.

Abram Kolski is not alone in his silence on the daily lives and contributions of women prisoners. Unlike Eisner, however, he did not deny the existence of women in Treblinka; he just never brought them up and was not asked about them. Kolski’s fellow survivor Abraham Bomba’s oral history interview is more like that of Eisner. Asked about the presence of women in Treblinka, Bomba told his interviewer the following (note that by “my camp” Bomba means Camp 1):

INTERVIEWER: Were there any women assigned in your camp?

ABRAHAM BOMBA: In my camp there was no women.

INTERVIEWER: It was all men?

ABRAHAM BOMBA: There was two women, which I find out about it. They were over there. They were working over there. After the war, I know—I know what one of them, Sonia, I knew her very well. I met her. We were together in Israel. A lovely woman. [In the following sentence, Mr. Bomba’s tone becomes much more resolute, placing emphasis on individual syllables as he speaks.] But besides these two women, I don’t know any other women was there. It could be, but I don’t know.²⁹

Bomba’s statement here is remarkable for several reasons. First, he is in error and—whether or not he had blocked out this truth by the time he gave his interview—he must have known this was not the case while he was in the camp.

Bomba escaped Treblinka prior to the revolt, though not until he had passed a considerable amount of time inside the camp. As one of the few Treblinka survivors to achieve some level of notoriety, Bomba is widely remembered for the difficult and emotional interviews he gave to Claude Lanzmann for the documentary *Shoah*. In these, Bomba recalls his forced labor as a barber made to cut the hair of women before they were sent to their deaths in the gas chamber.³⁰ He and other men who evade or discount the existence of women prisoners in later interviews never deny that the Nazis murdered thousands of women at the camp. They just will not talk about the fates of women who lived in the camp as fellow prisoners. Kolski, too, recounts resistance by women as they arrived—including a woman who killed one man and wounded another with a razor blade as she got off the train like those in the first pages of this chapter—all the while saying nothing about women prisoners.³¹

Other testimonies and attention to camp geography can help us arrive at conclusions despite the contradictions of witnesses like Bomba, Eisner, and Kolski. Treblinka survivor Jonas Kornhendler’s oral history interview provides a starting point. Kornhendler arrived at Treblinka from Czestochowa, Poland, in September 1942.³² Bomba was also in the Czestochowa Ghetto and was deported to Treblinka at about the same time.³³ Neither man is exact about the date, so it is even possible they arrived on the same transport. Where Kornhendler diverts from the path taken by Bomba is in his frankness about the existence of women prisoners in Treblinka. He not only said that they worked in the kitchen; he also stated that prisoners could see them and the kitchen from the barracks in which they slept—the same barracks that Bomba slept in. Kornhendler and Bomba also had almost identical access to parts of the camp where they were allowed without drawing the attention of guards, and Kornhendler could observe the camp from these locations. It is almost impossible to believe that Eisner, Kolski, and Bomba did not see these women. Indeed, it is even hard to believe that they did not speak to them. Beyond Kornhendler’s

statement that one could see the women’s workplace from the barracks, the fact that Jewish women prisoners slept in a partitioned area of the same building in which men were housed is also well documented.³⁴

The woman Bomba names in his interview—Sonia Lewkowicz—arrived in December 1942, and was not transferred to the other side of the camp until March.³⁵ Bomba escaped Treblinka in December 1942 or January 1943, so at the time he, Eisner, Kolski, and Kornhendler were in Treblinka, Lewkowicz narrowly could have been one of the women Bomba says he never saw.³⁶ Regardless of this, he and these other men must have seen other women from the Camp 1 work details that Lewkowicz endured before her transfer to Camp 2. Moving closer to the present, it would be surprising if the location she and other women worked did not come up when they met in postwar life. The descendants of Sam Goldberg—the supervisor of the women’s laundry detail—recorded a prisoner reunion in the year 2000 that both Sonia Lewkowicz and Bronka Sukno attended along with four male survivors and family. At this gathering, the survivors all talked of the camp and what they went through there.³⁷ Bomba’s earlier meetings with Lewkowicz would have likely gone the same way. Meeting women survivors in Israel did not change Bomba’s recollections of women’s work details in the camp. What he said in the interview shows that making the acquaintance of Sukno and Lewkowicz only led him to state that there were two women in the camp—nothing more. He did not add context for their lives, discuss their larger work details, or comment on what they were doing in Treblinka. Contemporary witnesses, however, are not the only individuals to erase women from Treblinka and its story of resistance. Historians, too, have played a role in the lack of focus on women at Treblinka.

The Camp 2 Brothel and Historical Avoidance

Historians have written almost nothing on the lives of women at Treblinka. No academic article addresses the history of women at this camp specifically, let alone any monograph-length work. While this is at least in part understandable because women constituted such a small minority of prisoners and there exists such a scarcity of sources on women at Treblinka, a certain avoidance of the topics of sex and sexual violence also plays a role. In his 1987 book *The Operation Reinhard Death Camps: Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka* and in its 2018 updated edition, the historian Yitzhak Arad titles a five-page chapter “Women Prisoners.”³⁸ These few pages are the only work that focuses on Jewish women at Treblinka. Though Arad did take on this topic long before the field turned toward a greater emphasis on the study of women, gender, or issues like masculinity and sex and sexual violence, his work also provides a prime example of the avoidance of these difficult topics by historians.

Arad’s chapter quotes survivor Eliahu Rosenberg on the formation of women’s work details in the Camp 2 portion of Treblinka in about February 1943 (the punctuation Arad uses in this quote is very important).

At that time thirteen girls were brought to the camp: six were employed in the laundry, three in the kitchen, one by the camp doctor as an aide, and the others were allotted to the various [k]apos . . .³⁹

Arad stops here with an ellipsis and makes little further comment on what became of these women. The words used by Arad here and those in the quotation that follows are both from Rosenberg’s written testimony provided to prosecutors in Vienna in 1947. Note the punctuation of this quotation, reproduced faithfully from the original, as well.

At this time, thirteen women were brought to the camp, of whom six were assigned to the laundry, three to the kitchen, where until then only a boy had worked, one was taken by the camp doctor as his “assistant,” and three others were assigned to the various [k]apos for their “private use.” Beyond these three [k]apos [specifically] the Germans allowed every [k]apo to visit these women between 6:00–10:00 pm in the evenings.⁴⁰

This selection of Rosenberg’s writing carries far greater implications than the selection used by Arad. Omission of the quotation marks around “aide/assistant” changes Rosenberg’s meaning as night and day. Rosenberg also employed these scare quotes around the term “private use” in the section cut off by Arad. He was clearly pointing at something more.

Rosenberg’s 1947 statement, alongside the 1961 Eichmann Trial investigation testimony of Camp 2 survivor Szlomo Helman, are the sources that reveal the existence of the Camp 2 brothel.⁴¹ Helman further described how the women forced to endure this place provided the lion’s share of arms available to Camp 2 prisoners on the day of the revolt. It is unfortunate that survivors and historians alike avoided revealing the existence of this place as that has delayed acknowledgment of what these women endured and the role they played in the capture of arms for the uprising.

Yitzhak Arad’s decision to stop short of quoting Rosenberg in ways that would clearly reference sexual exploitation and the existence of the brothel is not abnormal for the time in which he wrote. His book also barely mentions the fact that Sukno and Rosenberg insist that the deputy commandant was homosexual and maintained a forced Jewish sexual victim in the camp.⁴² Discussions of sex, sexuality, sexual exploitation, rape, gender, masculinity, and

related topics began to appear regularly and to gain their deserved attention in Holocaust studies only years later.⁴³ Much more important, however, Arad might have also feared that continuing the Rosenberg quotation would harm living survivors. Recall the unnamed woman, mentioned earlier, who worried that her husband and family might discover what she had gone through—and judge her for it—if she testified against the guards. An extensive exploration of these topics in 1987, while most survivors were still alive, might have made her fears a reality.

Silence and Erasure in Men’s Oral Histories

The same sort of protectionist decision-making that can explain Arad’s avoidance—among other factors—is also at play in the silences and erasures of later oral history interviews given by male survivors. Few oral history interviews given by men who survived Treblinka mention sex, sexual violence, or the lives of women inside the camp. This tendency to avoid the topic in recorded interviews at times runs contrary to the recollections of the same men in other formats. As discussed earlier, this is particularly true for statements written by men in the years just after the war. Eddie Weinstein says nothing of women at Treblinka in his oral history, though in a memoir written in 1947 and published in 2008 he provides much more on the topic.⁴⁴ He states:

We also heard that the Germans spared pretty women, whom they kept around for gang rape by German officers and Ukrainians, and murdered them. Only men were employed in the parts of Treblinka where I worked. Once someone called my attention to a young woman dressed as a teenage boy, who was sorting clothes with us. I don’t know how long she survived.⁴⁵

In this passage, Weinstein, as others, is more forthcoming about the fate of women that circumstances did not force him to consider personally. Here again the male survivor recalls what happened to anonymous women raped and murdered at the hands of the Nazis—albeit after the distancing words “we also heard.”

Weinstein follows the example of Bomba, Kolski, and Eisner in denying the presence of women we can prove that he saw by examining the geography of his life in the camp. He lived in the same area as Bomba and must have been fed at the same kitchen as all the other Camp 1 prisoners. Likewise, the selections, rapes, and murders he says he “heard” about—and thus insinuates that he did not actually see—took place in areas he would have been able to view from his routine place of work in the camp. The most important difference between his oral history and that of the others is that the interviewer never

directly asked about the presence of women, so he was never put in the position to make a denial.

What must be addressed first is that male survivors may have their own troubling reasons to avoid discussion of women in the camp. To be certain, the survivors quoted here—weighing their oral histories, the other sources they left behind, and conclusions about their lives in the camp supported by further evidence—do not appear to have any individual culpability in the sexual victimization of Jewish women at Treblinka. This is not at all to say that acts of sexual violence or relationships of a tremendously unequal and exploitative nature did not happen between Jews in this camp or during the Holocaust writ large. Strawczynski’s memoir, for one, unsparingly recounts rape committed by a Kapo. Considering what such accounts reveal, the existence of oral histories by men that avoid the topics of women prisoners, sex, and sexual violence compel an analysis of what could cause many male interviewees to be so evasive.

Sources like Strawczynski’s memoir and the early—if later mediated—writing of Richard Glazar leave little doubt that Jewish men and women at Treblinka did enter into relationships that can be characterized as “sex for barter” or “instrumental sex,” in the terms of historians Anna Hájková and Waitman Beorn.⁴⁶ In light of these earlier, more candid sources, the silences of oral histories are best explained by what historian Mary Louise Roberts terms “gender damage,” or injury to their masculine self-conception brought on for interviewees by the discussion of violence against women in the oral history environment.⁴⁷

These men, Holocaust victims themselves, felt they could do little or nothing to protect Jewish women from the sexual violence of guards and some prisoners in positions of power. The prospect of retelling such stories years later can be understood as a traumatic bridge too far. Addressing the realities of sexual violence against women at Treblinka with an audience could cause a revisitation of the male survivor’s inability to protect women as their traditional gender roles required. Considering this personal psychological factor in the interview process also provides an opportunity to think about how men at Treblinka, and in their lives long after the end of the Holocaust, continued to exhibit Meberg’s “logic of protection” both regarding women at Treblinka and in consideration of the oral history audience.

In most cases, men who survived Treblinka and gave oral history interviews recorded their contributions in their own homes. Interviewers for the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, by far the largest collection of these interviews, did their best to make sure these survivors were recorded in private. That is, the only people present besides the subject of the interview

were the interviewer and the videographer; there were no family members present. Several interviews show, however, that this was not always possible. Archival interview notes for Treblinka revolt survivor Leon Diskin’s oral history, for example, contain a remark by his interviewer that states the “survivor’s wife arrives unexpectedly [at this point] and fuddles in the kitchen (even the best laid plans can go awry).”⁴⁸ Those best-laid plans were the hope that Diskin could be recorded without family members present.⁴⁹ Similarly, family members and other individuals can clearly be heard moving about in the background of several interviews. Survivor Sam Goldberg’s interview, for instance, includes the voice of his wife, Esther, calling out to him from another room on a couple of occasions.⁵⁰

Treblinka escapee Adek Stein’s oral history best demonstrates the relevance of audience and interviewer/interviewee interactions. As he approached the topic of sexual violence while describing what he saw during the Holocaust, Stein became deeply uneasy when he realized he would have to tell these stories in front of women.

ADEK STEIN: They take some girls—*long pause*—they take some girls to make fun, for fun. They take it out on the street. Not on the street, on the part where we have been—*long pause*—I don’t want to say this to—it’s too drastic to say what they do. The young girls are here [*looking around the room*].

INTERVIEWER DA: In front of you?

ADEK STEIN: And this, this, the girls. I mean, these girls. These girls here.

INTERVIEWER DA: Don’t worry about them.⁵¹

Stein’s interview shows the difficulty that many older, traditional men had with the prospect of discussing sex and sexual violence in front of family and/or women generally. While he means it would be “too drastic” to tell these stories in front of young women, seeking to protect them from injury in hearing this history, it is also clear that he is protecting himself from the pain of reliving these events in the company of people who remind him of the victims he had no power to shield. As he discusses these topics, he halts frequently and looks around the room uncomfortably at his audience. For Stein, it was not just the act of telling that was difficult, it was also the sex and age of those who would hear his stories. His own ingrained masculine logic of protection extended to the young women in front of him during his interview.

Stein’s concern about his audience and his reluctance to discuss sexual violence in the company of women begs the question of how often this was an issue in the oral history format. The USC Shoah Foundation VHA contains ninety-five interviews tagged as involving individuals who experienced

Treblinka. Out of these oral histories, 75 percent of male Treblinka survivors were interviewed by women. If we consider only men who endured a period in the camp longer than one day, this number rises to 89 percent. It would be impossible to calculate with any accuracy how many of these interviews were conducted near or in the direct presence of family members.⁵² The percentage of male Treblinka survivors interviewed by women is actually a bit higher than the statistics for all Holocaust survivor interviews in the VHA. Of 53,231 Holocaust oral histories, 68 percent of all interviewers are women, while 67 percent of male survivors and 73 percent of female survivors were interviewed by women.⁵³

In multiple cases, male interviewees were more forthcoming in other formats or with male interviewers.⁵⁴ From Eddie Weinstein’s book mentioning sexual violence while his interview does not to the inaccuracies and inconsistencies of several other men, these observations are a cautionary tale to bear in mind when viewing these valuable sources. Though the avoidances, silences, or distortions in the oral histories of some male survivors cannot be attributed exclusively to the sex of their interviewer, this is a factor that historians and oral history collection groups should consider.

Conclusion

Women were at Treblinka and were very much involved in resistance and revolt, though the history and memory of their lives and actions are in multiple ways impacted by gender biases. Inside the camp, women’s work details and the spatial access of individual women like Bronka Sukno reflected the gender conventions of German guards—often to the benefit of resistance. The SS did not view Jewish women as a threat to their control of the camp in the same way they thought of adult men. As Sukno stated, she had the ability to enter the normally forbidden personal quarters of SS guards as a woman tailor, while Moyshe Klaynman, a male tailor, did not enter SS quarters.⁵⁵ Of course, the violent sexual exploitation that other women endured in the Camp 2 brothel is the most terrible example of this same thinking—though women here transformed this place into a powerful source of material support for the resistance. Significantly, there was no other location where guards would set down their rifles in the presence of Jews. The sexual violence perpetrated by guards in this location and others, as well as their beliefs about women’s supposed inability to threaten their power, undoubtedly played a role in their careless actions and the ability of prisoners to rise against them.

Knowledge of these events and others inside Treblinka, and during the Holocaust more broadly, is often a product of gendered thinking at the time and in the years following. As Eisner’s interview shows us, women had greater—or

at the very least different—fears about coming forward as trial witnesses and, later, as oral history subjects. It is no coincidence that Bronka Sukno and Sonia Lewkowicz sought the community of their fellow survivors, though they never wrote memoirs and did not seek out opportunities to tell their stories and the history of Treblinka as often as their male counterparts. Nevertheless, attention to the networks and places of resistance at Treblinka allows us to read against the distortions and evasions of male testimony to recover the contributions of women in resistance.

Jewish women at Treblinka fought back in self-led, spontaneous moments of armed and unarmed resistance, organized to protect their own lives and those of others at great peril, and endured the eye of hell to arm an insurrection which they almost certainly knew might bring about their own deaths. Our long misunderstanding of women's roles at Treblinka results from an unwillingness to confront sex and sexual violence on the part of male survivors and later historians. This same factor, alongside the tendency of male survivors to take full ownership of resistance and revolt, further explains why so few men name the women they speak of in any of the sources they created. Regrettably, it is unlikely that the omitted names of women murdered at Treblinka or the identities of many more who survived will ever be recovered. The next chapter, however, takes up an analysis of survivorship in general and the ways those lucky enough to escape that day made it out of the camp alive. As it shows, the stories of women's lives and actions at Treblinka continue to the very last moments of the camp's existence.

Surviving Treblinka

Finding the Few and Localizing Definitions of Survivorship

Yes, I remained alive and find myself among free people. But I often ask myself why. Is it so that I might tell the world about the millions of innocent murdered victims, to be a witness to the innocent blood that was spilled by the hands of the murderers?

Yes, I remained alive to bear witness against the great slaughterhouse of Treblinka.

—CHIL RAJCHMAN, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*

Chil Rajchman's memoir concludes with his searching thoughts on why he survived. As he came to the end of his recollections, Rajchman focused less on how he had made it out and more on the purpose of his life after all he had seen. He and several other survivors found answers to those intense questions and their very reasons to live in doing work to "bear witness" and recount the history of Treblinka in honor of all those who could not.

Rajchman and other Jews who made it out of Treblinka must have been racked by trauma, grief, and survivors' guilt for the rest of their lives.¹ Yet most, in their own ways, got on with their lives and built new futures alongside whatever family they could find. Several commented in writing or interviews about the reasons for their survival, or what they saw as their mission after making it out of Treblinka. Those who spoke of the reasons for resistance, and especially escape, underscored their desire to warn others about what Treblinka was as it still operated.² Others who explained their desire to carry out a revolt did not stop at mere revenge, though that was indeed a motivation. Beyond retribution, Jews who participated in the uprising also stressed a duty to save witnesses of this place so that its crimes would never be forgotten or denied.³

Survivors are the witnesses who made real and undeniable the murder of so many at this terrible place. We should not forget that the statements of former

guards at trials or, in rare cases, during later interviews would not have occurred without survivors to press the issue. When Franz Stangl spoke to Gitta Sereny, he did so from the West German prison in which survivor testimony had put him. Making Stangl confront the enormity of his own personal guilt is arguably the entire arc and mission of Sereny's book. Before survivor statements helped convict him, Stangl spent his days hiding in Brazil, never speaking a word about the camp.⁴ Likewise, when Franz Suchomel spoke to Sereny and Claude Lanzmann, it was only after his own conviction, incarceration, and release. By then, he was beyond much worry about further consequences and had little need to deny what survivors had already confirmed in court. Regardless, Lanzmann used a hidden camera to gather more candid responses, whereas Sereny still had to press Stangl for hours over many long interviews to get him to approach the matter of his own participation in mass murder and personal guilt as camp commandant.⁵

Survivors are at the core of all we know about Treblinka. They provided the irreplaceable evidence and the moral force that drove prosecutions, and their memories remain our best sources of this history. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that survival itself was resistance. This might seem so simple as to be an unnecessary point, but the survival of Jews amounted to a defeat of Nazi Germany's so-called Final Solution. To be Jewish was to be targeted, and to survive was to overcome genocidal intent. That same perseverance later became the foundations of justice, history, and the generations after.

The voices and sources that provide facts about Treblinka exist as the results of resistance. Many Treblinka survivors such as Samuel Willenberg and Richard Glazar made the act of telling—or bearing witness—a central mission of their later lives. Looking at survival as resistance and at every survivor source brought to light as an act against forgetting makes the identification and recognition of Treblinka survivors an important historical contribution.

This chapter takes up the task of identifying survivors and understanding their varied paths out of Treblinka. Historians have long understood that only a few people made it out of this camp. Treblinka is one of a handful of Holocaust camps or sites with what is thought to be a complete list of survivors. The museum at the former site of the camp today provides the names of eighty-five individuals known to have made it out alive.⁶ Work to understand the archive and resistance at this place, however, reveals that this accounting of survival is far from complete.

Revising understandings of survival at Treblinka also demonstrates what the creation of place-based definitions of survival can provide to the study of the Holocaust. Defining survivorship for individual locations like the thousands of camps and ghettos of the Nazi system is essential as historians seek to

clarify the roles, uses, and evolutions of those places. In the case of Treblinka, the varied paths to survival show that there is a need for some basic categories of survivor experience. The following sections explain survival under the headings of Revolt Survivors, Escape Survivors, and Through-Transport Survivors. An additional section highlights the differences between these categories—particularly that of Through-Transport Survivors—and a non-survivor group termed Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka.

Research that defines survival of a certain place can help us understand the reach and influence of a site beyond its fences, its walls, or its otherwise seemingly well-defined location. I expand on this in the section on Treblinka Revolt Survivors. This chapter concludes with a section relating the matter of survival definitions to the future of Holocaust studies and what historians should anticipate as the “era of the witness” nears its end.⁷

Most Holocaust locations do not have a supposedly complete list of survivors, and I do not think they should be created where none exists. Lists are problematic because their existence implies completeness. A survivor list often functions as a research starting point by appearing to offer the names of all eyewitnesses. The problem with this is that it makes additional search beyond the list unlikely. Why look elsewhere if you can access *the* list of sources? The trouble with survivor lists also extends to the recognition of individual experiences and how we memorialize individuals. Creating a list and inadvertently leaving someone out can unintentionally affect later research or even how descendants view the recollections of an ancestor. As the issues inherent in the identification of Treblinka survivors make clear, lists cannot hope to be comprehensive or without error. While recognizing these facts, the existence and wide acceptance of a list creates a situation wherein it can neither be erased nor wished out of existence. The only recourse once such an accounting holds sway is to improve it where possible while admitting and drawing attention to its permanently incomplete nature.

To change a list, you must first understand the criteria, or definitions used in its creation. While the existence of a survivor list provides the most pressing need for a definition of survivorship at Treblinka, finding answers to the questions addressed here can also help us reckon with the literal and experiential boundaries of other locations during the Holocaust—whether or not a list exists.

Alexander Donat's Treblinka Survivor Definition

The list of survivors published by the Treblinka museum today originated with the work of Holocaust survivor-writer Alexander Donat for his 1979 volume *The Death Camp Treblinka: A Documentary*.⁸ Donat compiled the names of survivors in the process of creating what he hoped would be the “most-panoramic and

least repetitious picture of Treblinka.”⁹ As testament to the overwhelming lethality of Treblinka and the difficulty of locating witnesses in his time, the short biographical vignettes and general roster provided by Donat take up just eight pages of his volume.¹⁰ Despite Donat’s admission that his findings were “anything but complete,” the list has remained largely unchallenged and unanalyzed for more than forty years.¹¹ Providing a more accurate accounting of survivors with some qualified categorization of experiences at Treblinka demonstrates that a larger number of voices exists and improves the chances of finding any testimonies these individuals may have left behind. To begin this process, however, one must understand whom the original list maker considered a survivor of Treblinka and then conceptualize their own definition.

Compiled from sources available at the time and of which he was aware, Donat’s list of survivors consists mainly of individuals who broke free from the camp in the process of the revolt. He does, however, include six people who escaped the camp before the uprising.¹² Donat’s inclusion of these names demonstrates that he did not think participation in the revolt was the only way one could be called a Treblinka survivor. Research on his list reveals only three mistaken inclusions. While some individuals have proven difficult to confirm, I have found reasons to remove only the names of Sonia Grabinska, Zygmunt Gostynski, and Tobias Mieczyslaw.¹³ Her own later trial testimony in addition to historical research by others proves that Grabinska was the birth name of Sonia Lewkowicz, also present on Donat’s roster. Gostynski and Mieczyslaw, meanwhile, were both held at the nearby Treblinka I labor camp, not the Treblinka II extermination camp.¹⁴

A close reading of Donat also reveals one exclusion that is the first point of departure from his original criteria here. Despite including an excerpt of Abraham Krzepicki’s testimony in his book, Donat leaves his name off the list of survivors.¹⁵ Krzepicki escaped Treblinka before the revolt, returned to Warsaw, and recounted his experiences to Rachel Auerbach as a part of her work for Emanuel Ringelblum’s *Oyneg Shabes* archive before he was killed fighting in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.¹⁶ His example provides evidence that Donat considered someone a Treblinka survivor only if the person had both escaped death inside the camp and then somehow lived through the rest of the war. This decision creates a difference between Treblinka survivors who died in the Holocaust and Holocaust survivors who were inside Treblinka.

Excluding those who died after escaping Treblinka unnecessarily diminishes the record of survival and resistance at this camp. Krzepicki’s personal saga further illustrates the cost to historical research of failing to include such people and their stories. Though it is unlikely that many more examples of people who escaped and recorded a testimony before being killed elsewhere

will be found, this does perfectly describe Aron Liebeskind. Liebeskind escaped Treblinka before the revolt but was ultimately recaptured by Nazi forces and murdered at Auschwitz. His story comes to us via the recollections of a fellow prisoner at Auschwitz and a song Liebeskind wrote about the loss of his son at Treblinka that he passed along before his death.¹⁷

Krzepicki and Liebeskind show how even individuals who did not survive the war contribute to what we know about the camp and merit a place among the named survivors of Treblinka. Theirs and other individual paths out of Treblinka display such a marked variance in survival and resistance strategies that the need for some system of categorization is clear. Inspired by Lawrence Langer, and borrowing the title of his book, the following sections define survivorship at Treblinka across three main “versions of survival” while explaining what this categorization adds to our knowledge of Treblinka.¹⁸ Each version also offers comment on how this schema can assist research on other sites of Holocaust perpetration.

Versions of Survival at Treblinka

Isadore Helfing endured ten horrific months at Treblinka.¹⁹ Under constant threat of death from guards, hunger, and disease, Isadore sorted the clothing left behind by the dead, tended horses used by German SS officers and prisoner work details, and disposed of bodies. On August 2, 1943, Helfing fought his way out of the camp in the revolt. He was lucky enough, once again, to survive the remainder of the war and recount these experiences to interviewers in a later oral history recording.²⁰ Helfing is one of seventy identified Revolt Survivors.

Zelda Gordon and Ben Lerman spent much less time at Treblinka but managed to survive all the same.²¹ Deported from Grodno in February 1943, Gordon was selected by German guards as one of one hundred Jewish women to be dispatched to Majdanek. She and these other women, fearing they had been chosen “for the amusement of German soldiers,” were then held in a barracks building overnight—as it happened this time, untouched by guards—before being placed on a train to Majdanek the next day.²² Even more remarkably, Gordon is not alone in her description of this version of survival at Treblinka. Several other women from her group of one hundred also made it through the remainder of the war.²³

Like Gordon, Ben Lerman was in the camp for a very short period of time—for him, less than one day. Ben and thousands of others arrived at Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto in April 1943. His deportation coincided with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. When Lerman’s train stopped at the camp, guards and prisoner workers opened the doors of the railcars one at a time.

Train sections were normally unloaded all at once, so this must have been a strange sight to prisoners familiar with the routine. As unloading went on, guards selected people they deemed capable of work and set them off to one side. Guards then put Lerman and others in this fortunate group back on the train and sent them off to Majdanek only a few hours after their arrival.²⁴ For many who spent short periods of time inside Treblinka, Majdanek was their next stop. Lerman, Gordon, and others like them could count themselves lucky to emerge from Treblinka at all, let alone after such a short time within its murderous confines. Together, these two are representative of the eighty-eight individuals identified as Through-Transport Survivors of Treblinka.

Yaakov Eisner had to deal with a longer incarceration at the camp than did Zelda Gordon and Ben Lerman, though he found a way out before the prisoner revolt. Eisner and a small group evaded the notice of guards at the end of the workday and hid outside the prisoner barracks, planning to use the cover of darkness to make their escape. After the sun went down, he scaled the fence and made off through the nearby woods.²⁵ Eisner was lucky enough to stay alive through the remainder of the war and recounted his experiences to oral history interviewers later. His story is emblematic of Treblinka's eighty-three identified Escape Survivors.

These individuals personify the most common versions of survival for Jews deported to Treblinka, or what I term Revolt Survivors, Through-Transport Survivors, and Escape Survivors. As examples of the need for a reconsideration of survival at Treblinka, only Isadore Helfing and Yaakov Eisner—out of all those profiled here—appear on the list created by Donat. Through the inclusion of experiential categories, I further emphasize variations in Jewish resistance strategies and Nazi perpetration at Treblinka. Employing these categories in conjunction with the greatly expanded research sources available today, the number of Revolt Survivors increases from Donat's initial list of sixty to seventy, and the number of Escape Survivors increases from seven to eighty-three. The named Through-Transport Survivors number eighty-eight, plus six additional questionable accounts, eleven persons uncategorized for lack of information, and three unique cases. Altogether, the scroll of Treblinka survivors expands from Donat's original 68 to 262 identified individuals—214 of whom made it through the rest of the war.

Revolt Survivors

At first glance, the Revolt Survivor category would seem to be the easiest to define. Treblinka Revolt Survivors are individuals who found a way out of the camp during the August 2, 1943, prisoner uprising. Those named in this category must owe their lives to this act of Jewish resistance to be included,

though the definition does not require that they have taken part. The Revolt Survivor Joseph Siedlecki, for example, stated that he had nothing to do with resistance organization and had no significant prior knowledge of the impending inmate attack. Still, as he witnessed the events unfolding around him on that day, he wisely took advantage of the fighting and ran for the fences.²⁶ His own act of resistance, therefore, was not one of coordination with others, but it is still instructive of how some Jewish prisoners acted to save their own lives when opportunities arose on that day.

In his book, Donat estimates that as many as three hundred people escaped Treblinka on the day of the revolt. Revolt Survivor testimonies give estimates ranging between 150 and 350, though I have identified only seventy individuals who made it out of the camp that day.²⁷ The remaining 230 people, if that many did actually flee the camp, are representative of how the category of Revolt Survivor can get murky and why lists will always be incomplete. The post-escape stories of Revolt Survivors often include descriptions of how others fleeing alongside them later lost their lives to pursuing guards or to German forces called in to assist the camp staff or at the hands of local Poles. Here, as elsewhere, in the German-occupied Generalgouvernement, non-Jewish Poles killed, turned in, or informed on Jewish fugitives out of plain antisemitism, fear of the Germans, or hope for reward.²⁸ It should also be noted, however, that almost all of the seventy Revolt Survivors who did persevere mention some form of help from non-Jewish Poles in their recollections.

In interviews with Gitta Sereny, former commandant Franz Stangl estimated that Treblinka held 840 prisoners on the day of the revolt and that 105 Jewish prisoners were left alive in the camp at the end of the day. Stangl further stated that he ordered guards not to kill these remaining prisoners immediately.²⁹ Though all numbers given by former guards and prisoners alike are merely estimates, it is likely that three hundred to four hundred people got out at least temporarily in the revolt, while a similar number were killed in the fighting in and around the camp. The latter group does not include those hunted down by German forces outside the fences and in the fields, forests, and villages nearby. Stangl's quite specific recollection of 105 living Jews inside the camp after the fighting ceased may well be accurate. The fate of these people is a matter that adds further nuance to the category of Revolt Survivor.

German SS and Ukrainian guards eventually murdered most of the prisoners left alive inside Treblinka after the revolt. Before they did, however, guards forced this group to tear down the camp and erase all traces of its existence. Because of their location inside the Ghetto Barracks at the time of the revolt, many of the women prisoners of Camp 1 were among those left inside Treblinka. They were not able to get out of the building during the fighting as at

least one guard was with them at the time of the first shot.³⁰ Though the roughly one hundred persons left inside the camp lived through the uprising, they are not Revolt Survivors. While the definition of this category does not require that one have taken part in the planning or fighting, it does require that an individual have gained at least temporary freedom from Nazi forces as a result of the prisoner rising. Additionally, even though guards killed some of the last prisoners of Treblinka elsewhere, I do not count these unfortunate people as survivors either.

On October 20, 1943, a small train consisting of five railcars departed Treblinka for Sobibor. On board were many of the remaining guards and twenty-five to thirty Jews. These prisoners, perhaps taken along as labor to unload whatever else was on this train, did not survive long at Sobibor. Treblinka guards dispatched on the same train soon murdered them as well.³¹ Despite the fact that they were outside the camp or at least killed elsewhere, the members of this group are not Treblinka survivors because they never escaped the power of its guards. The unique story of one survivor, however, does show that at least one person did leave Treblinka alive after the revolt and lived to tell the tale.

Kalman Jankowski was selected by the SS as a musician when he arrived at Treblinka. He and others were routinely forced to play for the amusement of the guards while also working as Goldjuden in Camp 2. After the revolt, Jankowski found himself alive but still stuck in the camp. In statements given to investigators after the war, Jankowski stated that he was one of eighteen to twenty-five prisoners sent to the Treblinka I labor camp after the revolt. He was later able to survive this camp by escaping in October 1944.³² The fates and identities of the other seventeen to twenty-four members of this group are unknown. Jankowski shows that some of the approximately one hundred prisoners left alive in Treblinka after the revolt were transferred to the nearby labor camp. Whether the Germans planned to kill all of them to eliminate witnesses of the extermination facility before closing the labor camp is also unknown, though it seems likely. What this does reveal, however, is that at least one person who did not make it out on August 2, 1943, survived the Holocaust. If the names of others in Jankowski's group ever come to light, they too would be survivors of Treblinka II—regardless of whether they survived the Holocaust—but not Revolt Survivors. This group was not freed by Jewish resistance on the day of the revolt, and so they represent a different path to life after Treblinka.

The fate of one more group that did not make it out of the camp during the revolt is also known. Former SS guard Franz Suchomel told Sereny that the last twenty-five to thirty Jews at Treblinka—after the departure of those sent out on the train and after Jankowski's group left for Treblinka I—were all executed by guards.³³ Historian Witold Chrostowski dates this last act of

killing at the camp to November 17, 1943.³⁴ The last victims of this place included Tchechia Mandel and at least one other woman, possibly two.³⁵ Suchomel recalled her last words and the manner of her death.

With the camp torn down and all the work of obscuring its traces completed, guards took this small group to a chosen spot and forced them to kneel before each was shot in the back of the neck.³⁶ According to Suchomel, when it was her turn Mandel said, “Aha, I never did believe any of your fairytale promises, you pigs. Go ahead, kill us. Just do me a favor and don’t ask us to undress.”³⁷ This incredible exchange comes from one of the few times a guard ever directly named a Jew in an interview. Rarer still is a statement from a guard that quotes a Treblinka prisoner. It is with these prideful and spiteful last words that Treblinka may have come to an end. Mandel and the others with her were the last group of Jews present at the camp. After that November day, the guards went on to other assignments, and former prisoners lucky enough to still be alive faced the challenges of hiding, evasion, and—for many—further escapes.³⁸

The timing of the revolt meant that Jews who escaped Treblinka on August 2, 1943, still had to find ways to endure another twenty-one months of war and Nazi genocide. The impossibility of arriving at any true reckoning of what happened to those who made it out alive, at least initially, demonstrates in part why the creation of lists is problematic. We will never know how many were killed in the fighting immediately or how many people made it close to the end of the war only to die at the hands of one or another force let loose by Nazi ideology and a continent in flames.

With these problems in mind, the definition of Revolt Survivor does require some bounds and clarification. People in this category are, as stated earlier, all those who made it out of Treblinka on August 2, 1943. The Revolt Survivor category further requires that the uprising itself be the reason for the survival of each individual, regardless of whether the person took part. Those transferred to Treblinka I are not included because they owed their lives to an SS decision, not to Jewish resistance. I also do not include individuals who died at the hands of guards in chase on the day of the uprising or those killed by German and other forces in the time immediately after. Instead, I see the victims of Treblinka’s own guards and the reinforcements they could unleash as casualties of the camp itself, despite their possible position outside the wire at the time of their deaths. How long after the revolt and how far from the camp’s fences this guidance should apply will vary from person to person. Research on other Holocaust sites should view this analysis as a chance to probe the geographic limits of that location, the reach of local perpetrators, and the boundaries of their power over victims and so-called bystanders.

The Third Reich's camps, ghettos, and mass-shooting sites had impacts far beyond their recognizable physical edges. Political scientists Volha Charnysh and Eugene Finkel revealed how the economic effects of Treblinka spread well beyond its gates. Their work plotted the level to which local non-Jewish Poles enriched themselves as Nazi mass murder went on and showed how the effects of this profiteering remain visible today in the quality and construction of housing around the former camp.³⁹ Work to define the category of Revolt Survivor can take this research back to the days around August 2, 1943, to reveal how far the murderous tentacles of this extermination camp spread into the Polish countryside. Similar work on other sites will also demonstrate the geographic scope of each and the breadth of each location's influence on local populations and potential victims.

Escape Survivors

Escape Survivors, personified by Yaakov Eisner, share quite similar stories. Like Eisner, many found ways to evade the notice of guards until sunset in order to make their way over the fences at night. These survivors tell us much about the operation of Treblinka. The prevalence of nighttime escapes seems to confirm that guard towers were not manned after prisoners were locked in their barracks at night. The sheer number of Escape Survivors is also instructive. So many found ways out of Treblinka before the revolt that we can only conclude guards were less than expert at their roles and that prisoner accountability must have been at least somewhat lax in general. Indeed, survivor testimonies frequently note that Treblinka did not issue uniforms and, for a long time, had no system of numbering individual inmates.⁴⁰

Leon Diskin, Eddie Weinstein, and Michael Fischmann took the other most common path for Treblinka Escape Survivors. Rather than climb fences at night, these men hid onboard train cars as other inmates loaded them with the stolen belongings of those murdered in the Treblinka gas chambers.⁴¹ Their daylight escapes were possible, again, owing to ineffective supervision by guards and the lack of an individualized inmate headcount. These conditions, however, did not last. As explored earlier, SS guards and leaders eventually realized that the camp was losing prisoners almost every day and began to make changes both in terms of the built environment and daily routines.

In January 1943, Treblinka's SS moved prisoners to a newly enlarged central barracks structure surrounded by its own interior fence. At about this same time, a new regime of prisoner control in the form of number patches attached to clothing and roll calls by number replaced basic headcounts, which prisoners had found easy to falsify.⁴² Thereafter, the permanent workforce stabilized

and the opportunity for solo or coordinated escapes greatly diminished. The agency of the prisoners themselves in bringing about these changes should not be overlooked. The actions of Escape Survivors led to these changes in guard procedures and camp geography.

Understanding the varied paths and decisions of Escape Survivors does much to expand our knowledge of resistance at Treblinka and its impact on the ways in which guards operated the camp. To add clarity to this category, Escape Survivors are all those individuals who found a way out of Treblinka prior to the August 2, 1943, revolt through some form of resistance that did not involve selection by SS guards or planned transport to another place in the Nazi system. It is easiest to understand some parts of this definition if one compares it with that for Through-Transport Survivors, discussed in the next section.

By analyzing the timing of escapes, their impact on Nazi SS decision-making, and their role in making possible the planning of wider resistance acts, Escape Survivors and their stories are instructive for the whole history of Treblinka. Researchers on further forms of resistance or means of survival at other camps should find it important to think of these subjects in terms of their chronology and how they affect the wider timeline of the place they study. At Treblinka, recognition of the switch from individual or small group escape to coordinated, large-scale planning makes it possible to understand the evolution of resistance and how that was tightly connected to changes in the spatial environment and guard routines. Through-Transport Survivors offer new understandings of how Treblinka fit into the wider Nazi perpetration of the Holocaust and how outside acts of Jewish resistance had a major impact on the outcome of events at this camp.

Through-Transport Survivors

For some, the short survival stories of Zelda Gordon and Ben Lerman may beg the question of how long an individual needed to be inside Treblinka or any other camp to be considered a survivor of that place.⁴³ In addressing what, if any, time limits are appropriate to the definition of a survivor in the case of Treblinka, however, the very nature of this extermination camp and its normal operations suggests there should be none.

Nazi authorities designed Treblinka and its Aktion Reinhard sister-camps, Belzec and Sobibor, to carry out plans for the total annihilation of European Jewry. Bearing in mind that most individuals who disembarked at Treblinka met their deaths less than two hours after arrival, it seems inappropriate to impose any length-of-stay restriction in assigning a status to a Treblinka survivor.⁴⁴ Instead, we should view as a survivor any individual who ever set foot

inside the camp and somehow emerged alive. Including these people gives them historical recognition for what they endured. In addition to this commemorative function, identifying these survivors also contributes to our understanding of how the Nazis operated Treblinka and offers a glimpse of how their procedures changed over time.

Like Gordon and Lerman, Saul Kuperhand is an example of an individual who spent less than a day within Treblinka's wire fences and emerged to tell the tale. The Nazis transported Kuperhand and his extended family from the Siemiatycze Ghetto in early November 1942. In an event that the testimonial record indicates was very rare, SS guards selected 150 men from his transport for transfer from the Treblinka II extermination camp to the Treblinka I labor camp. Having been selected, Kuperhand managed to bring his brothers Yakov-Hirsh and Usher into the line of men leaving the extermination camp. As a result of his quick thinking, Kuperhand and two of his brothers survived while the rest of his family perished.⁴⁵ Biniamin Rok, another man from Saul Kuperhand's hometown and transport, evaded death in the same manner that day.⁴⁶ Israel Cymlich also survived Treblinka II through a similar combination of luck and initiative by managing to transfer to Treblinka I. The number of survival stories demonstrates that—while certainly not prevalent—such occurrences were not singular incidents.⁴⁷ Including these voices among the survivors of Treblinka gives credit to the fast-thinking resistance demonstrated by those able to recognize their situation and to find a way to save their own lives and those of others at the point of disembarkation.

In another occurrence of transport from Treblinka to another camp, Benjamin Piskorz recounted how he was among 320 selected for transport from Treblinka to Majdanek in April 1943.⁴⁸ Piskorz, Gordon, and Lerman all recount their transport to Majdanek. This camp was the most frequent next stop except for the nearby labor camp that shared Treblinka's name. These transfers demonstrate how Nazi uses of the Treblinka extermination camp changed with the wider events of World War II and acts of Jewish resistance elsewhere.

The April–May 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising had a considerable, if as yet largely unrecognized, impact on day-to-day operations at Treblinka II. Piskorz was deported from Warsaw as German forces fought to regain control of the ghetto from Jewish combatants. As they did so, it appears that they resorted to the temporary use of the unloading ramp at Treblinka as a place to sort and select workers bound for other camps. Lerman also arrived at Treblinka during this same period.⁴⁹ These survivors indicate that resistance in Warsaw managed to change the routine at Treblinka and offered Jews arriving there a new path to survival if they could manage to get selected for transport to Majdanek

or sneak themselves and others into the line out of the camp as Kuperhand did. Though they were sent elsewhere, these people did step off the train at Treblinka with hundreds or thousands of others from their same transport who met their deaths in the gas chambers that day. The survivors' transport out was often the result of subtle acts of resistance to this fate—the survivors either jumped into a better line or did their best to appear capable of work even after all they had already endured.

The testimonies of Through-Transport Survivors illustrate how people with one day or even only hours of experience inside Treblinka can still recount important details about the arrival of transports, the physical appearance of the facility, and how they managed to escape death in ways that change understandings of resistance and the normal routine inside this camp. For these reasons, everyone who stepped off the train at the camp merits inclusion among the survivors of Treblinka no matter how long they stayed. I draw a fine line, however, between those who did get off the transports and those who did not. This last group defines a category of experience that I term Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka.

Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka

In his work, the historian Jacob Flaws sets out to determine the spatial, sensory, and experiential reach of the camp for Jews, Germans, and local non-Jewish Poles. Flaws stresses the importance of his search for sensory witnesses by stating that only “approximately 70” Jews made it out of the camp alive.⁵⁰ He accepts Donat's list as unamendable fact, uses it as his starting point, and mobilizes it in partial justification of his efforts to identify a new set of voices to recount the history of Treblinka. Flaws conducts his search for additional individuals with knowledge of the camp by defining a “zone of sensory witnessing” that spread far into the surrounding Polish countryside. He explains that persons within this zone—regardless of their identity—saw, smelled, and heard what went on inside Treblinka in one way or another. He thus employs an expansive understanding of the sensory experience to increase “the number of Treblinka witnesses potentially into the thousands.”⁵¹

In Flaws's consideration, Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka are all those individuals who lived in or passed through the camp in one way or another as well as all those who hid within the geographic spread of its sight, smell, or sounds. By including both those inside and outside the camp in the same version of witnessing, however, Flaws uses the term in a way that is too broad for the consideration of survivorship. Meanwhile, his definition of non-Jewish local Poles as witnesses, so long as they lived within the spatial zone of the camp's sensory presence, helps highlight the overall spread of knowledge about Treblinka. Still, the local sensory

witness voices Flaws recovers are mostly unable to comment in any detail on life within Treblinka or the interior routines of the camp.

As opposed to Flaws's quite broad formulation of witnessing, I define Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka as comprising Jews who came quite near to the camp but *did not* enter its confines for even a moment. The definition of Jewish Witnesses, here, helps us understand and contextualize the experiences of Treblinka survivors—particularly Through-Transport Survivors. The stories of Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka have much to teach about the impacts of resistance, changes to Nazi procedures at this camp, and the evolving role of this place in the wider Holocaust.

Nazi forces in Bialystok deported Ralph B., Irene S., Yetta Eisner, and Doba Apelowicz to Treblinka on a pair of rail transports shortly after the August 2, 1943, prisoner revolt. Though none of them could date their experiences precisely, it is clear from their descriptions of the journey and events that transpired on their arrival at Treblinka that they were on two different trains.⁵² Since only two transports arrived at the camp after the uprising, these Jewish Witnesses contribute to understandings of what happened to both.⁵³ Ralph, Irene, Yetta and Doba also allow us to examine what took place at Treblinka after the revolt, as few others can. In the aftermath of the fighting and the efforts of guards to pacify the camp, survivors of all kinds—with the unique exception of Kalman Jankowski—were no longer in Treblinka. All but one known Jewish survivor made it out of the camp either on August 2, 1943, or before that date. As such, only the mendacious accounts of former guards and the statements of these Jewish Witnesses can provide us with much of a window into these last days of Treblinka.

The deportation from Bialystok of all four of these individuals also coincided with the destruction of the ghetto in that city and an accompanying wave of Jewish resistance there. What happened to their transports, therefore, must be viewed as the combined result of Nazi intentions and Jewish resistance at Treblinka and in the Bialystok Ghetto. As it happened, these acts of resistance changed deportation practices in Bialystok as well as arrival procedures at Treblinka in profound ways.⁵⁴

Nazi authorities sorted the transport that took Ralph B. and Irene S. to Treblinka before boarding according to whether each person was considered capable of work. Ralph and Irene were placed in a railcar with others chosen for labor. When their train arrived in the area of Treblinka, only those cars carrying the sick, elderly, and infirm were taken into Treblinka. Ralph and Irene's railcar waited on a rail siding at the nearby station. They never laid eyes directly on the camp, nor did they step off the train.⁵⁵ Yetta Eisner was likely on the same transport. As she described it: "We were there for quite a while, I

don't remember how long. I only know that three or four cars were disconnected because at that particular time they couldn't accommodate so many people and this, from there, we were taken to Lublin."⁵⁶ Eisner not only recounts how the arrival of her train at Treblinka worked; she also offers a sound analysis of one reason why she and the others in her car did not enter Treblinka.

Though the revolt did not succeed in destroying the gas chambers at Treblinka, much of the camp's other infrastructure did burn. Additionally, all but about one hundred prisoners experienced in the process of unloading and moving the people that arrived on transports either fled or were killed in the revolt. These factors left the camp unable to kill as many as it had before and thus contributed to its closure after these two Bialystok transports.⁵⁷ What Eisner may not have realized, however, is the possible importance of resistance in Bialystok itself. Just as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising influenced the temporary use of the Treblinka arrival ramp as a selection area, resistance at the Bialystok Ghetto could have forced the dispatch of these transports despite the damaged state of Treblinka at that time.

Doba Apelowicz endured a deportation from Bialystok that was similar to that of Yetta Eisner, Ralph B., and Irene S., but her arrival on the other of these two post-revolt trains was slightly different. When her train got to Treblinka, it appears that the cars were not arranged in an order that would allow those selected for life to be left at the nearby train station. Apelowicz describes instead how her train pulled onto the siding at Treblinka itself where other cars were opened. From there, she was able to watch from inside her own car as her mother and other family members were taken to the gas chambers. Though she did not step off the train, Apelowicz was an even closer Jewish Witness to what happened at Treblinka.⁵⁸

Yetta Eisner, Doba Apelowicz, Ralph B., and Irene S. are not survivors of Treblinka because of one key difference between their experiences and those of the Through-Transport group. Nazi authorities had all four of these individuals within their grasp but did not intend to kill them at Treblinka. They did not get off the train at the camp and never set foot behind the fences because they had already been chosen for another fate. Their evasion of death at Bialystok and at Treblinka itself is at least in part due to pressures applied to Nazi planners by Jewish resistance. If the camp had not been damaged during the revolt and were Bialystok not also a site of fighting, all of those placed on these trains could have ended up in the line to death at Treblinka.

Any accounting, categorization, or definition must have bounds. I chose to count as survivors only those individuals who stepped off the train at Treblinka because Nazi guards placed these individuals in a position where they

faced the gravest danger of death the moment they disembarked. Once inside, even if a rare selection for departure was to become their fate, they had to fight to stay alive, to posture themselves in a way that made them appear ready for work or have the quick wit and opportunity to jump lines. The category of Jewish Witnesses as defined here also offers a new understanding of the impacts of resistance. Though the arrival of two transports after the revolt could be seen as evidence of the failure of the revolt, the ways in which Jewish Witnesses describe their preselected journeys and unopened railcars at least complicates this judgment. Revolt at Treblinka and resistance at Bialystok saved lives by simultaneously lessening this camp's capacity to kill and creating a need to rush Jewish prisoners out of the ghetto before repairs could be made.

Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka demonstrate how resistance changed the normal course of events at the camp. The fact that Nazi guards did not intend to kill them—and did not remove them from the train to make this decision—shows how their experiences differed from those of Through-Transport Survivors. Similar to the ways in which analysis of Escape Survivors shows how resistance changed the built environment at Treblinka and moved prisoners toward the planning of revolt once this path closed, Jewish Witness stories demonstrate how the revolt changed procedures at Treblinka in a way that saved lives even for the last two transports. By considering the definition of Jewish Witnessing here, researchers focused on other locations will gain new ways to conceptualize the spatial bounds of their locations. Some will find that zeroing in on the timing of certain experiences will reveal changes made by the perpetrators or adaptations made by Jews. Regardless of the shape other studies take, conceptualizing versions of survival at other locations during the Holocaust is certain to expand our understandings of the ways in which people endured these sites as well as the area, or zone of their influence, and how each operated over time.

The “Last” Survivor of Treblinka and Localizing Definitions of Survivorship

On the occasion of Samuel Willenberg's passing in February 2016, media outlets around the world mourned him as the “last Treblinka death camp survivor.”⁵⁹ The BBC, the *Times of Israel*, and the *Miami Herald*—to name just three—ran stories and obituaries prominently featuring the word “last.”⁶⁰ Two days later, however, the *Times of Israel* corrected itself by running another story, this one titled “There Are Still Treblinka Survivors Living. One Tells His Tale.”⁶¹ Having seen earlier reports, the daughter of Leon Rytz reached out to the press to tell of her father's experiences. Rytz lived out his days in Sweden, where he settled not long after the Second World War. Though he was

well-known there up to his death in 2023, his saga had not previously come to the attention of journalists outside his adopted home. After the *Times* and other outlets wrote about Rytz, a new framing of survival at Treblinka began to take hold. The *Times* subsequently relabeled Willenberg the “final survivor of the August 1943 *Treblinka prisoner’s revolt*.”⁶² With italic emphasis the paper intended to show how Willenberg was the last representative of a certain experience, even though he was not the last living survivor of the camp.

Leon Rytz, as he explained to Amanda Borschel-Dan of the *Times*, escaped Treblinka before the revolt. Rytz also survived several other camps during his perilous path to 1945. These facts left Borschel-Dan questioning how we should define and label his experiences. She wondered whether it was “factually correct” to call Rytz a “Treblinka survivor” because he was also imprisoned in Majdanek, Buchenwald, and Bergen-Belsen. Borschel-Dan took her question to Yad Vashem’s Ehud Amir, who assured her that there is “no binding definition of how a Holocaust survivor is labeled.” Borschel-Dan quoted Amir, stating that “a person who was in several camps can be considered a survivor from each camp [in which he was a prisoner].”⁶³

The passing of Samuel Willenberg and the late recognition of Leon Rytz opened new conversations in the media. Noting, as they did, the different kinds of survival stories told by Willenberg and Rytz, media outlets also began to qualify different versions of survival at Treblinka. Willenberg became the last Treblinka revolt survivor while Rytz—at the time of this reporting—took center stage as the last living survivor of the camp and as a pre-revolt escapee. Of equal importance is Borschel-Dan’s search for a proper way to label survival and the differing experiences during the Holocaust. That both of these men are Holocaust survivors was not at all a matter of discussion. While that is easily understood, how we might conceive of and categorize their experiences more specifically was less clear.

Amir’s explanation to the *Times* reporter highlights the fact that there is no single or official way to label Holocaust survivors and their experiences. In addition to this, at present, there is no historiography of the term “survivor” as it relates to a specific place, such as a camp, ghetto, or shooting site during the Holocaust. Though many historians and organizations offer capacious definitions of the wider term “Holocaust survivor,” little if any attention has been paid to how the term “survivor” should be employed locally.⁶⁴ This lack of place-specific understandings of survival is particularly noteworthy in light of the vibrant expansion of spatial Holocaust research in recent years.

As they reacted to the passing of Willenberg and the emergence of Rytz, however, reporters began an exploration of these questions and what their answers might mean for our understandings of the Holocaust. Leon Rytz may

well be the last living voice of survival from this extermination camp. The increasing age of even the youngest child survivors of the Holocaust also means that “last” experience and “last” voice news stories will, sadly, only increase in the coming years. As they do, journalists like the *Times*’s Borschel-Dan will struggle to find prudent and respectful ways to describe the lives and paths of the people they cover. Historians would be wise to get in front of this coming wave of media definitions and experiential descriptions by providing their own. Leading future public discussion, however, is not the only reason scholars should address the definition of survivorship at the places they study.

Though we are no longer be able to call upon someone with direct memories of the camp, we should still be prepared to find another kind of “last” survivor of Treblinka. Many individuals now passed remain unacknowledged survivors of this place. The permanently incomplete nature of any survivor list means that even after the passing of Leon Rytz, others who survived the camp still await recognition. We should keep in mind that the memories and histories of others as yet unrecognized—and the recollections they leave behind—will emerge long after the “last” survivor has passed on.

Conclusion

This chapter provided examples of the many ways in which a localized conceptual framework for the title “survivor” can advance our understandings of perpetration sites, the actions of victims, and the spatial influence of individual places over so-called bystanders. Revolt Survivors compel us to consider where the bounds and power of this camp stopped, complicating any simplistic view of the fences as the limits of local perpetrator power. Escape Survivors, meanwhile, provide an important understanding of how Jewish resistance changed the very face of Treblinka and helped create the conditions needed for revolt planning. Through-Transport Survivors take our knowledge of resistance other than the revolt still further while also allowing us to see how Treblinka fit into the wider Holocaust, as well as how camp routines changed over time. Finally, Jewish Witnesses of Treblinka provide yet another view of the boundaries of this camp as their experiences draw out changing perpetrator intent and provide new information on the impacts of Jewish resistance at Treblinka and elsewhere. These categories and others as yet undefined will benefit scholars of other sites.

No single definition of survivorship or dominant set of experiential categories is likely to emerge. Many of the more than forty-seven thousand camps and ghettos of the Third Reich will require a unique exploration of their own versions of survival. The thousands of mass shooting sites may demand still more reckonings with the idea of localized survivorship. Still, the utility of

these questions is clear. Place-based definitions of survivorship—without creating new lists—will help understand the experiences, choices, and paths of individuals forced to confront Nazi genocide. Spatial studies of the Holocaust will benefit still further from this means of determining the boundaries of their studies.

Increasing the number of survivors from 68 to 262 in the context of a place that killed as many as 925,000 people in no way alters the overwhelming lethality of Treblinka. The importance of analyzing survivorship at Treblinka is instead the creation of an update to Donat's list that is more capable of foregrounding differences in individual paths to survival. The stories of those left off Donat's list deserve recognition and inclusion even while we continue to acknowledge that no collection of names will ever be definitive. The Epilogue provides a new, and still incomplete, list of Treblinka survivors.

Conclusion

My greatest revenge is that I created a beautiful, loving family.

—SAMUEL WILLENBERG, interviewed for Tomlinson, *Treblinka's
Last Witness*

Treblinka was supposed to be a rumor. The Nazi attempt to exterminate European Jewry at this place and others like it was to be just one vaguely whispered part of what Heinrich Himmler called “an unwritten and never-to-be-written page of glory.”¹ With the bodies burned, the fields plowed over, and witnesses gone, little to nothing of what happened at Treblinka would have been known or deeply understood. Nazi defeat and Jewish survival made sure this vision never came to be. While we must rightly credit Soviet and Allied victory for putting an end to the Shoah, we should also recognize that it was Jewish resistance and the preservation of survivor voices through evasion, escape, and the uprising that gave us memory and evidence of what went on inside Treblinka. Victory alone could not do that.

This book has described how Jews trapped inside Treblinka fought back against Nazi genocide and Himmler’s stated goal of future silence. The story revealed here centers the revolt but also takes pains to uncover how many smaller, or less visible, acts of perseverance and resistance fed into and enabled that outcome. Escape and resistance at Treblinka relied upon social networks and geographic place-making strategies. Jewish prisoner leadership created places of resistance by uniting like-minded prisoners and providing them with the geographic access and materials needed to safeguard the lives of coconspirators and, later, to rise up against their captors. This feat was often accomplished by manipulating work detail assignments and suggesting the creation of new work roles or by changing how guards perceived certain areas through various lies and ruses. The prisoner Organizing Committee’s efforts to build

networks and to shape spaces at Treblinka first emerged from relationships Jews brought to the camp from prewar life and later expanded to include new bonds created among work groups within the camp.

Jews sent to Treblinka usually arrived in groups from their own cities and towns of origin. As they disembarked at this extermination camp in its earliest phases, SS guards sometimes selected large numbers of men as replacements for summarily murdered workers, thereby giving area groups an initial foothold in the camp. Brought in as one, prisoners from certain areas tended to remain together—especially in their choice of where to sleep in the barracks. As time went on, the reorganization of Treblinka meant a stabilization of the workforce and the end of large-scale selections from one or another town. From this point on, however, Jewish prisoners basically replaced Nazi guards in the selection of the small number of replacements for slain slave laborers. After the reorganization, an individual might come into the Treblinka workforce through the intervention of a prewar friend. This meant that local networks and preexisting relationships had everything to do with the creation and maintenance of bonds between early prisoners and those who arrived later.

Leveraging Lagerältester Galewski's position and the assistance of other Jews working in the arrival area, Treblinka conspirators found ways to pick their own comrades in resistance. Using Galewski's influence on work assignments, the Organizing Committee found means to put resistance members in the most advantageous work details while simultaneously using lies and suggestion to gain access to spaces within the camp. After much trial, many tragedies, and a few errors, Treblinka prisoners turned networks and the access to space they provided into an armed revolt. As the links in this chain came together, it was the trust these networks enabled that built an uprising predicated upon the ability to safeguard the lives of conspirators, move important individuals and groups within the camp, and control the creation as well as the placement of fighting groups.

This book contributes to our understanding of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust by demonstrating the origins of a relatively well-known event in the long background of prisoner actions that made it possible. The mix of geographic and social network research methods I use could be replicated to analyze other camps and sites or expanded to help answer wider questions in Holocaust and genocide studies. At any time and place, the who, the where, and the what of history are interdependent, making this mix of methods highly advantageous. This is especially true when sources are conflicting, scarce, or lacking in detail. The spatial and social network research methods used here further underpin my analysis of gender and the roles of women in resistance at Treblinka. This book is an example of how we can learn more by

testing testimonies against space and by gendering geographies of historical research.

Survival at Treblinka devotes greater attention to the lives and actions of women at this camp than the entire existing historiography of Treblinka. From the existence of a long-erased camp brothel to women's acts as intelligence gatherers and weapons distributors, what I uncover here restores a small but incredibly important and chronically understudied group to the historical record. Taking this analysis a step further, I also offer explanations for several factors that have long kept women prisoners and survivors at the margins of Treblinka history and memory. Spatial analysis of testimonies provided by male survivors makes it possible for this work to push beyond the evasions of some and the complete erasure of others. Looking at gender and masculinity, meanwhile, helps explain the statements of men who avoided discussion of women's lives at Treblinka and their acts in resistance.

What emerges is a closer understanding of how women took part in resistance and revolt as well as some explanations of why many male survivors chose not to remember those facts publicly later on. Survivors and historians evaded discussion of women's lives at Treblinka, at times, out of a desire to protect women survivors from the latter-day judgment of others. These same surviving men and some of their peers also avoided the topic of women's lives and what they endured at Treblinka in order to protect themselves from the psychologically damaging effects of retelling. What they would not say seems to have a great deal to do with their own masculine conceptions of self as protector. These issues become all the more complicated when we look at how the medium of retelling further weighed on the actual content of what was said. Evidence discussed here indicates that several men were more forthcoming on paper in the years immediately after the war and then far more reticent and avoidant in later oral history interviews. The manner of telling and the audience being told have had an impact on what male survivors have said about women's experiences and traumas during the Holocaust.

It was easier for some male survivors to recount sexual violence in the solitary act of writing or even in testimony to a (likely male) court interviewer than it was for them to tell predominantly female oral historians in their later years. In the public memory of sex, sexual violence, and women's lives during the Holocaust, the timing, medium, and audience all have profound impacts upon what is said and unsaid. Of course, we must also consider that some men might have stayed silent to avoid any judgment of their own actions. While that cannot and should not be ignored, the available sources on Treblinka indicate that these male survivors evaded such topics not to cover up their own actions but rather—in part—out of a desire to protect themselves from gendered

psychological reinjury. It seems these same men also stayed quiet to protect women survivors—living and dead—from the judgment of others and out of some desire to protect later female audiences from the horror of the retelling itself. However we might see that final decision, it does seem to be a responsibility that male survivors took upon themselves in certain settings.

Finally, this book addresses the matter of survival in terms of both how many people emerged from this place alive and what exactly it means to be a survivor of Treblinka. The larger number of survivors listed here could spur further research on this camp, deepening our knowledge of these people and what they endured. Understanding survival in a categorical and well-defined sense, meanwhile, helps clarify the boundaries of Treblinka's power to kill and its evolving role in the Holocaust. While no list of survivors will ever be complete, this update and the analysis of survivorship in this book can help us conceptualize the experiences of Holocaust survivors in greater detail—especially as they leave us. The coming years will see various aspects and experiences of survival defined and redefined in public discourse and scholarly publications. The prefiguring of this coming conversation should help us to honor and acknowledge respectfully the varied experiences of Holocaust survivors as they depart but remain in our collective memory thereafter.

Future Directions for Treblinka Research

Even in my work to categorize and define survival at Treblinka, this book does not stray far from the confines of the camp itself and finds its boundary in time, for the most part, in the predusk hours of August 2, 1943. These spatial and temporal boundaries are deliberate choices to center the narrative specifically on Jewish resistance and survival at Treblinka. This, I believe, is close to unique among secondary sources on this camp. Other historians and even memoir writers move well beyond these topics. Yitzhak Arad's work, while foundational to this and any other study of an Aktion Reinhard camp, covers the entire existence of three separate Nazi facilities.² Beyond Arad, most other books on Treblinka also devote specific sections to resistance while broadening their view to several other topics. Stripping away wider inquiries and foregrounding Jewish survivor sources allow this book to claim a corner of its own. Though I would not have that any other way, ending as the sun set on the revolt does leave unexplored many later episodes of the Jewish experience at Treblinka.

Where did those who escaped during the process of the revolt go? How did they make it through almost two more years of war and Nazi genocide? What did the scars of those days and all those in the camp do to their lives afterward? In what ways were the afterlives of Treblinka survivors different from those of

other Holocaust survivors, if at all? To answer these and other questions I have begun to think about how new research could follow the lives of survivors after the August 2, 1943, revolt. The core question might be: how did each individual deal with the burden of having witnessed this extermination camp? As the sources used in this book show, a sizable group of Treblinka survivors made it the mission of their postwar lives to speak out and seek justice for those murdered at the camp. This same dedicated group devoted extensive time and energy to Holocaust education and projects seeking to preserve the memory of Treblinka victims. Theirs, however, was not the only path after the revolt. For those Treblinka survivors who told their story as much as they could, many more chose to remain silent all the remaining days of their lives. How did all of these people cope, and what were their family lives like after the terrible experiences of an extermination camp?

The efforts of all those who decided to speak highlight another important question: when does resistance end? Should we view work to convict former guards, demand compensation, and preserve memory of the lost as acts of latter-day resistance? To me, the answer to this question is an emphatic yes. Escape Survivors before the revolt and voices that reported on the planning of the uprising both insist that the central goal of resistance was the preservation of witnesses and a desire to tell the world what had happened at this place. For decades after the end of the war, Treblinka survivors traveled to trials and investigations in West Germany, Austria, Poland, Ukraine, the Soviet Union, Israel, and the United States. These men and women routinely paused their lives and traveled thousands of miles to publicly relive their darkest traumas in the hope of putting the killers behind bars and indelibly recording all that the Nazis had done at Treblinka.

With trials and other legal proceedings having largely ended by the 1990s, Treblinka survivors continued their work to preserve memory and history in hundreds of interviews for archival oral history organizations, museums, schools, and documentary films. In their efforts to build a lasting body of evidence, Treblinka survivors sought to ensure that what had happened at this extermination camp would remain unforgettable and undeniable. Today, scholars recognize the attempt to obliterate all traces of the crime as the final phase of genocide.³ In his so-called Speech at Posen, Heinrich Himmler basically declared the Nazi intent to do just that. Survivors fought against that plan long after 1945. Research on the lives of Treblinka survivors after August 2, 1943, would be of value to our knowledge of post-Holocaust survivor choices, the study of resistance, and efforts to understand the legacies of genocide.

Moving up to the present, work on the afterlives of survivors could also look at their descendants and how they have—or have not—made this inheritance

a part of their own identities. In a future soon beyond the “era of the witness,” new generations are already devoting themselves to memory of Treblinka.⁴ In writing this book, I have had the opportunity to observe this as I received invaluable help from the descendants of Treblinka survivors.⁵ Some descendants are deeply involved in memory and teaching, with two second-generation books in print and at least one more on the way.⁶ What will their contributions to the history of Treblinka be? How many will take on this task with the same zeal as their parents? Will the children of those who spoke out often also seek the spotlight, or will the next storytellers come from unfamiliar corners?

Samuel Willenberg’s words atop this conclusion offer a strong indication of how some survivors thought of life after Treblinka. He and most of the others who made it out built new lives and raised families after all they endured. By penning his later memoir, creating his drawings and sculptures, and taking part in so many speaking engagements and interviews, Willenberg made the memory of Treblinka a central focus of his later days. Of all the words and artistic representations he left us, however, it is Willenberg’s statement that his family was his “greatest revenge” that best shows his thoughts on resistance and legacy. His choices show that he saw new life and new joys experienced long after 1945 as continuing resistance beyond survival at Treblinka.

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In honor of my family, I dedicate this book to the people who endured Treblinka.

Appendix

Survivors of Treblinka

The list of survivors in this appendix is a work in progress and a task impossible to conclude. I wish to stress this fact above all else. I hope that my work to expand our knowledge of survival at Treblinka will be seen as a step forward and, ideally, as one part of an ongoing collaborative process of recognition and documentation. Demonstrating the existence of a much larger available source base should spur further research on those killed at this camp as well as the lives and actions of survivors. With these goals in mind, the references in this section are extensive and offer much more than the basic information needed to confirm that each person was a survivor of Treblinka. Nonetheless, these notes are still not exhaustive. We are fortunate, in terms of available research sources, that there are simply far too many survivor documents and materials to include a comprehensive list here.

My work on this list comes after or alongside the important recent efforts of others. The Muzeum Treblinka recently provided a small update to the list of survivors maintained on its website, while Michał Wójcik's 2018 *Treblinka '43: Bunt w Fabryce Śmierci* (Treblinka '43: Revolt in a factory of death) includes an updated list of survivors, as does the book's more recent German-language translation.¹ In 2021, Chris Webb and Michał Chocholatý released a revised edition of their 2014 book *The Treblinka Death Camp: History, Biographies, Remembrance*. This work also includes a new list of survivors from which my efforts benefited greatly.² While we do not always agree on what constitutes survival of Treblinka, Webb and Chocholatý's book is a prime example of the ways in which each successive author can move this work forward.³

The list here follows a philosophy of equality in all experiences at Treblinka. Most important, names are listed in alphabetical order without regard to survival category. These are useful in research and in understanding this history, but I do not want to imply a hierarchy of any kind by recording the identities

of survivors in a list segregated by type of survival. In order to aid researchers interested in finding sources on Revolt Survivors, Escape Survivors, or Through-Transport Survivors, a parenthetical abbreviation appears after the name of each person denoting the means of survival. Those are (RS), (ES), and (TT) for the three main categories. A Means of Survival key lists these categories and other less common paths of survival. One further parenthetical abbreviation is also a common notation in the list. All individuals identified by Alexander Donat on his original list have a (D) after their names.⁴ I have also provided additional sources for these people in the endnotes for all instances in which more information is currently available.

For each individual, this list records the various spellings of the person's name as found in the sources of which I am aware. Some names have quite a few variants. Over the course of the intervening eighty years from uprising to present, survivors, their descendants, historians, and archivists creating and cataloging documents around the world in a multitude of languages have altered and confused these spellings. Some names have been overtranslated, making, for example, Josef Czarny sometimes appear as Joseph Black. The additional matter of differing transliterations from Yiddish- and Hebrew-language sources only adds to the variety. While this list attempts to provide a record of all variations found, the main text of this book defaults to the name most commonly found in the sources or the variant generally used in other secondary literature.

The names of Treblinka survivors killed at a later point during the Holocaust are recorded in italics. This notation, however, should be taken with a grain of salt. The fates of some documented Treblinka survivors are unknown. I place a person's name in italics only if a source definitively states that the individual was killed before the end of the Holocaust. Those for whom conclusive sources have not been located are not italicized. As such, and truly in all regards, the list below is a snapshot of knowledge at this time. It is certain to change in the future.

Finally, I want to comment on one more thing about the nature of survivor lists and the matter of resistance during the Holocaust writ large. Survival and resistance are, by their very nature, situational. Agency, that much-debated term encompassing all means and acts of taking control over one's life and fate, requires opportunity. It further requires a personal recognition of such an opportunity, which can come only from a clear understanding of the moment at hand. The Nazi German SS designed Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka to strip away any clear sense of the moment from their victims. Those disembarking at these camps encountered a maddening rush of brutality and screamed or-

ders that often resulted in a fog of fear and paralysis of the mind. Deliberate and skillful disinformation also robbed people of the awareness required to exercise agency.

From the lie that Jews were being sent east for work as they boarded trains to the deceptive painting and set dressing of Treblinka's arrival platform as an innocuous rail station, everything about this place was a carefully crafted attempt to deny victims any understanding of the moment that could spark resistance. In our privileged hindsight, we should not forget that belief in the existence of extermination camps at this time was anything but logical. While scholars continue to debate whether the Holocaust represents a unique event in comparison to other genocides, the Aktion Reinhard system itself certainly was something altogether new in the long history of human inhumanity. It simply does not make sense to expect that people would be able to fathom a world in which their next stop was a death factory. This is precisely why prisoners organized escapes to warn others. It is also the very reason those runaway messengers were not always believed. When stunned incredulity at last gave way to terrified acceptance of the facts, it was often too late to make any great difference.

Rather than a resistance personality, a prescient ability to predict the future, or some other supposedly distinctive personal quality, what most frequently set apart the people who ended up on this list was the benefit they derived from the selfless acts of others. A friend lent a hand or told them what to do, information made it to them before they got on the train, they were shown an opportunity and leapt at it, or they just ran when others created a chance for them to do so. Among the nearly one million human beings murdered at Treblinka are, without doubt, many who would have grabbed at any chance to fight back and borne any pain or danger that came with it had they only known what was to come. Had they only possessed the opportunity.

The people listed here never claimed to be the best, most talented, or strongest individuals subjected to the horrors of Treblinka. In the end, what mattered most to their survival was chance and chances. Natural though it may be to look at a history as dark and terrible as this and seek heroes, that tendency can also distort reality. The stories of survivors rightly fill us with awe and admiration, but our feelings should come with a recognition that those who lived are no more deserving of our attention and respect than those murdered at this place.

These are the voices that emerged from that darkness to remember and honor all those who never had a chance.

They are the lucky ones.

Survivor List Abbreviations

Name in italics = Survivor of Treblinka later killed during the Holocaust

ES	Escapee Prior to the Revolt
NC	Method of Survival Not Confirmed—Revolt or Escape Survivor
Q	Questionable Account
RS	Revolt Survivor
TI	Transferred to Treblinka I after the Revolt—Escaped from Treblinka I
TT	Through-Transport Survivor
UC	Unique Case
UN	Method of Survival Unknown

The Known Survivors of Treblinka

<i>Akam, Haim</i> (TT)	Haim Akam was a Through-Transport Survivor who arrived at Treblinka with Saul Kuperhand. He was transferred to Treblinka I, where he was later murdered. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, <i>Shadows of Treblinka</i> , 109, 114.
<i>Alembik, Mordechai</i> (ES)	Mordechai Alembik was from Wielun, Poland. He escaped with Leo Lewi (as Lewi confirms in his testimony held by the Ludwigsburg archive) but died at some point later in the Holocaust as recorded by the Wielun Yizkor book: see <i>Sefer zikaron le-kehillat wielun</i> [<i>Wielun Memorial Book</i>] (Wielun Organization in Israel and the Memorial Book Committee in USA, 1971); Statement of Leon Lewi, March 30, 1960, B162/3821 Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg [hereafter BL], pp. 847–49, 847B.
Angrest, Simcha (ES)	Testimony of Simcha Angrest, October 14, 1994, YVA, O.3, File 8382, and O.3, File 3158, Item 3562676.
Aronson, Leib (TT)	After Aronson's arrival at Treblinka II, guards (it appears) chose him, along with sixty to seventy others, for transport to Treblinka I within hours. He later escaped from the Treblinka I labor camp and eventually landed in the Bialystok Ghetto, where the original of his testimony was created. Testimony of Leib Aronson, May 1943 (Bialystok Underground Archive source), YVA, M.II, File 52, Item 3714571, p. 2.
Augustyniak, Czeslaw— formerly Blaustein, Leo (D) (ES)	Statement of Czeslaw Augustyniak, February 2, 1960, B162/3819, BL, pp. 635–37; Statement of Czeslaw Augustyniak, May 30, 1960, B162/3821, BL, pp. 992–99; Statement of Czeslaw Augustyniak, December 14, 1967, B162/3831, BL, pp. 4006–17; Donat, <i>The Death Camp Treblinka</i> , 284–85.

- Bachner, Eddie (TT) Eddie Bachner arrived at Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto in May 1943. He and a group of others were selected after a motorcycle arrived with a message for the SS. Bachner also mentioned the selection of five or six “good looking women,” insinuating that he knew their looks were the reason for their selection and that he knew what would happen to them. He did not elaborate further, however, and he was not asked by his interviewer. Eddie Bachner (Eliasz Bachner), Interview 53923, Tape 2 of 2, starting at 13:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 19, 1997. In a second interview, Bachner estimated that he was one of one hundred people taken out of Treblinka in this transport. Eddie (Eliasz) Bachner, Interview 43304, Tape 4 of 9, 24:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 26, 1998.
- Barbanel* (No first name) (TT) Barbanel, an electrician, was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, III.
- Bandler, Max (ES) Max Bandler escaped from Treblinka as part of a plan to inform the outside world with the help of Shmuel Goldstein and others. He returned to the Koziencie Ghetto (where he was from), but he was not believed. Bandler’s story comes to us through Shmuel Goldstein. It is not certain that Bandler survived the war, but Goldstein’s story seems to indicate that he did. “Szmul [Shmuel] Goldstein,” Memorial and History Page, The Memory of Treblinka Foundation, 2023, <https://memoryoftreblinka.org/szmul-goldstein/>.
- Berger/Bergère, Oskar (D) (ES) Report Prepared by Oscar Berger. No exact date given; series of documents in which the report resides are dated 1938–1951. YVA, TR.21, File 47, Item 7060669; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 285.
- Bergstein, Tadeus (TT) Tadeus Bergstein was a Through-Transport Survivor sent to Treblinka on May 22, 1943, at the end of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising period. He was selected among a group of four hundred and held on the platform overnight before being sent on to Majdanek. His interview with the USC Shoah Foundation is in Portuguese. Thanks go to Ita Gordon for translation assistance. Tadeus Bergstein, Interview 30503, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, June 30, 1997.

- Berko/Berka (RS) Named as fellow Revolt Survivor, fleeing alongside Yaakov Miler in his testimony. Testimony of Yaakov Miler, March 1982 (day not given), YVA, O.3, File 7913, Item 3563554.
- Berman, Minia (UN) Minia Berman is listed as a survivor (method of survival not stated) in the Treblinka Muzeum list update and in Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Muzeum Treblinka, <https://muzeumtreblinka.eu/en/informacje/resistance-and-uprising/>.
- Birman, Szlama (TT) Szlama Birman was a Through-Transport Survivor from the Warsaw Ghetto. He was transported to Treblinka May 12, 1943, during the ghetto uprising. He was chosen (with others, numbers unknown) and sent on to Majdanek. Szlama Birman, Interview 26422, Tape 4 of 8, 22:00–28:00, and Tape 5 of 8, 00:10–02:20. See archival PIQ Report, p. 9, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 26, 1997.
- Blumenfeld, Maniek* (TT) Maniek Blumenfeld was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He later died at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 114.
- Bodak, Josef (TT) Josef Bodak was a Through-Transport Survivor from the one of the last trains out of the Bialystok Ghetto. He believed he was on the last transport. Bodak stated that he was held overnight in Treblinka before being sent on to Blizyn, possibly via Majdanek. Bodak also names a “Diamond,” a young man, as a fellow survivor of Treblinka. Bodak said this man lived in Sydney, Australia, after the war. Without further information, I have not yet placed Diamond on the list. Josef Bodak, Interview 40491, Tape 3 of 6, 20:30–end, Tape 3 of 6, 00:15–07:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, April 23, 1999.
- Bomba, Abraham (D) (ES) Statement of Abraham Bomba, November 4, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1465–66; Statement of Abraham Bomba, November 27, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 521–23; Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, Tape 2 of 7, 22:00–28:30, Tape 3 of 7, 02:40–22:00, Tape 4 of 7, 00:30–27:00, and Tape 5 of 7, 07:05–10:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996.

- Lanzmann, *Shoah* (DVD); Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*; S. D. Singer, ed., *Tshenstokhov: nayer tsugob-material tsum bukh "Tshenstokhover yidn"* [Czenstochov: A new supplement to the book *Czenstochover Yidn*] (United Relief Committee in New York, 1958), 57–59; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 285.
- Boorstein, Moshe (ES) Moshe Boorstein escaped with Simcha Laski and two others in the same outbound train of stolen goods. The two unnamed young men were killed by guards as they tried to jump from the train. As I consider this still dying at the hands of Treblinka-associated German forces, I did not add them to the list as unnamed escape survivors. Simcha Laski, in quoted excerpts of his writing used by Yitzhak Arad, named Boorstein as a fellow escapee who survived at least until they both reached Czestochowa. It is not entirely clear whether Laski or Boorstein survived the war, but it seems Laski did. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 259.
- Boraks, Gustaw/Borax, Gustav/Godel/Godl (D) (RS) In addition to his own testimony, Gustaw Boraks was mentioned by Leo Lewi, also of Wielun, Poland, in his testimony. Lewi calls him "Godel Boraks" and gives his address (in 1960) as Haifa, Israel. Boraks also wrote a section in the Wielun Yizkor book that he signed "Godl" in Yiddish. *Sefer zikaron le-kehillat*; Statement of Leon Lewi, October 21, 1959, B162/3818, BL, pp. 209–17, 216; Statement of Gustaw Boraks, March 15, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1950–53; Statement of Gustaw Boraks, September 15, 1968, B162/3820, BL, pp. 4253–55; Testimony of Gustaw Boraks, September 19, 1967, YVA, O.3, File 3061, Item 3556574; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 285.
- Brat, David (ES) Richard Glazar wrote of David Brat's planned escape, which took place with the intent to warn the Warsaw Ghetto about Treblinka. His fate after escape is unknown. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 22.
- Brenner, Henoch/Hejnoch/Henry—Brener, Enoch (D) (RS) Statement of Henry Brenner, May 7, 1968, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4066–73; Testimony of Hejnoch Brener, October 9, 1945, Materials from the Fischer Trial, Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor, Institute of National Remembrance, Poland, "Chronicles of Terror 39–45," Online Collection, www.chroniclesofterror.pl (hereafter CoT), IPN GK 196/69, pp. 44–47; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 285.

- Brodchandel, Zygmunt (TT) Postcards written by Zygmunt Brodchandel, Undated, YVA, O.75, File 3184, Item 11057057.
- Broide, Avraham (TT) Testimony of Avraham Broide, September 23–24, 1975, YVA, O.3, File 4183, Item 3558303.
- Buchalter, Feival/Fajwel Sharaga (ES) Feival Sharaga Buchalter was in Treblinka for two days before his escape along with two unnamed others. Archival metadata provided by his daughter contains this information. Personal Documents of Frymet Fusman and Fajwel Buchalter (spelled Feival in metadata), Undated, YVA, O.37, File 1161, Item 12065643.
- Bulkowstein, Adek/
Avrom—later Adek
Stein (ES) Adek Stein (Avrom Bulkowstein), Interview 3169, Tape 2 of 12, 13:50–30:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, June 13, 1995. Also mentioned in Zylbersztajn, *L'Chaim*, 225.
- Burke, Charles—
formerly Berkowicz,
Yechiel “Chil” (ES) Baum, “Charles Burke—Chil Berkowicz,” 42–45. Charles Burke, formerly Berkowicz, was named a fellow survivor of Treblinka by Abraham Bomba; see “Statement of Abraham Bomba,” November 27, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 521–23, 522; Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, Tape 2 of 7, 22:00–28:30, Tape 3 of 7, 02:40–22:00, Tape 4 of 7, 00:30–27:00, and Tape 5 of 7, 07:05–10:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996; D. Singer, *Tshenstokhov: nayer tsugob-material tsum bukh “Tshenstokhover yidn”* [Czenstochov: A new supplement to the book *Czenstochover Yidn*] (United Relief Committee in New York, 1958), 57–59.
- Bursztynski, Sura/
Barbara Tyl (ES) Sura Bursztyn/Barbara Tyl was from Wolomin near Warsaw. She was sent to Treblinka in the summer of 1942 and took “advantage of the chaos” there to escape, seemingly at or near the time of arrival. She recounted this story in her evidence to the Righteous Among the Nations authorities of Yad Vashem, though her full testimony has not yet been located. A brief version of her story is available through the Righteous database entries of Jakub and Janina Krajewscy, who hid her for an extended period after her escape. “Ceremony of the Righteous in the Royal Łazienki Park in Warsaw | Polish Righteous,” <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/aktualnosci/ceremonia-sprawiedliwych-w-lazienkach-krolewskich-w-warszawie>; see also <https://collections.yadvashem.org/en/righteous/4028287>.

- Bursztynski, Beno (TT) Beno Bursztynski was a Through-Transport Survivor deported to Treblinka at the time of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Bursztynski made it out with the help of Red Commando member Shloime Skurka. Skurka was a Warsaw rickshaw driver, as was Bursztynski. Skurka told him how to get in the right group to save himself. This information saved his life and kept him from becoming a permanent Treblinka prisoner. Beno Bursztynski, Interview 47938, Tape 5 of 9, 00:50–16:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, November 8, 1998.
- Cegiel, Szymon (ES) Photo of Simon Cegiel in Ghetto Fighters House Archive carries the following metadata description: “Simon was born in Kosow Lacki, Poland, in 1920, the youngest son of Menachem—Mendel and Riwka (nee Kret). He had five older siblings. Cegiel was a carpenter. In 1941, when the Treblinka labor camp was established, he was put to work there. He was sent to the Treblinka extermination camp but escaped with ten other people. After the war, he testified in trials of war criminals.” Photo, “Simon Cegiel, a young Holocaust survivor in Poland,” photo dated 1942 (though the archive doubts this dating), Catalogue Number: 68174, Registry Number: 704143. Ghetto Fighters House Museum, Photo Archive, Haifa, Israel. Szymon Cegiel appears on a list that is part of materials created by Samuel Willenberg. Statement of Samuel Willenberg, Undated (likely 1945), B162/3821, BL, pp. 913–55; Testimony of Samuel Willenberg, Undated (quite early, possibly 1945), YVA, O.3, File 567, Item 3560424.
- Ceranko, Jakob (Q) Jakob Ceranko’s testimony held by Yad Vashem does not make it clear how he survived and whether he was in Treblinka I only or also briefly in Treblinka II. For this reason, I have placed him in the Questionable category until other sources can be located. Testimony of Jakob Ceranko, February 11, 1947, YVA, M.1/M.1.E, File 743, Item 3540995.
- Chaimowitz, Jechiel (ES) Aron Gelbard named Jechiel Chaimowitz as a fellow escapee. Gelbard stated that Jechiel Chaimowitz escaped with him and lived in Tel Aviv, Israel, in 1959. He also called Chaimowitz an engineer by training and trade. The quality of the Gelbard testimony document is quite poor, so it is possible that Jechiel is spelled Jeshiel and the O in Chaimowitz is not a complete certainty. Statement of Aron Gelbard, November 26, 1959, B162/3819, BL, p. 517.

- Chakin, Vivian née Sidranska (TT) Vivian Chakin was named as another survivor from the same transport to Treblinka as Linda Penn. Penn stated that Chakin lived in New York after the war. They were close friends and stayed together all through the war and after. Penn's mother, Riva Kremr, took on Chakin as a daughter of her own after the murder of Chakin's parents at Treblinka. Linda P. Mssa.hvt.1962. Part 1, Segment 3, 00:12:08, University Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (hereafter FVA), January 24, 1992; Bloch, *From Holocaust to Redemption*, 238.
- Chaniak, Abe* (TT) Abe Chaniak was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Chimick, Idel* (TT) Idel Chimick was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 113, 173.
- Chodzko, Mieczyslaw (TT) Mieczyslaw Chodzko, *Évadé de Treblinka*, 13. Chodzko was also mentioned as a fellow survivor of Treblinka by Czeslaw Augustyniak/Leo Blaustein; see Statement of Czeslaw Augustyniak, February 4, 1960, B162/3819, BL, pp. 635–37, 637.
- Ciechanowski, Chaim/Cham (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 285.
- Ciechanowski, Leizer (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 285.
- Cienki (First name unknown)* (ES) Citing “Robert Kuwalek correspondence,” Webb and Chocholatý state that the two Cienki brothers escaped Treblinka to warn the ghetto of their origin, Miedzyrzec Podlaski, where they were turned over to the Germans by ghetto authorities and killed. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 268.
- Cienki (First name unknown)* (ES) Citing “Robert Kuwalek correspondence,” Webb and Chocholatý state that the two Cienki brothers escaped Treblinka to warn the ghetto of their origin, Miedzyrzec Podlaski, where they were turned over to the Germans by ghetto authorities and killed. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 268.
- Cooperman, Yechezkel (ES) Yechezkel Cooperman escaped alongside Abraham Bomba and Charles Burke (then Yechiel “Chil” Berkowicz).

- Yitzhak Arad quotes Bomba speaking about his fellow escapees. It is not clear whether Cooperman survived the war. See Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 260.
- Czarny/Czerny, Josef (D) (RS) Statement of Josef Czerny, August 25, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1679–83; Statement of Josef Czerny, March 27, 1967, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4237–39; *Ivan the Terrible: The Demjanjuk Dossier* (1988). Yad Vashem Film Center, Item 5706; United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979); Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 285–86.
- Czechowicz Frid, Aaron/Aron/Baron—Czechowicz, Aron (D) (ES) Statement of Aron Czechowicz Frid, February 20, 1969, B162/3833, BL, pp. 4393–98; Testimony of Aron Czechowicz, October 11, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 57–59; Testimony of Aron Czechowicz, YVA, O.3, File 552, Item 3561280; Testimony of Aron Czechowicz, YVA, O.3, File 564, Item 3740164; Testimony of Aron Czechowicz, February 20, 1969, YVA, O.3, File 3800, Item 3557570; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 286.
- Diamant, Nachman/Diamant, Nachum (ES) Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 269; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Diskin, Leon (ES) Leon Diskin was in Treblinka for three days, likely working in Camp 1 as a sorter. He escaped with a friend (Moyshe, no last name given, not added to this list for lack of information) on an outbound goods train hidden under clothes. It seems this train took them to Majdanek, where they blended into existing workers to survive. Leon Diskin, Interview 17082, Tape 3 of 5, Segment 21, 11:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, July 14, 1996.
- Doliner, Nuske* (TT) Nuske Doliner was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 111–12, 173.
- Doliner, Usher* (TT) Usher Doliner was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 113, 173.
- Doliner, Yankel* (TT) Yankel Doliner was a Through Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed

- at Treblinka I. Miriam Kuperhand and Saul Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 113, 114, 173.
- Domb, Jakob (D) (RS) Statement of Jacob Domb, December 7, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 545–46; Statement of Jakob Domb, January 17, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1938–41; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 286.
- Duszkiewicz, Berl (UN) Berl Duszkiewicz originally appeared by last name only on the Treblinka Muzeum list update. First name “Berl” from Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Einshindler, Israel (ES) Webb and Chocholatý state that Israel Einshindler was a sorter from Czestochowa who taught Oskar Strawczynski how to do the work there before escaping from the camp shortly after Strawczynski’s arrival. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 269–70.
- Eisner, Yaakov/Jakob (D) (ES) Statement of Jakob Eisner, December 6, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1617–21; Statement of Jakob Eisner, June 6, 1961, B162/3826, BL, p. 1966; Yaakov E. Mssa. hvt.3371, FVA, June 19, 1992. Abraham Bomba called Eisner a fellow escapee who returned to Czestochowa. Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, Tape 5 of 7, 28:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996; Statement of Abraham Bomba, November 27, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 521–23, 522; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 286.
- Epstein, Pinchas (D) (RS) Statement of Pinchas Epstein, December 21, 1959, B162/3819, BL, p. 553; Statement of Pinchas Epstein, June 7, 1960, B162/3824 BL, pp. 1622–29; Statement of Pinchas Epstein, June 13, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1969–71; Statement of Pinchas Epstein, February 1, 1967, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4234–36; Testimony of Pinchas Epstein, YVA, O.3, Tape Number V.T/564, Item 3561624; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 286.
- Farber, Soimele* (TT) Soimele Farber was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later murdered at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 111, 173.
- Faww (No last name) (ES) Sol Rosenberg names Faww (no last name given) as a fellow escapee. Chardkoff, *Sol’s Story*. Sol Rosenberg also mentions Faww in his USC Shoah Foundation interview

- but does not name him. Sol Rosenberg, Interview 10098, Tape 4 of 8, 08:00–20:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, March 9, 1996.
- Finkelstein, Leon/
Finkielstajjn, Lajzer (D)
(RS) Leon Finkelstein/Lajzer Finkielstajjn's comments in his testimony from 1945 and his Ludwigsburg testimony of 1960 are diametrically opposed. In the 1945 testimony, he states that he escaped in the revolt and was active in its planning. In his 1960 testimony, he clearly states that he did not get out in the revolt and instead escaped alone after it in November 1943. This would make him the only known postrevolt escapee from Treblinka II and one of only a few individuals to survive the cleanup and concealment phase that took place after the uprising. Though the names on these two testimonies are not exactly the same, both are the same age, and both were butchers resident in Warsaw before the war. Statement of Lajzer Finkielstajjn, June 21, 1960, B162/3822, BL, pp. 1103–6, 1103; Testimony of Leon Finkelstein, December 28, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/70, pp. 191–93; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 286.
- Finkelstein, Nisan
David (TT) Nisan David Finkelstein was a Through-Transport Survivor who arrived at Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto on May 13, 1943. He was placed back on a train to Majdanek in a group of 570 men. Testimony of Nisan David Finkelstein, July 1977, YVA, O.3, File 3923, Item 3557242.
- Finkelsztejn, Herz (UN) Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; "Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List]," Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Fischmann, Michael
(ES) Michael Fischmann escaped with Edward Weinstein on an outbound stolen-goods train. Fischmann was from Łosice. His fate thereafter is unknown. Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 60–63; Weinstein, Interview 2694, Tape 3 of 7, 00:20–19:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 17, 1995.
- Fleschner, Gilel (UN) In the court statements of former SS guard Franz Suchomel, the witness is asked several times to respond to allegations made by Gilel Fleschner. He specifically responds to Fleschner's testimony of January 20, 1960. Several points about Fleschner emerge in the transcript of this statement by Suchomel. Fleschner was a member

- of the tailor's or furrier's workshop. Suchomel was SS head of his detail. To this date, I have not found a statement by Fleschner himself, but the content of Suchomel's interviews shows that he was a survivor—method unknown. Statement of SS guard Franz Suchomel, October 25, 1960, B162/3823, BL, pp. 1415–26, 1419.
- Frankel, Henry (TT) Henry Frankel (Frankiel before his immigration to the US) was a Through-Transport Survivor deported to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto. He was unloaded at Treblinka May 8, 1943, and placed back on the train the same day with about three hundred young men selected for work. They then went to Majdanek. Henry Frankel, Interview 20142, Tape 7 of 10, 05:30–22:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, September 30, 1996.
- Frydman-Gerberbaum, Morris* (TT) Morris Frydman-Gerberbaum's brother, Adam Frydman, stated that Morris was deported to Treblinka from the aftermath of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on or about May 8, 1943. He arrived at the camp on or about May 10 or 11, 1943, at night. He was then selected among about 350 for transport to Lublin Alter Flughafen/Majdanek the same night. He was later killed at Skarzysko-Kamienna on November 3, 1943. Adam Frydman, Interview 34936, Tape 5 of 10, 24:45–30:00. See also PIQ Report, p. 34, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 6, 1997.
- Frydman, Adam (TT) Adam Frydman was deported to Treblinka in the aftermath of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on or about May 8, 1943. He arrived at the camp with his brother and father on or about May 10 or 11, 1943, at night—he stated that they were unloaded and selected in the dark. The three of them were selected among about 350 for transport to Lublin Alter Flughafen/Majdanek the same night. His brother and father were killed in later camps along their path. Adam Frydman, Interview 34936, Tape 5 of 10, 24:45–30:00. See also PIQ Report, pp. 13, 15, 28, 34, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 6, 1997.
- Frydman, Saul* (TT) Adam Frydman stated that his father, Saul Frydman, was deported to Treblinka in the aftermath of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on or about May 8, 1943. He arrived at the camp on or about 10 or 11 May 1943 at night. He was

- then selected among about 350 for transport to Lublin Alter Flughafen/Majdanek the same night. He was later killed at Majdanek during Aktion Erntefest on November 3, 1943. Adam Frydman, Interview 34936, Tape 5 of 10, 24:45–30:00. See also PIQ Report, p. 28, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 6, 1997.
- Fuks, Mordechai (ES) Testimony of Mordechai Fuks, May 12, 1996, YVA, O.3, File 9124, Item 3563408.
- Gavriel* (No last name) (TT) Gavriel (a butcher by trade) was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 113, 173.
- Gelbard, Aron (D) (ES) Statement of Aron Gelbard, November 26, 1959, B162/3819, BL, p. 517; Aron Gelbard was also named by Abraham Bomba as a fellow Treblinka escapee who returned to Czestochowa. In Bomba's Shoah Foundation testimony tagging and closed captioning, the name is spelled Aaron Gilbert. Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, Tape 5 of 7, 28:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 286.
- Gerstman, Michael (TT) Michael Gerstman was a Through-Transport Survivor from Warsaw. He arrived at the time of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943. Gerstman was placed back on a train the same day with five hundred others and sent to Majdanek. Michael Gerstman, Interview 14516, Tape 3 of 6, 06:40–10:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 8, 1996.
- Glatt, Uryn (NC) In her book, Zilbersztajn makes it clear that Uryn Glatt was a Treblinka survivor but not whether he got out in the revolt or as an escapee. Zylbersztajn, *L'Chaim*, 76, 80.
- Glazar/Glazer, Richard/
Goldschmid, Richard
(D) (RS) Richard Glazar spoke frequently about Treblinka over the years up to his death in 1997. The following is just a selection of the many sources by him or created with his contribution. Statement of Richard Glazar, August 31, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1882–85; Statement of Richard Glazar, September 1, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1886–94; Statement of Richard Glazar, September 4, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1895–1901; Statement of Richard Glazar, September 5, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1902–1913; Statement of Richard Glazar, November 2, 1967, B162/3831, BL, pp. 3845–56; Statement of Richard Glazar,

- November 3, 1967, B162/ 3831, BL, pp. 4000–4005; Statement of Richard Glazar, February 18, 1970, B162/3838, BL, pp. 5506–8; Glazar, *Die Falle mit dem Grünen Zaun*; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*; Lanzmann, *Shoah* (DVD); Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*; Sereny, *Am Abgrund: Gespräche mit dem Henker*, Überarb. Neuausg., 3. Aufl (Piper, 1997); Sereny, *Into That Darkness*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 286–87.
- Gleit, Aron (RS) Testimony of Aron Gleit, November 1971, YVA, O.3, File 3989, Item 3558403.
- Glenwick, Henry
(formerly Gliniewiecki)
(TT) Dr. Henry Glenwick, MD (Gliniewiecki at the time of the war) was a Warsaw-born physician deported to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto in April 1943. He believed he was among the last non-ghetto fighters deported to the camp. At Treblinka, Glenwick was pulled aside by SS among a group of young men selected for through transport to Lublin and eventually Budzyn. Glenwick was selected as a man of working age, and not a doctor. He states that he saw and understood that the selection process was taking place so he removed his glasses to look more physically ready for work. Glenwick also stated that he knew what Treblinka was when he got there from escapees and that he lost his entire family the day he arrived. The Germans sent his group of selected men back out of Treblinka within hours. Thanks to Edward Westermann for bringing Henry Glenwick to my attention. Henry Glenwick, *A Physician Under the Nazis: Memoirs of Henry Glenwick* (Hamilton Books, 2011), 59–60.
- Golaszewski, Henryk/
Henric (formerly
Epsztein, Haim) (ES) Brother of Zenon Golaszewski (formerly Zalman Epsztein); notes and research conducted by Leah Edelstein-Keshet, a descendant of the Golaszewski family, in possession of the author.
- Golaszewski, Zenon
(formerly Epsztein,
Zalman) (ES) Statement of Zenon Golaszewski, December 5, 1965, Gerichte Rep. 388, Nr. 755—Band 32C, Duisburg Branch, State Archive of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany (hereafter DB), pp. 276–83; notes and research conducted by Leah Edelstein-Keshet, a descendant of the Golaszewski family, in possession of the author.

- Goldberg, Sam/
Shmulke/Shmulik (RS) Sam Goldberg, Interview 30760, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, July 13, 1997. Shmuel “Samuel” Goldberg, Family Oral History Interview with Shmuel “Samuel” Goldberg, interview by Shlomo Goldberg, Transcript, 1991, in possession of the author courtesy of Karen I. Treiger; Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*; Shmuel “Samuel” Goldberg, “Between Stok and Treblinka [*Tsvishn stok un treblinke*],” 429–34; Tsudiker, *The Chronicle of Stok (Near Wengrow)*.
- Goldberg, Szymon/
Shimon (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Goldfarb, Abraham/
Avram (D) (RS) Statement of Abraham Goldfarb, November or December 21, 1959 (date blurry on document), B162/3819, BL, p. 550; Statement of Abracham Goldfarb, June 11, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1967–68; Statement of Abraham Goldfarb, June 14, 1961, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1607–16; Testimony of Avram Goldfarb, March 13, 1961, YVA, O.3, File 1846, Item 3556004; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Goldstein, Alexander
(TT) Alexander Goldstein arrived at Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto on May 12, 1943. He was placed back on an outgoing train after a selection in which he was chosen as one of one hundred to leave—likely all young men. Goldstein’s mother arrived at Treblinka with him and was killed there. Alexander Goldstein, Interview 25297, Tape 3 of 5, 00:25–00:00. See also PIQ Report, p. 17, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 30, 1997.
- Goldstein, Shmuel/
Szmul (RS) Shmuel Goldstein arrived at Treblinka from the Kozenice Ghetto. He worked as a sorter for five months and stated that he was part of resistance planning. His narrative of survival at the camp also mentions his help with the escape of Max Bendler, a man also from Kozenice. Goldstein survived by escaping on the day of the revolt. His information comes from a book in progress by his son Paul Goldstein. Thanks to Avinoam Patt for bringing this to my attention. “Szmul [Shmuel] Goldstein,” Memorial and History Page, Memory of Treblinka Foundation, accessed September 19, 2023, <https://memoryoftreblinka.org/szmul-goldstein/>.

- Gordon, Zelda (TT) Zelda Gordon, RG-50.005.0018, Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter JTHOHA, USHMM). March 6, 1984. Zelda G., Mssa.hvt.0448, FVA, March 6, 1983.
- Gottlieb, Karl (ES) Oscar Berger stated that he escaped alongside Karl Gottlieb by hiding on an outbound stolen-goods train. Berger does not provide Gottlieb's later fate. Report Prepared by Oscar Berger, no exact date given, series of documents in which it resides dated 1938–1951, YVA, TR.21 File 47, Item 7060669.
- Gradel, Chaim (ES) Chaim Gradel and three unnamed others (two men and a woman) escaped Treblinka by bribing Ukrainian guards. He states that these same guards ran away at the same time that he and his group did. Testimony of Chaim Gradel, June 25, 1945, YVA, O.33, File 161, Item 3540911.
- Gray, Martin/
Grayewski/Grynberg,
Meitek (Q) Some dispute the story of survival at Treblinka that appears in Martin Gray's memoir. I have elected to leave Gray on the list of survivors under the Questionable category. *Seeking Martin Gray* (2006), Yad Vashem Film Center, Item 82565; Martin Gray, *For Those I Loved*, ed. Max Gallo, 35th anniversary exp. ed. (Hampton Roads, 2006); Martin Gray-Grynberg, Interview 8605, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 29, 1996.
- Grinberg, Jehoszua (ES) Testimony of Jehoszua Grinberg, August 1971, YVA, O.3, File 3494, Item 3557027.
- Grinberg, Tadeusz/
Tanhum—Greenberg,
Tanchum (D) (RS) Statement of Tadeusz Grinberg, January 19, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1862–68; Statement of Tadeusz Grinberg, June 11, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1869–70; Memoirs of Tanchum Grinberg, December 10, 1945, YVA, M.49/M.49.P, File 153, Item 3548142; Testimony of Tanchum Greenberg, December 1961, YVA, O.3, File 568, Item 3557277; Tanhum Grinberg, "The Revolt in Treblinka," in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 214–23; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Grinsbach, Eliahu (D)
(RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Gross, Yosef (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Grubstein, K. Jekutiel
(TT) Testimony of K. Jekutiel Grubstein, Wartime document accessioned 1947, YVA, O.3, File 3603, Item 3560485.

- Gutman, Józef (ES) Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 274; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Helfand, Adam (UN) Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Helfing, Isadore (RS) Isadore Helfing, RG-50.042.0014. JTHOHA. USHMM. March 9, 1992. Isadore H., Mssa.hvt.0413, FVA. December 3, 1983. Isadore Helfing, Interview 5512, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 15, 1995.
- Hellman/Helman/
Hermann, Szlomo/
Shlomo/Schlomo (D)
(RS) Statement of Shlomo Hellman, February 6, 1960, B162/3820, BL, pp. 673; Statement of Shlomo Hermann, June 6, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1630–32; Testimony of Szlomo Helman, June 7, 1961, YVA, O.3, File 2267, Item 3555994; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Herschkowitz (No first
name—father) (ES) A father and son named Herschkowitz escaped with Abraham Krzepicki. Krzepicki’s writing is the original source. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 135; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 275.
- Herschkowitz (No first
name—son) (ES) A father and son named Herschkowitz escaped with Abraham Krzepicki. Krzepicki’s writing is the original source. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 135; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 275.
- Jacobskind, Lejzer (UN) “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka; spelled Jakóbski in Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*.
- Jacobskind, Lejzer (UN) “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka; spelled Jakóbski in Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*.
- Jakubowicz, Jakob/Jacob
(D) (ES) Statement of Jakob Jakubowicz, November 20, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 409–10; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Jankowski, Kalman (D)
(TI) Statement of Kalman Jankowsky, November 16, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 403–8; Statement of Kalman Jankowski, February 11, 1960, B162/3820, BL, pp. 821–26; Statement of Kalman Jankowsky, October 12, 1967, B162/3831, BL, pp. 3821–28; Statement of Kalman

- Jankowski, May 29, 1970, B162/3839, BL, pp. 5595–98; Testimony of Kalman Jankowski, August 25, 1960, YVA, TR.21, File 93, Item 7217722, pp. 132–36; Statement of Kalman Jankowski, November 16, 1959, BL, B162, F3819, pp. 403–8; Statement of Kalman Jankowski, May 29, 1970, B162/3839, BL, pp. 5595–98, 5596; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Johnson, Anneliese
(born Wegner) (Q) Anneliese Johnson (born Wegner) states that she escaped from Treblinka II during the revolt on August 2, 1943, in her memoir *Yesterday's Todays*. Without in any way wishing to doubt her account, much of what she says in her writing is unique. Johnson states that she is from German Pomerania and was deported on a train to Treblinka from this area. No trains went to Treblinka from that place. The timing of her stated arrival at the camp and other details of her memoir make her account problematic and perhaps the result of faulty memory of another camp. Johnson, *Yesterday's Todays*.
- Karpman, Feliks (ES) Feliks and his brother Mordka Karpman escaped Treblinka. Feliks Karpman, RG-50.488.0150, JTHOHA, USHMM, July 11, 2002, timecoded notes, p. 2.
- Karpman, Mordka (ES) Mordka Karpman escaped Treblinka alongside his brother Feliks Karpman. He survived the war and died of cancer in the US in 1961. Feliks Karpman. RG-50.488.0150, JTHOHA. USHMM, July 11, 2002, timecoded notes, p. 2.
- Kaufman, Haskel* (ES) Haskel Kaufman was a cousin of Abraham Bomba and escaped with him but was later murdered at Buchenwald. Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, Tape 2 of 7, 22:00–28:30, Tape 3 of 7, 02:40–22:00, Tape 4 of 7, 00:30–27:00, and Tape 5 of 7, 07:05–10:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996.
- Kaufman, Jozef (ES) Jozef Kaufman was identified as a fellow escapee by Pejsach Leon “Poldek” Rytz/Ryczwol. He survived the war and later reunited with Leon per a Swedish online news article. Thanks go to Svea Larson for translation from the Swedish. Borschel-Dan, “There Are Still Treblinka Survivors Living, One Tells His Tale”; Eva Janzon, “Överlevande: ‘Jag berättar för att hedra de döda,’” News Magazine, *Världen idag*, January 25, 2019, <https://www.varldenidag.se/reportage/overlevande-jag-berattar-for-att-hedra-de-doda/460436>.

- Kelin, Judah (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Klaper, Michael (TT) Michael Klaper was the brother-in-law of Maurice Markus and survived alongside Markus and Dr. Pupke. Testimony of Maurice Markus, March 21–22, 1963, YVA, TR.21, File 103, Item 7217755.
- Klaynman, Moyshe/
Klajnman Mosze (RS) Unpublished memoir of Moyshe Klaynman, written between 1944 and 1947, YVA, M.49, File 118, Item 3547904; also listed as Mosze Klajman in Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*.
- Kohn, Shalom/Kon,
Stanisław (D) (RS) Statement of Schalom Kohn, November 12, 1959, B162/3818, BL, pp. 379–81; Statement of Shalom Kohn, July 18, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1644–50; Statement of Shalom Kohn, May 9, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1571–73; Testimony of Stanisław Kon (Shalom Kohn), October 7, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 16–20; Shalom Kohn (Stanislaw Kon), “The Treblinka Revolt,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 224–30; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Kolski, Abraham/
Avraham/Abram (RS) Testimony of Avraham Kolski, January 1980, YVA, O.3, File 4102, Item 3558223; Abraham Kolski, RG-50.030.0113, JTHOHA. USHMM, March 29, 1990; Abram Kolski, Interview 49970, Tape 2 of 8, 13:30–28:00, Tape 3 of 8, 00:30–27:30, Tape 4 of 8, 01:30–27:00, Tape 5 of 9, 03:00–13:20, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, July 29, 1999.
- Kompanijec, Henryk
(ES) Thanks go to R. Tyndorf for bringing this survivor and source to my attention. Malgorzata Piorkowska, *Sprawiedliwi i ocaleni: Mieszkancy Wegrowa i okolic, pomagajacy Zydom w latach okupacji* (Towarzystwo Milosnikow Ziemi Wegrowskiej; Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. A. Cieszkowskiego w Wegrowie, 2012), 119.
- Kon, Abe (D) (RS) Statement of Abe Kon, October 9, 1945, B162/3820, BL, pp. 669–72; Testimony of Abe Kon, October 9, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 37–39; Testimony of Abe Kon, YVA, O.3, File 549, Item 3561279; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Kornhendler, Jonas (ES) Jonas Kornhendler was deported to Treblinka from the Czestochowa Ghetto around Yom Kippur 1942 (late September). He was a sorter and a member of the Tarnungskommando outside the fences. He escaped with one other man from Czestochowa over the fences after

- two weeks in the camp. Jonas Kornhendler, Interview 30369, Tape 1 of 4, 20:00–26:00, and Tape 2 of 4, 00:15–13:30. See also PIQ Report, pp. 3,5,7, and 14, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, June 30, 1997.
- Koszycki, Jacob (D)
(RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Krawiec, Abe* (TT) Abe Krawiec was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Krawiec, Eli* (TT) Eli Krawiec was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 111, 173.
- Krawiec* (No first name)
(TT) Krawiec (no first name found) was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 106, 109, 173.
- Krawiec, Kałman (Q) Kałman Krawiec could be the same person already recorded on the list under the surname Krawiec without a first name. In light of this, I have placed him in the questionable category. Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Kremr, Riva (TT) Riva Kremr was Linda Penn’s (formerly Luba Kremr) mother. Riva Kremr also survived Treblinka after a stay of one night. Her story was passed on by Linda Penn in a Fortunoff Archive interview. Riva Kremr survived the war and lived in New York City and, later, Houston with her daughter. Linda P. Mssa.hvt.1962, FVA, January 24, 1992.
- Kruk (No first name)
(RS) Chil Rajchman said that Kruk was from Plock, Poland, and escaped Treblinka alongside him on the day of the revolt—his later fate is unknown. Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 104; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 276.
- Krzepicki, Abraham/*
Yaakov (ES) Testimony of Menachem Krzepicki, 1967, YVA, O.3, File 3220, Item 3557351; Abraham Krzepicki, “Eighteen Days in Treblinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 77–145.

- Kudlik, Alexander
“Arie”/Aleksander (D)
(RS) Statement of Alexander “Arie” Kudlik, October 2, 1944, B162/3830, BL, pp. 3673–75; Statement of Alexander “Arie” Kudlik, December 7, 1959, B162/3820, BL, pp. 663–64; Statement of Arie Kudlik, June 30, 1960, B162/3824 BL, pp. 1663–68; Statement of Arie Kudlik, June 11, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1954–55; Testimony of Aleksander Kudlik, October 10, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 52–54; Testimony of Aleksander Kudlik, YVA, O.3, File 562, Item 3740157; Testimony of Aleksander Kudlik, YVA, O.3, File 550, Item 3557813; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Kulawy, Sam (Q) Sam Kulawy’s oral history interview is inconclusive. If more confirmation evidence can be found, Kulawy may well be listed as a Through-Transport Survivor. He stated that he was deported from the Biala Podlaska Ghetto as it was liquidated (among the last to leave in a group of men forced to clean the ghetto). He states that he was at Treblinka for eight days and then was sent on to Auschwitz, though he twice slips in his interview and says Majdanek instead. This survival trajectory is abnormal, and the interview shows the frailty of memory. For these reasons I have left Kulawy in the Questionable category. Sam Kulawy, Interview 2697, Tape 2 of 4, 18:10–20:30, Tape 3 of 4, 00:30–5:45, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 18, 1995.
- Kuperhand, Saul (TT) Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*.
Kuperhand, Usher (TT) Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 108–9.
Kuperhand, Yakov-Hirsh (TT) Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 108–9.
- Lachman/Lackman, Sol
(Solomon) (D) (RS) Sol Lackman, Interview 16282, Tape 1 of 4, 26:00–29:00, Tape 2 of 4, 00:45–29:30, Tape 3 of 4, 00:30–04:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, February 4, 1996. Also listed as Szaja/Salek Lachman in Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Laks, Moszek/Mietek—
Laks, Moishe-Mordechai
(D) (RS) Moishe-Mordechai Laks was named a fellow survivor of Treblinka (method of survival not stated/unknown) by Abraham Bomba. Statement of Abraham Bomba, November 27, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 521–23, 522; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.

- Laski/Leski, Simcha—
Simon/Simcha-Simon
(ES) Simcha-Simon Leski and Simcha Laski are the same person named in different sources. Arad names Simcha Laski as an escape survivor from Warsaw who was transported to Treblinka at the end of July 1942 and escaped four days later. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 259. Arad is quoting from (in his citation, transliteration, and translation) Israel Kaplan, ed., *Fun Letzten Churbn*, no. 3, Munich, October–November 1946; Simcha-Simon Leski, Interview 19361, Tape 2 of 5, 10:30–26:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 26, 1996.
- Leff, Haim* (TT) Haim Leff was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Leff, Moishe* (TT) Moishe Leff was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Leifer, Itzel* (TT) Itzel Leifer was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Leizerovich, Mikhael
(ES) Testimony of Mikhael Leizerovich, January 6, 1992, YVA, O.3, File 6744, Item 3560373.
- Lerman, Ben (TT) Ben Lerman, RG-50.431.0469, JTHOHA, USHMM, June 26, 1997; Ben Lerman, MUA_GA_Lerman, The Generation After Oral History Project of Milwaukee, WI, Marquette University Libraries, October 5, 1983. Four local newspaper stories covering Ben Lerman provided to the author courtesy of Jay Hyland and Ellie Gettinger of the Milwaukee Jewish Museum; notes from telephone conversations and email correspondence with the daughter of Ben Lerman in possession of the author; Ben L. Mssa.hvt.1023, Part 2, Segment 13, 00:13:48, Segment 14, 00:19:48, FVA, April 22, 1987.
- Levi, Robert (UC) Robert Levi is the only German Jew known to have survived Treblinka. His is a unique case because he spent most of his time in Treblinka I, though he was forced to help build the original Treblinka II gas chambers and was present as the camp was constructed and first opened. His testimony shows intimate knowledge of the earliest killing procedures and other previously unknown

- incidents. Testimony of Robert Levi, August 5, 1960, YVA, TR.21, File 85, Item 7188907; Statement of Robert Levi, April 19, 1951, B162/3817, BL, pp. 133–133B; Statement of Robert Levi, March 7, 1960, B162/3820, BL, pp. 786–94.
- Levi/Lewi, Leon/Leo (D) (ES) Statement of Leo Lewi, October 21, 1959, B162/3818, BL, pp. 209–17; Statement of Leo Lewi, November 13, 1959, B162/3818, BL, pp. 376–77; Statement of Leo Lewi, March 30, 1960, B162/3821 BL, pp. 847–49; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Lewin, Pinek* (TT) Pinek (possibly diminutive of Pinchas) Lewin was confirmed as a fellow short-stay survivor sent on to Majdanek by Thaddeus Stabholz. Stabholz also stated that Lewin had twice previously escaped from trains to Treblinka, returning to Warsaw each time. Escapes happened in August 1942 and January 1943. Lewin was also in Auschwitz with Stabholz after Majdanek. He was murdered by a “Lagerkapo” in Auschwitz-Birkenau after a period there of at least two months. Stabholz, *Seven Hells*, 5, 10, 142.
- Lewkowicz, David “Dudek” (ES) Lewkowicz, “What I Saw in Treblinka,” 227–36; Testimony of Dudek Lewkowicz, YVA, O.3, File 526, Item 3557790.
- Lewkowicz/Levkovitz, Sonia/Sonja—nee Grabinska/Grabinski (D) (RS) Statement of Sonja Lewkowicz (née Sonja Grabinska), November 8, 1959, B162/3818, BL, pp. 179–80; Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, June 23, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1657–62; Testimony of Sonia Levkovitz, YVA, O.3, File 4181, Item 3558301; Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, November 8, 1959, B162/3818, BL; Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, June 23, 1960, B162/3824, BL; Testimony of Sonia Lewkowicz, United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979); Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 287.
- Liber, Sol (TT) Sol Liber arrived at Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the uprising there. He had been a fighter in the ghetto uprising. Out of his train of 3,600 Jews, 500 young men, himself included, were chosen to return to Warsaw to clean up after the fighting. They left Treblinka after about two hours and traveled to Lublin, where the Germans learned 500 Greek Jews had already been brought to Warsaw to complete this work. Because of this, Liber and his group were left at Majdanek. See Sol Liber, Interview 58, Tape 3 of 5, 21:05, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 11, 1994.

- Lieberman, David (ES) Statement of David Lieberman, June 7, 1971, B162/3839, BL, pp. 155–57; David Lieberman, Interview 2298, Tape 2 of 5, 01:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 3, 1995.
- Liebeskind, Aron* (ES) Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Clarendon Press, 2005), 192–93; “Music and the Holocaust,” World ORT: Educating for Life, accessed October 31, 2016, <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/>.
- Linder, Eli (ES) Webb and Chocholatý state that Eli Linder escaped on an outbound goods train and returned to Warsaw. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 279.
- Lindwasser, Abraham (D) (RS) Statement of Abraham Lindwasser, December 21, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 516; Statement of Abraham Lindwasser, July 6, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1669–76; Statement of Abraham Lindwasser, March 7, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1959–63; Statement of Abraham Lindwasser, April 18, 1961, B162/3826 BL, pp. 1964–65; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Lipman, Bernard (ES) Bernard Lipman was deported to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto. Dating from his testimony is difficult, but it is clear that he was at Treblinka early and definitely well before the ghetto uprising. He escaped the camp on the same day he arrived by hiding on an outbound stolen-goods train. Bernard Lipman, Interview 55045, Tape 1 of 1, 21:30–26:30 and 36:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, April 24, 1994.
- Litwak, Ignac (ES) Statement of Ignac Litwak, December 9, 1964, Gerichte Rep. 388, Nr. 775—Band 32C, DB, pp. 281–83.
- Loddick, Ella (ES) Ella Loddick was a friend of Abraham Bomba. He escaped from Treblinka, supposedly killing a Ukrainian guard in the process. Loddick returned to the Czestochowa Ghetto and is said to have married at this time, but he died soon after. How he died and whether this was during or after the Holocaust is not stated. Webb and Chocholatý cite Abraham Bomba oral history interview: Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 279.

- Lonchik (No first name)*
(TT) “Mr. Lonchik,” called an accountant (no first name given), was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 113, 173.
- London (No first name)*
(TT) “Mr. London” (no first name given), a pharmacist by trade, was a Through-Transport Survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Luck, Moshe (D) (RS)
Markoff, Benjamin
“Ben” (TT) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
Benjamin “Ben” Markoff was a Through-Transport Survivor sent to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the ghetto uprising. He dated his six hours in Treblinka to April 27 or 28, 1943. He also named his friend Morris Pilberg as a survivor of the same transport, in which about three hundred were selected for transport on to Majdanek. Benjamin Markoff, Interview 50206, Tape 2 of 6, 20:30–25:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, September 18, 1999. Morris Pilberg named Ben Markoff as a fellow Through-Transport survivor from the same train; see Morris Pilberg, Interview 1879, Tape 5 of 8, 12:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, April 18, 1995.
- Markus (D) (RS)
Markus, Maurice (TT) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
I believe that Maurice Markus is not the “Markus” on the Alexander Donat list. Maurice Markus is documented in a German trial testimony to which Donat had access. It is unlikely that Donat found this same Markus and did not get the first name from a source such as this trial record. Donat’s entry for “Markus” does not give any information other than this single name. For the Yad Vashem testimony of Maurice Markus, see Testimony of Maurice Markus, March 21–22, 1963, YVA, TR.21, File 103, Item 7217755; for Donat’s listing of Markus, see Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Mattel, Morton (RS) Morton Mattel, RG-50.347.0001, JTHOHA, USHMM, July 29, 1981.
- Medrzycki, Anshel (ES) Anshel Medrzycki escaped from Treblinka and teamed up with Abraham Krzepicki in the forest during September 1942. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 279.

- Miedziński, Szmul (UN) Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Mieczyslaw, Pan/
Stelmachowicz, Pan (ES) Pan Mieczyslaw, who hid afterward in Warsaw under the name Pan Stelmachowicz, escaped from Treblinka soon after his arrival (likely the same day) by hiding in the clothes piles of an outbound goods train. Guards searched this clothing by stabbing at it with pitchforks, and he was wounded in the leg by this but not discovered. According to the source, Pan Mieczyslaw died of a massive heart attack not long after the war, never having fully recovered from the stress and toll of his experiences. Note that the source refers to him escaping and arriving at Treblinka on trucks, but it is likely that this is a mistake and that a train wagon is the reality. His story is recounted by Blanca Rosenberg in her memoir *To Tell at Last*. Special thanks to Richard Tyndorf for alerting me to this survivor and the book in which his fate is recorded. Blanca Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last: Survival Under False Identity, 1941–45* (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 127, 128, 171.
- Milgraum/Milgroym,
Naftali (ES) Naftali Milgraum was an Escape Survivor who spent four days in Treblinka. He was deported to the camp directly from a jail in Czestochowa. In a planned escape, he and two unnamed others made it out of Camp 1 by going under the fence near the Lazarett. Milgraum’s testimony is a part of the Perlman Collection of sources on the Holocaust that made their way to Mandate Palestine, 1942–1943. His inclusion in this collection shows how far the word of escapees traveled even during the war. It does not seem that Milgraum made it to Mandate Palestine himself. Thanks go to Michal Friedman for Hebrew-language translation assistance. Testimony of Naftali Milgraum, 1942–1943, YVA, O.12, File 53, Item 5408698.
- Miller, Yaakov/Miler/
Miller, Jacob/Müller,
Jakob (RS) Testimony of Yaakov Miler, March 1982, YVA, O.3, File 7913, Item 3563554; “Eyewitness Testimony 47. The Uprising in Treblinka,” 264.
- Mitelberg, M. (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Moniek (No last name) (ES) Moniek was named as a fellow escapee by Sol Rosenberg. See Chardkoff, *Sol’s Story*. This is not the same person as Moniek Salzberg as suggested in the revolt as explained by Yaakov Miler in a testimony held by Yad Vashem. See

- Testimony of Yaakov Miler, March 1982, YVA, O.3, File 7913, Item 3563554; Sol Rosenberg, Interview 10098, Tape 4 of 8, 08:00–20:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, March 9, 1996.
- Mordski, Leizer* (ES) Leizer Mordski escaped from Treblinka by hiding in an outbound stolen-goods train according to his friend Edward Weinstein, though he was later killed in early July 1944 by antisemites in the Polish Armia Krajowa (Home Army). Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 61–62.
- Mydło, Mojżesz/Mydło, Morris/Moishe (ES) Morris Mydło was deported to Treblinka from the Kielce Ghetto very early in the existence of the camp. He believed he arrived in June or July of 1942. July is the most likely on the basis of the actual timeline of Treblinka. He escaped from the camp about three days after his arrival by hiding on an outbound stolen-goods train. The Polonized version of his name comes from the Treblinka Museum List Update. His Shoah Foundation testimony provides all the information presented here and allows his categorization as an escape survivor. Morris (Moishe) Mydło, Interview 35486, Tape 1 of 4, 23:30–28:40, Tape 2 of 4, 02:05–09:45, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, November 9, 1997; “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List],” Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Naszewski, Hirsh (UC) Hirsh Naszewski was sent to Treblinka before Treblinka II opened. He was resident in Treblinka I (most likely) and from there commuted to help build Treblinka II, much like Robert Levi. He then escaped Treblinka and made his way back to Stoczek. Testimony of Hirsh Naszewski, May 1967, YVA, O.3, File 3198, Item 3557071. Confirmed with the assistance of Richard Tyndorf.
- Newerstein/Nuwerstein, Abraham (TT) Abraham Newerstein was a Through-Transport survivor sent to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the ghetto uprising. He arrived at the camp May 8, 1943. Newerstein initially stepped out as an electrician when guards asked for someone with those skills but was warned by Treblinka workers that this would be fatal and switched to a group of men selected as carpenters. These men were placed on trucks and sent directly to Budzyn. Abraham Newerstein, Interview 12386, Tape 2 of 5, 12:00–22:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, February 22, 1996.

- Nieplotnik, Shepsel* (TT) Shepsel Nieplotnik was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 74, 109, 111, 113, 173.
- Nieplotnik, Shie* (TT) Shie Nieplotnik was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 74, 74, 109, 111, 173.
- Novodvorski, David (ES) David Novodvorski was identified as a Treblinka survivor by Yisrael Gutman in his book on resistance at Warsaw. Novodvorski arrived at Treblinka in August 1942 and escaped in the same week, see Israel Gutman, מרדכי וארשה אנילביץ' ולחימת גיטו מרד הנצורים: [Revolt of the besieged: Mordechai Anielewicz and the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto] (Yad Vashem, 1993), 239.
- Oleg* (No last name) (TT) Oleg (no last name given) was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Pachter, Michel (Moyshe) (TT) Michel (Moyshe) Pachter's oral history interview and memoir show that both he and his brother Zev (or Zeev) Pachter were Through-Transport survivors of the same train. Michel (Moyshe) Pachter, Interview 5173, Segment 88, 25:28, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, October 30, 1995. Pachter, *Varsovie, Treblinka, Majdanek, Skarzysko, Czestochowa*. Thanks go to Alice C. M. Kwok for translations from the French.
- Pachter, Zeev/Zev (TT) Michel (Moyshe) Pachter's oral history interview and memoir show that both he and his brother Zev (or Zeev) Pachter were Through-Transport survivors of the same train; see Pachter, Michel (Moyshe). Interview 5173, Segment 88. 25:28, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, October 30, 1995; Pachter, *Varsovie, Treblinka, Majdanek, Skarzysko, Czestochowa*. Thanks go to Alice C. M. Kwok for translations from the French. See also Zev Pachter's own interview: Zeev (Zev) Pachter, Interview 31902, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 23, 1997.
- Pecanowski/Pacanowski, Moshe/Mosze (D) (ES) Statement of Mosze Pacanowski, June 15, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1677–78; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.

- Penn, Linda/Kremr (Kremer), Luba (TT) Linda Penn, Interview 38042, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 11, 1998; Linda Penn, Interview 55144, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 24, 1992; Linda P. Mssa.hvt.1962, Part 1, Segment 3, 00:12:08, FVA, January 24, 1992; Riva Kremr, Interview 38051, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 10, 1998.
- Perelstein, Leon (RS) Yoram Lubling names Leon Perelstein as a survivor of the Treblinka revolt and recounts his story of Alfred Galewski's suicide on the day of the revolt. Lubling cites the Yad Vashem Archive source YVA M.49.p/106; see Lubling, *Twice-Dead: Moshe Y. Lubling*, 122; Webb and Chocholaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 281.
- Peretz, Asher/Ashert (Q) Photo of Asher Peretz in Ghetto Fighters House Archive carries the following caption: "Asher Peretz, a former inmate in the Treblinka camp. He was a witness in the war crimes trial of the camp's staff." Photo, "Asher Peretz, a former inmate of the Treblinka camp," dated only "Postwar," Catalogue Number 11381, Registry Number 17753, Ghetto Fighters House Museum, Photo Archive, Haifa, Israel. Also listed as Ashert Peretz in Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*. I placed Peretz in the Questionable category because these sources are less than conclusive—no explanation of his survival is given.
- Perakowski, Marek (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Pilberg, Morris (TT) Morris Pilberg was deported to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto around the time of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. He arrived at Treblinka around May 1943 (note that in his interview he is one year off—says 1942). He was then chosen as one of 320 sent on to Majdanek/Budzyn. This same train is mentioned by many others. See his USHMM (audio only) oral history interview: Morris Pilberg, RG-50.462.0762, JTHOHA, USHMM, April 22, 1985. See also "Filling their Hearts Up," *South Florida Sentinel* (Fort Lauderdale, FL), March 30, 2006; Morris Pilberg, Interview 1879, Tape 5 of 8, 12:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, April 18, 1995. Pilberg's friend Benjamin Markoff named him as a fellow survivor of the same transport and described the event in the same detail as Pilberg. Markoff dated their arrival at Treblinka to April 27 or 28, 1943; see Benjamin Markoff,

- Interview 50206, Tape 2 of 6, 20:30–25:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, September 18, 1999.
- Pinchesowitz, Meyer (TT) Meyer Pinchesowitz was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 113, 173.
- Piskorz, Benjamin (TT) “Benjamin P.,” chapter 10, in Donald L. Niewyk, ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998); David P. Boder, “David P. Boder Interviews Benjamin Piskorz; September 1, 1946; Tradate, Italy: Voices of the Holocaust Project,” Online Archive, trans. David P. Boder, Voices of the Holocaust, Paul V. Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology, 2009, <https://voices.library.iit.edu/interview/piskorzB>.
- Plaszewski, Lejbusz (ES) Lejbusz Plaszewski escaped Treblinka in an unnamed group of nine. Testimony of Lejbusz Plaszewski. June 6, 1947, YVA, M.1/M1.E, File 1252, Item 3545973. Abraham Bomba also confirms Plaszewski as a fellow survivor. Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, Tape 2 of 7, 22:00–28:30, Tape 3 of 7, 02:40–22:00, Tape 4 of 7, 00:30–27:00, and Tape 5 of 7, 07:05–10:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996; Statement of Abraham Bomba, November 27, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 521–23, 522.
- Platkiewicz, Manny/
Platkevitz, Marian (D)
(RS) Testimony of Marian Platkevitz, June 1979, YVA, O.3, File 4229, Item 3561380; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Poliakiewicz, Symcha (ES) Poliakiewicz, *A tog in treblinka*.
- Polonski, Joseph (ES) Joseph Polonski escaped from Treblinka in a group (number of people unspecified) by hiding in the clothes storage barracks building and then jumping the fence. He was from Lukow, Poland, and was deported to Treblinka from the ghetto there. *Escape from Treblinka: The Joseph Polonski Story*, Documentary, Vegas PBS in association with USHMM, 2021; Scott Littky, “The Amazing Story of Joseph Polonski.” *Omaha Jewish Press*, October 4, 2022.
- Porzecki, Moshe (D)
(RS) The Ghetto Fighters House Archive contains a photo of Moshe Porzecki in which he is labeled a survivor of

- Treblinka and someone who testified at postwar trails. “Moshe Porzecki, a former inmate of the Treblinka camp,” dated only “Postwar,” Catalogue Number: 11379, Registry Number 17751, Ghetto Fighters House Museum, Photo Archive, Haifa, Israel; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Poswalski/Posowalski/
Pazovalski/Poswolski,
Henry/Henryk (D) (RS) Note that the first two items here are the same document held by both the Ludwigsburg and the CoT archives: Statement of Henryk Poswolski, October 9, 1945, B162/3820, BL, pp. 806–10; Testimony of Henryk Poswolski, October 9, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 40–43; Testimony of Henryk Poswolski, YVA, O.3, File 554, Item 3561646; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.
- Pruss (No first name)*
(TT) Pruss (unnamed son of Pinchus Pruss and brother of Simhale Pruss) was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Pruss, Pinchus* (TT) Pinchus Pruss (father of Simhale and the unnamed Pruss) was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Pruss, Simhale* (TT) Simhale Pruss (son of Pinchus and brother of the unnamed Pruss) was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 112, 173.
- Pupke (No first name—
titled Dr.)* (TT) Dr. Pupke, no first name given, survived Treblinka as a Through-Transport survivor alongside Maurice Markus and Michael Klaper. Markus stated that he was later murdered at the Budzyn camp. See Testimony of Maurice Markus, March 21–22, 1963, YVA, TR.21 File 103, Item 7217755.
- Rabinowicz, Jacob (ES) Jacob Rabinowicz was a journalist from Warsaw who escaped Treblinka and went back to the ghetto there. Yitzhak Arad explained that it was his information that led to the Bund dispatching Zalman Friedrich Sigmund to investigate what Treblinka really was. Sigmund met the escapee Azriel Wallach in Sokolow in the process of his mission. It is not clear from these sources whether

- Rabinowicz survived the war. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 260–61.
- Rajbenbach, Nathan (ES) Nathan Rajbenbach was an Escapee Survivor. Following his earlier escape from the Kossow Ghetto, he was recaptured and sent to Treblinka in November 1942. He was held in Treblinka, where he worked as a sorter for about one month until his escape hiding under the bundles of clothes in an outbound stolen-goods train in December 1942. His story demonstrates that he was something of a career escapee. After his escape from Treblinka, he returned to Kossow. Thanks go to Ita Gordon of the USC Shoah Foundation for translation of this testimony. Nathan Rajbenbach, Interview 33635, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, September 14, 1997.
- Rajchman vel Romanowski/Reichman, Yechiel/Chil/Henryk/Henryk (D) (RS) Testimony of Jechiel Rajchman (Henryk Romanowski), October 11, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 57–59; Testimony of Henryk Reichman Romanowski, October 12, 1945, YVA, O.3, File 553, Item 3561645; Testimony of Yechiel Reichman, YVA, O.3, File 3816, Item 3557086; Testimony of Henryk Rajchman, YVA, O.3, File 566, Item 3560423; Chil Rajchman, Interview 5, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, October 24, 1994; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289.
- Rajgrodzki, Jerzy/Georg (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289.
- Rajzman/Reizman, Samuel/Shmuel (D) (RS) Statement of Samuel Rajzman, May 15, 1968, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4103–15; Testimony of Samuel Rajzman, October 9, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 32–36; Testimony of Samuel Rajzman, December 3, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 179–81; Testimony of Samuel Reizman, YVA, O.3, File 547, Item 3557811; Testimony of Samuel Rajzman, YVA, O.3, File 561, Item 3560422; House Committee on Foreign Affairs, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes—79th Congress, First Session” (United States Government Printing Office, 1945), Doc. Y4.F76/1: W19/5, pp. 120–25, US Congressional Record; Samuel Rajzman, “rajzinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 231–51; *The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal Sitting at Nuremberg*

- Germany, Taken from the Official Transcript* (HM Stationary Office, 1946); Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289.
- Rak, Meir/Cancer,
Meier (D) (RS) Because Rak is Cancer in Yiddish, these two names are likely the same person. Use of the last name Rak comes from the Treblinka Museum List Update and Donat's volume. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289; "Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka [Updated Museum Survivor List]," Museum webpage, Muzeum Treblinka.
- Rapp, Avraham (ES) Avraham Rapp worked as a clothing sorter before escaping Treblinka. Testimony of Avraham Rapp, December 12, 1946, YVA, M.1/MI.E, File 627, Item 3542274.
- Rappaport/Rapaport,
Moshe—Morris (D)
(ES) Moshe Rapaport/Morris Rappaport (the latter spelling per the Bomba source) was called a fellow escape survivor who returned to Czestochowa by Abraham Bomba. Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, 5 of 7, 28:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 14, 1996; Statement of Morris Rapaport, November 8, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1467–68; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289.
- Remba, Nahum "Natek"*
(TT) Natek Remba was confirmed by Thaddeus Stabholz as a short-stay survivor sent on to Majdanek. His full name and fate are filled in by Lawrence N. Powell's work. Thaddeus Stabholz, *Seven Hells*, 6; Lawrence N. Powell, *Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, the Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 250, 251, 265.
- Richter (No first name)
(ES) Richter, first name unknown, was from Czestochowa. He escaped from Treblinka and returned to the small ghetto, where he took part in resistance and attempted to kill "Rohn," the SS officer in charge of deportations. It is not known whether he survived the war. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 260–61.
- Rock, Abe* (TT) Abe Rock (Rok) was Biniamin Rok's brother. He was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand and his brother Biniamin. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173–74.

- Rock, Benjamin/Rok, Benjamin (TT) Testimony of Beniamin Rok, YVA, O.3, File 4843, Item 3558739.
- Rogozik, Yeshayahu Mendel (TT) Yeshayahu Rogozik was a Through-Transport Survivor sent on to Majdanek in a group of 320. Testimony of Yeshayahu Rogozik, March–April 1986, YVA, O.3, File 4432, Item 3558685, pp. 20–22.
- Rojtman (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289.
- Rojzman, Berek/Roizman (D) (RS) Sereny, *Into That Darkness*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289.
- Rosen, Heniek (ES) Heniek Rosen was confirmed in the testimony of his Radom neighbor Henry Zagdanski. His fate after escape is not known. Henry Z. Mssa.hvt.1647, FVA, October 14, 1991.
- Rosenberg, Eliahu/Elijahu/Eliasz (D) (RS) Statement of Eliasz Rosenberg, April 17, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1919–20; Statement of Eliahu Rosenberg, January 13, 1960, B162/3821, BL, pp. 966–70; Statement of Eliahu (Eliasz) Rosenberg, March 29, 1968, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4047–50; Memoir of Eliasz Rosenberg, December 20, 1945, YVA, M.49/M.49.P, File 151, Item 3548140; Statement of Elias Rosenberg, December 24, 1947, YVA, O.3, File 4548, Item 3558557; Testimony of Elijahu Rosenberg, September 6, 1979, YVA, O.3, File 4039, Item 3558441; Statement of Eliasz Rosenberg, April 17, 1961, B162/3826, BL; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289.
- Rosenberg, Oskar-Asher (TT) Oskar-Asher Rosenberg (at wartime, Asher-Oskar) was a Through-Transport survivor sent to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the uprising there. He was chosen as one of 318 Jews sent on to Majdanek. He eventually ended up in the Budzyn camp. Oskar-Asher Rosenberg, Interview 26785, Tape 2 of 4, 25:00–30:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, February 20, 1997.
- Rosenberg, Sol (ES) Sol Rosenberg, Interview 10098, Tape 4 of 8, 08:00–20:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, March 9, 1996; Chardkoff, *Sol's Story*.
- Rosental/Rozental, Szymon/Schaman (RS) Statement of Schaman Rosental, October 4, 1944, B162/3830, BL, pp. 3676–77; Statement of Szymon Rozental, January 25, 1968, B162/3831, BL, pp. 3883–86.
- Rosenthal, Lejbel (ES) Abraham Bomba stated that Lejbel Rosenthal escaped from Treblinka and then returned to the camp to tell

- Alfred Galewski how he had done it before escaping a second time. Abraham Bomba, Interview 18061, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive. August 14, 1996; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 284–85.
- Rosenzweig, Gedalia (ES) Gedalia Rosenzweig escaped with Edward Weinstein on an outgoing stolen-goods train. Rosenzweig was from Losice; his later fate is not certain. Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 54, 60–63; Edward Weinstein, Interview 2694, Tape 3 of 7, 00:20–19:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 17, 1995.
- Ross, Benjamin/
Rozenwaks, Benjamin (TT) Benjamin Ross (formerly Benjamin Rozenwaks) was a Through-Transport survivor deported from the Warsaw Ghetto on April 20, 1943, during the uprising there. He and his father, Joseph Rozenwaks, were chosen among about eight hundred and sent to Majdanek and then Budzyn. Benjamin Ross, Interview 8432, Tape 2 of 4, 00:10–04:00, and archival PIQ Report, pp. 17 and 31, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, November 8, 1995.
- Rozenwaks, Joseph* (TT) Joseph Rozenwaks was a Through-Transport survivor from the Warsaw Ghetto. He and his son Benjamin Rozenwaks (later known as Benjamin Ross) were deported on April 20, 1943, and selected at Treblinka among about eight hundred others. They were then sent on to Majdanek and Budzyn. Benjamin Ross states that his father likely died in or near Herzbrug (near Dachau) in 1944. Benjamin Ross, Interview 8432, Tape 2 of 4, 00:10–04:00, 14:00–15:00, and archival PIQ Report, pp. 17 and 31, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, November 8, 1995.
- Rozmaryn, Jacob (TT) Jacob Rozmaryn was a Through-Transport Survivor sent to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto on either April 27 or 28, 1943, at the time of the ghetto uprising. He was in Treblinka for less than one day and then sent on to Lublin-Majdanek and then Budzyn. Jacob Rozmaryn, Interview 28198, Tape 2 of 4, 18:00–23:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, April 2, 1997.
- Rytz, Leon—Ryzczwol,
Pejsach Leon “Poldek” (ES) Leon Rytz was identified in a 2016 *Times of Israel* newspaper article. In the wake of Samuel Willenberg’s death, Rytz’s daughter stepped forward to state that her father had also survived the camp and—at that time—

- was still alive; see Borschel-Dan, “There Are Still Treblinka Survivors Living, One Tells His Tale.” Rytz also gave oral history interviews now held by USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation: Leon Rytz, RG-50.998.0007, JTHOHA, USHMM, April 26, 2017; Leon Rytz, RG-90.047.0053, JTHOHA, USHMM, March 14, 2018; Leon Rytz, Interview 37378, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, November 14, 1997.
- Salzberg, Moniek (RS) Moniek Salzberg/Zalberg (מוניעק זאלצבערג) was a Revolt Survivor identified in the testimony of Yaakov Miler: Testimony of Yaakov Miler, March 1982, YVA, O.3, File 7913, Item 3563554, p. 20.
- Salzberg, Władysław (RS) Władysław Salzberg was named as a fellow Revolt Survivor fleeing alongside Yaakov Miler in his testimony: see Testimony of Yaakov Miler, March 1982, YVA, O.3, File 7913, Item 3563554. His first name is given only as W. by Richard Glazar, who stated that he knew a fellow survivor named “W. Zalcborg” who lived in Bavaria in 1960. Statement of Richard Glazar, March 10, 1960, B162/3821, BL, pp. 895–908, 906–7. Webb and Chocholatý use the spelling Władysław Salzberg and cite “Correspondence with Robert Kuwalek” for information on his survival. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 285.
- Schwartz, Helen (TT) Helen Schwartz, Interview 2889, Tape 3 of 6, 07:20–15:00 and archival PIQ Report, p. 5, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 29, 1995. Helen Schwartz also gave a prior, shorter, less detailed interview to the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre of Greater Toronto, a USC Shoah Foundation partner institution. She does not mention Treblinka in this interview. Helen Schwartz, Interview 54305, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 4, 1988.
- Seder, Allen/Sedrer, Abraham Osher (TT) Allen Seder was a ThroughTransport survivor sent to Treblinka from Bialystok. The date of his arrival might be February 1943, but his testimony shows the frailty of memory. Seder was chosen with a small group to go on to Majdanek. Allen Seder (Abraham Osher Sedrer), Interview 8135, Tape 2 of 5, 25:40–28:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, October 31, 1997.

- Sharson, Lazar (ES) Lazar Sharson escaped from the Camp 2/death camp area of Treblinka by tunnel on December 31, 1942. He was one of seven to make the attempt, five of whom made it outside the wire and to a local village. There four of his accomplices were recaptured, one shot on the spot, and the other three returned to Treblinka and executed. Sharson was the only one of this group to reach freedom. His story appears in Yitzhak Arad's work. Arad cites Eli Rozenberg, Yankel Wiernik, and Arie Neiberg's book, *Haacharonim [The lost]* (Merchavia, 1958), pp. 98, 190–91. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 264.
- Shashkes (No last name)*
(ES) Shashkes (ששקס) was named as escapee later deported to Treblinka a second time as the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto intensified. As such, Shashkes is both a Treblinka Escape Survivor and a man killed at the camp. Testimony of Aron Czechowicz, February 20, 1969, YVA, O.3, File 3800, Item 3557570.
- Shneiderman/
Sznajdman, Wolf/
William/Velvel/Velvl
(D) (RS) Testimony of Wolf Sznajdman, 1945, YVA, O.3, File 560, Item 3561649; Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Siedlecki, Joseph/Josef
(D) (RS) Statement of Josef Siedlecki, May 8, 1968, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4074–77; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Silberzweig, Sol (TT) Sol Silberzweig was a Through-Transport survivor sent to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto (he estimates) in mid-April 1943. He fought in the uprising in Warsaw. He was selected as a carpenter and loaded back on the train in a group of 350. Sol Silberzweig, Interview 13715, Tape 2 of 8, 21:00–28:45, Tape 3 of 8, 04:220–10:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, March 28, 1996.
- Silver, David/
Zybersztejn, Dawid
(TT) David Silver (born and at wartime Dawid Zylbersztejn) was a Through-Transport survivor sent to Treblinka from Warsaw in approximately mid-April 1943 at the time of the ghetto uprising. He was chosen (stepped out as a volunteer) among one hundred men to be sent elsewhere as carpenters. They were then sent to Budzyn. David Silver, Interview 4713, Tape 3 of 5, 06:30–19:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, October 5, 1995.
- Singer* (ES) “Mr. Singer,” no first name given, is recalled as a Treblinka escapee by Aaron Salzburg in an oral history

interview held by the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive of the University of Michigan–Dearborn. Salzburg states that Singer escaped Treblinka and returned to the Opatow Ghetto trying to tell people what Treblinka really was. Singer was one of four persons to escape Treblinka and return to the ghetto, though he gives no other names except that of Samuel Willenberg (incorrectly spelled/recalled). Singer was later transported to Skarzysko labor camp with Salzburg, where Salzburg believes he tried to escape and was caught and killed in the process. Salzburg additionally states that people did not believe the first of these escapees until more of them showed up and told the same story about Treblinka. Salzburg, Aaron, Oral History Interview with Aaron Salzburg, Audio Recording, July 24, 1984, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan–Dearborn, <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/salzburg/>. Thanks to Richard Tyndorf for finding this source.

- Sperling, Herschl/
Henrick/Henry (D)
(RS) Statement of Henry Sperling, April 12, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1740–51; Testimony of Henrick Sperling, April 1962, YVA, O.3, File 2229, Item 3556035; Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Staniszewski, Roman
(UN) Roman Staniszewski was named as a fellow Treblinka survivor in the court testimony of Czeslaw Augustyniak. The way in which he survived is not stated. Statement of Czeslaw Augustyniak, February 4, 1960, B162/3819, BL, pp. 635–37, 637.
- Sterdiner, Szlomo (Q) Szlomo Sterdiner's short testimony is inconclusive. He is likely a survivor, but the source does not confirm how. I have listed him as Questionable for lack of information. Testimony of Szlomo Sterdiner, July 20, 1961, YVA, O.3, File 53, Item 7060808.
- Stiffel, Frank (ES) Frank S. Mssa.hvt.0532, FVA, February 4, 1985; Stiffel, *The Tale of the Ring*; Bloch, *From Holocaust to Redemption*, 269.
- Stiffel, Martin (ES) Martin Stiffel escaped in an outgoing train alongside his brother Frank Stiffel. This is covered in his brother Frank's book and his Fortunoff interviews. Martin survived the rest of the war after Treblinka in Warsaw

- under false papers. He took his own life in Rome, Italy, after the war. Frank S. Mssa.hvt.0532, FVA, February 4, 1985; Stiffel, *The Tale of the Ring*.
- Strawczynski, Oskar/
Oscar (D) (RS) Statement of Oskar Strawczynski, October 3, 1944, B162/3830, BL, pp. 3669–71; Statement of Oscar Strawczynski, December 20, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 625–31; Testimony of Oskar Strawczynski, October 7, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 22–28; Testimony of Oskar Strawczynski, 1945, YVA, O.3, File 558, Item 3561648; Testimony of Oskar Strawczynski, June 17, 1968, YVA, O.3, File 3131, Item 3557650; Oskar Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” in Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 117–82; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Strawczynski, Zygmunt/
Zygmund (D) (RS) Statement of Zygmund Strawczynski, May 21, 1968, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4089–4102; Oskar Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” in Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 117–82; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Sukno, Bronka (D) (RS) Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1961, B162/3825, BL, pp. 1874–77; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Szajnberg, Henoch
(TT) Henoch Szajnberg was a Through-Transport survivor sent to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the uprising there. Neither his testimony nor the PIQ Report gives exact dating. He was chosen about a few hundred others (he was not specific) and sent on Majdanek. Henoch Szajnberg, Interview 11776, Tape 2 of 4, 26:30–28:00, Tape 3 of 4, 00:25–05:10, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, February 6, 1996.
- Szejnberg/Szeunberg,
Wolf (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Szklarz, Menachem
(TT) Menachem Szklarz was a Through-Transport survivor sent to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto on May 10, 1943, during the period of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. He was held overnight on the ramp and placed back on a train the next morning to Majdanek in a group of five hundred. Thanks go to Ita Gordon of the USC Shoah Foundation for Portuguese-language translation assistance. Menachem Szklarz, Interview 24691, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, January 14, 1997.

- Szmulowicz, Jacob (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Sztabholc, Tedeusz/
Stabholz, Thaddeus (TT) Testimony of Tedeusz Sztabholc, YVA, M.1/M.1.E, File 1162, Item 3541275; Thaddeus Stabholz, *Seven Hells* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1990); Thaddeus Stabholz, Interview 12869, Tape 2 of 6, 29:00, Tape 3 of 6, 00:10, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, March 11, 1996.
- Sztajer/Steier, Chaim/
Haim (D) (RS) Statement of Chaim Sztajer, April 11, 1969, B162/3834, BL, pp. 4479–83; Testimony of Chaim Steier, YVA, O.3, Tape Number O.33.C/420 and O.33.C/534XX, Item 3561200; Zylbersztajn, *L'Chaim*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Taigman/ Teigman/
Tajgman/Tajgmann,
Kalman (D) (RS) Statement of Kalman Taigman, November 11, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 602–4; Statement of Kalman Tajgmann, August 25, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1600–1606; Testimony of Kalman Tajgman, YVA, O.3, File 1586, Microfilm Code 99.199, Item 3555720; Testimony of Kalman Tajgman, YVA, O.3, 7814, Item 3561022; Tzipi Baider, *Just the Two of Us*, DVD/Streaming (Hedva Goldschmidt; Go2Films, 2011); Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 290.
- Tekel, Eliezer (ES) Testimony of Eliezer Tekel, 1995, YVA, O.3, File 9160, Item 3563435.
- Tempelhof, Henry* (TT) Henry Tempelhof was confirmed as a Through-Transport Survivor sent on to Majdanek by Thaddeus Stabholz. His first name and his murder at Majdanek are cited by Lawrence N. Powell. Stabholz, *Seven Hells*, 27; Lawrence N. Powell, *Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, the Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 250, 265.
- Tempelhof, Wladek*
"Vovek" (TT) Wladek "Vovek" Tempelhof was conformed as a Through Transport survivor sent on to Majdanek by Thaddeus Stabholz. His first name and nickname and his murder at Majdanek are cited by Powell. Stabholz, *Seven Hells*, 27; Lawrence N. Powell, *Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, the Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 250, 265.
- Trach, Benzyl* (TT) Benzyl Trach was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.

- Turowski, Eugen/
Eugene/Eugeniusz (D)
(RS) Statement of Eugen Turowski, December 5, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 547; Statement of Eugeniusz Turowski, August 28, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1595–99; Statement of Eugeniusz Turowski, June 11, 1961, B162/3826, BL, pp. 1956–58; Testimony of Eugeniusz Turowski, October 7, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 29–31; Testimony of Eugeniusz Turowski, November 23, 1945, YVA, O.3, File 556, Item 3561647; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 291.
- Tyrkiel, Nathan (TT) Nathan Tyrkiel was a Through Transport survivor from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising period. He dates his transport around the end of Pesach 1943, or April 27–28, 1943. He was selected for transport to Majdanek. Nathan Tyrkiel, Interview 3406, Tape 2 of 3, 02:00–4:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, June 21, 1995.
- Unger, Charles/Karel
(D) (RS) Statement of Charles Unger, May 31, 1968, B162/3832, BL, pp. 4120–429; Photograph with caption of Charles Unger, Yad Vashem Photo Archive, Archival Signature 2BO5, Item ID 100436; Karel or Charles Unger was a Czech Jew and a friend of Richard Glazar. Glazar spoke of him extensively in his memoir. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 291.
- Vaser, Yosele (ES) Yosele Vaser was deported to Treblinka from the Kielce Ghetto. A few days after his arrival, he and Moyshe (Morris) Mydlo escaped back to the Kielce Ghetto and tried to warn people about what Treblinka was. At first, this did not work. Moyshe (Morris) Mydlo survived the war and gave a Shoah Foundation testimony. Yosele Vaser's fate is unknown. The original Donat list has a "Wasser" with no first name but does not list Moyshe (Morris) Mydlo. It seems unlikely that Donat's Wasser is Yosele Vaser since his fellow escapee is not listed by Donat. Trunk, *Jewish Responses*, 123; Morris (Moishe) Mydlo, Interview 35486, Tape 1 of 4, 23:30–28:40, Tape 2 of 4, 02:05–09:45, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, November 9, 1997.
- Wallach/Walach, Azriel
(ES) Azriel Wal(l)ach was named as an Escape Survivor by Zalman Friedrich Sigmund, who, as a member of the Bund, sought in a clandestine mission of information gathering to learn more about where Warsaw Jews were being sent. Sigmund stated that he met Walach in Sokolow. The information he learned from Walach was

- published in the Warsaw underground newspaper *Ojciec walczy*, September 20, 1942. Joseph Kermisz, *Jewish Underground Newspapers in Warsaw*, vol. 6 (Yad Vashem, 1997); Asaf Yedidya, "In Defiance of the Nazi Communications Blackout: How Polish Jews Tried to Discover the Destination of the Deportations," *Legacy*, 2012.
- Warszawski/Warsaw, Sewek/Szyja/Neck/Yeshayahu (D) (RS) Statement of Sewek Warszawski, October 28, 1959, B162/3818, BL, pp. 244–49; Statement of Sewek Warszawski, January 21, 1960, B162/3819, BL, pp. 618–24; Statement of Sewek Warszawski, May 23, 1962, B162/3826, BL, pp. 2067–73; Testimony of Szyja Warszawski, October 9, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 48–51; Testimony of Szyja Warszawski, September 10, 1945, YVA, O.3, File 557, Item 3557249. Warszawski was referred to by the first name Yeshayahu in the testimony of Szlomo Helman; see Statement of Shlomo Helman, June 6, 1961, YVA, O.3, File 2267, Item 3555994; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 291.
- Wasser (D) (RS) Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 291.
- Weinberg, Kazik Borys/Boris Kazik (RS) Testimony of Kazik Borys Weinberg, July 20, 1945, YVA, O.3, File 565, Item 3557270; Webb and Chocholaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 291.
- Weiner (ES) Abraham Krzepicki named Weiner as a Hasid who escaped along with him, see Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 141; Webb and Chocholaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 291.
- Weiner, Haim (TT) Haim Weiner was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Weingrod, Bernard (TT) Bernard Weingrod was confirmed as a Through-Transport survivor in emails with his son, Dr. Michel Weingrod, MD, a Parisian cardiologist. Thanks go to Waitman Beorn, who provided contact with Michel Weingrod's niece Eve Ash, who put me in touch with her uncle. Email correspondence in the possession of the author. Dr. Michel Weingrod's story of his father's survival almost exactly mirrors that of Maurice Markus. Both were transported to Treblinka at the final destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, both were then sent on to Majdanek and then the Budzyn Camp; see

- Testimony of Maurice Markus, March 21–22, 1963, YVA, TR.21, File 103, Item 7217755.
- Weinstein, Eddie (ES) Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*; Edward Weinstein, Interview 2694, Tape 3 of 7, 00:20–19:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, May 17, 1995.
- Weisberg, Sol (UN) Sol Weisberg was named a fellow survivor of Treblinka (method of survival not stated/unknown) by Abraham Bomba; see Statement of Abraham Bomba, November 27, 1959, B162/3819, BL, pp. 521–23, 522.
- Wiernik, Jankiel/
Yankel/Jakob—
Smarzyński, Jan (D)
(RS) Statement of Jakob Wiernik, August 23, 1960, B162/3824, BL, pp. 1633–43; Testimony of Jankiel Wiernik (Jan Smarzyński), October 12, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/69, pp. 64–65; Testimony of Jankiel Wiernik (Jan Smarzyński), January 4, 1945, CoT, IPN GK 196/75, pp. 15–26; Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*; Adolf Eichmann Trial (Jerusalem District Court, December 12, 1961); *The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal Sitting at Nuremberg Germany, Taken from the Official Transcript* (HM Stationary Office, 1946); Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 291.
- Willenberg, Samuel (D)
(RS) Statement of Samuel Willenberg, Undated (likely 1945), B162/3821, BL, pp. 913–55; Testimony of Samuel Willenberg, Undated (quite early, possibly 1945), YVA, O.3, File 567, Item 3560424; Tzipi Baider, *Just the Two of Us*, DVD/Streaming (Hedva Goldschid; Go2Films, 2011); Monique O. Madan, “Samuel Willenberg, the Last Surviving Treblinka Prisoner, Dies at 93,” *Miami Herald*, February 20, 2016; T.O.I Staff, “President Pays Tribute as Last Survivor of Treblinka Revolt Is Laid to Rest,” *Times of Israel*, February 22, 2016; Alan Tomlinson, *Treblinka’s Last Witness*, DVD, Documentary (Tomlinson De Onis Productions LLC, 2014); Samuel Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 189–213; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*; Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 291.
- Zagiel, Sewryn (Severin)
(TT) Zagiel, Seweryn (Severin), Interview 4432, Segment 67, 30:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, August 7, 1995. Thanks go to Alice C. M. Kwok for translation from the French.
- Ziegelman/Zigelman,
Mejer (D) (RS) Mejer Zigelman spelling found in Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 291.

- Zonenfeld, Kive* (TT) Kive Zonenfeld was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Zonenfeld, Pesach* (TT) Pesach Zonenfeld was a Through-Transport survivor who survived alongside Saul Kuperhand. He was later killed at Treblinka I. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173.
- Zycherman, Feny (TT) Feny Zycherman's interview shows that she was a Through-Transport survivor deported from Warsaw to Treblinka in late April or May 1943. She was placed back on the train and transferred to Majdanek. Feny Zycherman, Interview 1228, Tape 2 of 3, 02:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, February 27, 1995.
- Zylberberg, Moshe (TT) Moshe Zylberberg was a Through-Transport survivor from the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the ghetto uprising. He arrived in late April or May 1943 and was selected among 400 or 350 for transport to Majdanek/Lipowa 7. Moshe Zylberberg, Interview 26491, Tape 5 of 8, 25:00–28:00, Tape 6 of 8, 00:25–09:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, March 4, 1997.
- Zymerman, Joseph (UN) Kalman Teigman told Webb and Chocholatý that Joseph Zymerman was a survivor who settled in New York after the war. How he survived was not explained. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 294.

Notes

Introduction

1. Shalom (Stanislaw) Kohn, "The Treblinka Revolt," in *The Death Camp Treblinka: A Documentary*, ed. Alexander Donat (Waldon Press, 1979), 229; Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, A Touchstone Book (Touchstone, 1995), 193.

2. Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: An Examination of Conscience* (Vintage Books, 1983), 239.

3. Samuel Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 209.

4. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 240; Oskar Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka," in Oscar Strawczynski and Israel Cymlich, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka* (Yad Vashem Publications, 2007), 180–81.

5. Though this source offers an incomplete, yet widely accepted survivor list, other sections of this work will explore the number of Treblinka survivors in great detail as well as the concept and definition of survivorship. See "Resistance and Uprising," Muzeum Treblinka, accessed June 5, 2025, <https://muzeumtreblinka.eu/en/informacje/resistance-and-uprising/>.

6. My own work to uncover Treblinka sources and find new survivors has helped make it possible to undertake new research on resistance at this place. Chad S.A. Gibbs, "Lessons from the Treblinka Archive: Transnational Collections and Their Implications for Historical Research," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 5, no. 14 (October 2018): 1–16. Recent archaeological work by Caroline Sturdy Colls and others has revealed that Nazi forces were less thorough in their destruction of physical evidence at the camp than previously understood, though survivor testimonies remain our best sources for the reconstruction of daily life and resistance at Treblinka. See Caroline Sturdy Colls and Michael Branthwaite, "‘This Is Proof’? Forensic Evidence and Ambiguous Material Culture at Treblinka Extermination Camp," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 22, no. 3 (2018): 430–53; Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions* (Springer, 2015); Caroline Sturdy Colls, "Gone but Not Forgotten: Archaeological Approaches to the Site of the Former

Treblinka Extermination Camp in Poland,” *Holocaust Studies and Materials* 3 (March 2013): 253–89.

7. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 186.

8. Smith makes uncritical use of the term “Sonderkommando” in his work. I will not do so here as the term was not often used in reference to Treblinka work prisoners. The prevalence of this word in some secondary works on Treblinka seems to be the result of assumptions that knowledge of Auschwitz can be transferred to the study of this camp. “Sonderkommando” will appear in this work only as part of a quotation or when referring to quoted material. Mark S. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling* (The History Press, 2010), 160.

9. Tim Cole’s book *Holocaust Landscapes* explains how the Holocaust created new places where none or nothing like them had existed before. From camps, to ghettos, to killing fields, the Holocaust irrevocably changed the European environment. More broadly, “placemaking” refers to the ways in which human beings infuse spaces with meaning. In short, a space can be thought of as a blank slate, a room with no name and nothing in it. A place, on the other hand, has a definition provided by its human use. In a basic sense, one could think of how a bedroom is just four walls until someone puts a bed in it and decides to sleep there. Once the room is furnished and used for sleep, placemaking has occurred and the room has a definition as a bedroom. This is how this book will use the concepts of space and place. Later on, this book will show how Treblinka prisoners found ways to change the meanings of certain spaces and take advantage of others to further resistance. Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2016), 2, 6; Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole, and Alberto Giordano, eds., *Geographies of the Holocaust* (Indiana University Press, 2014), 4.

10. See chapter 15, “Women Prisoners,” in Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Indiana University Press, 1987), 114–18.

11. Robert Sommer, *Das KZ-Bordell: Sexuelle Zwangsarbeit in Nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern* (Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009); Robert Sommer, “Sexual Exploitation of Women in Nazi Concentration Camp Brothels,” in *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, ed. Sonja J. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Sidel (Brandeis University Press, 2010).

12. “Choiceless choices” is a term coined by the late Lawrence Langer in Lawrence L. Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit*, SUNY Series in Modern Jewish Literature and Culture (State University of New York Press, 1982); Maddy Carey, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust: Between Destruction and Construction* (Bloomsbury, 2017).

13. Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Petö, eds., *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 12; see also Zoë Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History* (Oxford University Press, 2017); Ronit Lentin, “‘A Howl Unheard’: Women Shoah Survivors Dis-Placed and Re-Silenced,” in *When the War Was Over: Women, War, and Peace in Europe, 1940–1956*, ed. Claire Duchon and Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (Leicester University Press, 2000), 179–93; Svetlana Aleksievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II*, trans. Richard Pevar and Larissa Volokhonsky (Random House, 2017).

14. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*, 160.
15. Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Indiana University Press, 1987), 15; Manfred Burba, *Treblinka: Ein NS-Vernichtungslager im Rahmen der "Aktion Reinhard"* (Pachnicke, 1995), 6.
16. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 16; for a discussion of standard camp economic and command hierarchy, see Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).
17. Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (Norton, 2003), 287; Christopher R. Browning, *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*, rev. ed. (Holmes & Meier, 1991), 29; Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 15; Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942*, *Comprehensive History of the Holocaust* (University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 356–57.
18. Patrick Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 7–13.
19. Edward B. Westermann's recent work on the role of alcohol in Nazi genocide and atrocities is particularly instructive on these topics. His recent book also covers guard drinking rituals inside Treblinka. See Edward B. Westermann, *Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany*, *Battlegrounds: Cornell Studies in Military History* (Cornell University Press, 2021); Edward B. Westermann, "Drinking Rituals, Masculinity, and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany," *Central European History* 51 (2018): 367–89; Edward B. Westermann, "Stone-Cold Killer or Drunk with Murder? Alcohol and Atrocity During the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 1–19.
20. Dwork and van Pelt, *Holocaust*, 286–87; Browning, *Fateful Months*, 29; Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, 353.
21. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 11; Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *The Good Old Days: The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders*, trans. Deborah Burnstone (Konecky & Konecky, 1991), 307–8.
22. Browning, *Fateful Months*, 57.
23. Josef "Sepp" Hirtreiter and commandant Franz Stangl, among others, are prime examples of this continuity of SS euthanasia program personnel finding their way to employment at Treblinka. Hirtreiter's 1959 euthanasia trial would eventually bring the accused and the events of Treblinka to the attention of the German courts and result in the subsequent Treblinka trials of the mid-1960s to early 1970s. See B162, AZ 3817–3848, Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen Nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen, Ludwigsburg, Germany.
24. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 17; Burba, *Treblinka*, 5.
25. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 17.
26. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 13.
27. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, 361; Klee, Dressen, and Riess, *The Good Old Days*, 309.
28. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 30–31; Klee, Dressen, and Riess, *The Good Old Days*, 309.

29. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 37; Klee, Dressen, and Riess, *The Good Old Days*, 309; Konnilyn G. Feig, *Hitler's Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness* (Holmes and Meir, 1981), 296.

30. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 37.

31. Klee, Dressen, and Riess, *The Good Old Days*, 309; Chris Webb and Michal Chocholaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp: History, Biographies, Remembrance* (Ibidem, 2014), 311–12.

32. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 157–59.

33. Witold Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka* (Valentine Mitchell, 2004), 37.

34. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 133.

35. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 30; Webb and Chocholaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2014), 319.

36. Jacob Flaws's article "Sensory Witnessing at Treblinka" examines the sights, sounds, and smells of Treblinka to reveal a sensory zone of witnessing around the camp. His work is particularly instructive with regard to how the very smell of Treblinka betrayed its true purpose and made non-Jewish local Poles a kind of witness to the camp's horrors. Jacob Flaws, "Sensory Witnessing at Treblinka," *Journal of Holocaust Research* 35, no. 1 (January 26, 2021): 41–65.

37. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 161, quote on 181.

38. Richard Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence: Survival in Treblinka*, Jewish Lives (Northwestern University Press, 1995), 37.

39. "Belzec," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed September 4, 2015, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005191>; "Sobibor," Online Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed September 4, 2015, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005192>.

40. It is worth noting that while historians have moved away from "death camp" as a term, survivors and guards alike use this phrase in reference to the distinct part of Treblinka that held the gas chambers, mass graves, and, later, body-burning infrastructure. It is often found on maps and in testimony to demarcate that area of the overall camp. Peter Laponder, *Maps/Drawings Depicting the Treblinka Death Camp*, Overhead Computer Draft (Treblinka Extermination Camp: H.E.A.R.T.—Holocaust Education and Research Team, 2007), accessed September 2015, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/treblinka/maps.html>.

41. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman, "H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes—79th Congress, First Session" (United States Government Printing Office, 1945), 121–23, Doc. Y4.F76/1: W19/5, pp. 120–25, US Congressional Record; Chil Rajchman, Oral History Interview with Chil Rajchman, Video, December 7, 1988, 4, Permanent Collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed August 2015, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504681>; Rachel Auerbach, "In the Fields of Treblinka," in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 32.

42. Eddie Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka: Daring to Resist, and Refusing to Die*, 4th ed. (Yad Vashem Publications, 2009), 39–41; Avraham Bomba, Oral History Interview with Avraham Bomba, Video, September 18, 1990, Permanent Collection, United

States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed August 2015, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504538>; Abraham Kolski, Oral History Interview with Abraham Kolski, Video, March 29, 1990, 6, Permanent Collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed August 2015, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504607>; statements of former SS guard Franz Suchomel in Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film* (De Capo Press, 1995), 97–98; Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah*, DVD, Documentary (Criterion Collection, 1985).

43. The same system and Lazarett naming existed at Sobibor. Arad, *The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, rev. ed. (Indiana University Press and Yad Vashem, 2018), 113, 131.

44. Burba, *Treblinka*, 7; Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, 25–27, 29–30.

45. Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, 60–61; Auerbach, “In the Fields of Treblinka,” 34.

46. Samuel Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka* (Zydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1984), 18–19.

47. Richard Rashke, *Escape from Sobibor* (1982; repr., Delphinium Books, 2013), 501–3; for a map of Belzec created by Arad, see Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 437.

48. Social networks research methods employed in this book are in part inspired by the work of Scott B. Weingart as well as that of Marten Düring and his collaborators. Their work showing the number of people and the strength of the networks required to assist just one hidden Jew in wartime Berlin was particularly instructive. The historian Sara Berger’s work on networks of Treblinka guards has also influenced this book. Outside the field of Holocaust studies, I found it very beneficial to consult Sharon Wood’s work on networks of working women in Gilded Age America. The spatial networks fusion I employ here is further inspired by the work of the Holocaust Geographies Collaborative, particularly the chapter by Tim Cole and Alberto Giordano focused on ghettoization in Budapest. Of course, I have praise for and drew inspiration from the other leaders and collaborators of the geographies group as well as further works in the vibrant and growing field of spatial Holocaust research. I also benefited greatly from the thoughts and ideas of Waitman Beorn, a spatial historian of the Holocaust and member of the collaborative. Sara Berger, *Experten der Vernichtung: Das T4-Reinhardt-Netzwerk in den Lagern Belzec, Sobibor, und Treblinka*, Studien zur Gewaltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts (Hamburger Edition, 2013); Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*; Tim Cole and Alberto Giordano, “Bringing the Ghetto to the Jew: Spatialities of Ghettoization in Budapest,” in Knowles, Cole, and Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, 120–57; Tim Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust: Journeying in and out of the Ghettos* (Continuum, 2011); Marten Düring, “Verdeckte soziale Netzwerke im Nationalsozialismus. Die Entstehung und Arbeitsweise von Berliner Hilfsnetzwerken für verfolgte Juden [Hidden social networks in National Socialism: The origins and working methods of Berlin assistance networks for persecuted Jews]” (PhD diss., Center for Advanced Study in the Humanities, 2015); Marten Düring et al., “Vennmaker for Historians: Sources, Social Networks and Software,” *REDES-Revista Hispana Para El Analisis de Redes Sociales* 21, no. 8 (December 2011): 421–52; Flaws, “Sensory Witnessing at Treblinka”; Jacob Flaws, *Spaces of Treblinka: Retracing a Death Camp* (University

of Nebraska Press, 2024); Janine Fubel, Alexandra Klei, and Annika Wienert, eds., *Space in Holocaust Research: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Spatial Thinking* (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2024); Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca, eds., *Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich* (University of Chicago Press, 2016); Simone Gigliotti, ed., *Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust*, 1st paperback ed., *Studies on War and Genocide* 13 (Berghahn Books, 2010); Paul B. Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression: The SS, Forced Labor and the Nazi Monumental Building Economy*, transferred to digital printing, *The Architect Series* (Routledge, 2005); Knowles, Cole, and Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*; Scott B. Weingart, "Demystifying Networks, Parts I and II," *Journal of Digital Humanities*, March 15, 2012, <https://digitalhumanitiesnow.org/2012/02/demystifying-networks-part-1-2-by-scott-weingart/>; Sharon E. Wood, *The Freedom of the Streets: Work, Citizenship, and Sexuality in a Gilded Age City*, *Gender and American Culture* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Alexander Williams, "Times of the Living Spaces of the Dead: Genocidal Violence and Its Effect Upon Spatiotemporal Perception in Eddie Weinstein's Treblinka Testimony Quenched Steel," in *Genocidal Violence: Concepts, Forms, Impact*, ed. Frank Jacob and Kim Sebastian Todzi (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023), 287–310.

49. Literature focused on Treblinka is nearly as old as the camp itself. Survivor memoirs and even historical accounts date to at least 1944. Escapee Abraham Krzepicki was likely the first Treblinka survivor to complete a chronicle of his experiences at the camp, having recorded his memories with the help of Rachel Auerbach in the Warsaw Ghetto prior to his death in the uprising there. Vasily Grossman's *The Hell of Treblinka* (1944) was the first account by an individual not personally present at the camp while it operated. Survivor Yankiel Wiernik's *A Year in Treblinka* was the first from an individual who actually participated in the revolt. The memoir accounts of Moyshe Klaynman, Herschl Sperling, and Edie Weinstein soon joined those of Wiernik and Krzepicki, appearing at the end of or in the immediate postwar period. Several more memoirs, such as that by Richard Glazar, came in the years that followed, with the most recent in 2023. (The list of memoirs here is not exhaustive and others will appear in later notes.) Grossman completed his work in the immediate aftermath of events and therefore had the advantage of the freshness of memory for the witnesses he was able to find, but this was a very small section of Treblinka survivors and local non-Jewish Poles. Rachel Auerbach again appears in the historiography with her 1947 work *In the Fields of Treblinka* (*Oyf di felder fun treblinke*). The authors of later works, such as Yitzhak Arad's seminal *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, Konnilyn Feig's *Hitler's Death Camps*, Chris Webb and Michal Chochołaty's *The Treblinka Death Camp*, Manfred Burba's short but accomplished *Treblinka: Ein NS-Vernichtungslager im Rahmen der "Aktion Reinhard,"* and Witold Chrostowski's *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, had access to far more survivor witnesses than were available to Grossman as the war still raged across Europe. Alexander Donat's 1979 volume *The Death Camp Treblinka*, Gitta Sereny's 1983 *Into That Darkness*, and Claude Lanzmann's 1985 film *Shoah* contributed analysis and, most important, gifted researchers with powerful collections of witness testimony. Donat's volume further produced the list of sixty-seven survivors now held as canonical in the study of this camp and

gave the world a version of Auerbach's earlier work in English translation. Most recently, these works have been joined by the archaeological explorations of Caroline Study Colls and the geographic and sensory work of Jacob Flaws. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*; Arad, *The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*; Yitzhak Arad, 778 אבדן ומרד—טרבלניקה [Treblinka—*ovdan v'mered* / Treblinka, hell and revolt] (Am Oved, 1983); Auerbach, "In the Fields of Treblinka"; Elena Barr Baum, ed., "Charles Burke—Chil Berkowicz," in *Tidewater Federation Memorial Book* (Tidewater Federation, n.d.), 42–45; Ian Baxter, *The SS of Treblinka* (Spellmount, 2010); Berger, *Experten der Vernichtung*; Michael S. Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide: The Operation Reinhard Death Camp Trials, 1955–1966*, Legacies of War (University of Tennessee Press, 2014); Burba, *Treblinka: Ein NS-Vernichtungslager im Rahmen der "Aktion Reinhard"*; Richard Chardkoff, *Sol's Story: A Triumph of the Human Spirit* (Cold Tree Press, 2002); Mieczyslaw Chodzko, *Évadé de Treblinka*, Témoignages de la Shoah (Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah) (Fondation pour la mémoire de la Shoah, 2010); Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*; Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*; Feig, *Hitler's Death Camps*; Flaws, "Sensory Witnessing at Treblinka"; Flaws, *Spaces of Treblinka*; Chad S.A. Gibbs and Matthew M. Greene, "Briv Funem Archiv: A Memoir in Four Acts: Moyshe Klaynman and Survival at Treblinka," *In Geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*, May 22, 2020, <https://ingeveb.org/blog/briv-funem-arkhiv-a-memoir-in-four-acts>; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*; Vasily Grossman, *The Hell of Treblinka*, repr. ed. (Martin Zwinkler, 2015); Anneliese Johnson, *Yesterday's Todays* (1889 Books, 2023); Klee, Dressen, and Riess, *The Good Old Days*; Abraham Krzepicki, "Eighteen Days in Treblinka," in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 77–145; Miriam Kuperhand and Saul Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka* (University of Illinois Press, 1998); Lanzman, *Shoah*, DVD; Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*; Yoram Lubling, *Twice-Dead: Moshe Y. Lubling: The Ethics of Memory, and the Treblinka Revolt* (Peter Lang, 2007); Samuel Moyn, *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France*, Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series (Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, 2005); Rokhl Oyerbakh, *Oyf di felder fun treblinke: reportazsh* (Centralna Zydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1947); Michel Pachter, *Varsovie, Treblinka, Majdanek, Skarzysko, Czestochowa*, Témoignages de la Shoah (Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah) (Fondation pour la Mémoire de le Shoah, 2013); Symcha Poliakiewicz, *A Tog in Treblinke: Khronik fun a Yiddish Lebn* (Industria Argentina—Tsentral-Farband fun Poylishe Yidn in Argentine, 1948); Symcha Poliakiewicz, *In shotn fun treblinke: khurbn sokolov-podlaski* [*In the shadow of Treblinka: The destruction of Sokolov-Podlaski*] (The Organization of Sokolov-Podlaski in Israel, 1957); Chil Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka: A Survivor's Memory, 1942–1943*, trans. Solon Beinfeld (Pegasus Books, 2011); Chil Rajchman, *Treblinka: A Survivor's Memory, 1942–43* (Maclehose Press, 2012); Mark S. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling* (The History Press, 2010); Hershl Sperling, "Treblinka—Eye-Witness Report," in *Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling*, ed. Mark S. Smith (The History Press, 2010), 243–52; Thaddeus Stabholz, *Seven Hells* (Holocaust Library, 1990); Frank Stiffel, *The Tale of the Ring: A Kaddish*, Mazal Holocaust Collection (Pushcart, 1994); Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies*; Colls and Branthwaite, "This Is Proof? Forensic

Evidence and Ambiguous Material Culture at Treblinka Extermination Camp”; Colls and Branthwaite, *Treblinka: Archaeological Investigations and Artistic Responses*; Karen I. Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy: A Holocaust Story* (Stare Lipki Press, 2018); Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution* (Stein and Day, 1982); Webb and Chochołaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2014); Webb and Chochołaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp*, 2nd ed. (Ibidem, 2021); Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*; Jankiel Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka: An Inmate Who Escaped Tells the Day-to-Day Facts of One Year of His Torturous Experience*, ebook (Pickle Partners, 2014); Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*; Samuel Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*, ed. Władysław Bartoszewski (Basil Blackwell in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989); Michał Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka Revolte im Vernichtungslager*, trans. Paulina Schulz-Gruner (Piper, 2020); Michał Wójcik, *Treblinka '43: Bunt w Fabryce Śmierci* (Znak litera nova, 2018); Malka Zylbersztajn, *L'Chaim: The Exceptional Life of Chaim Sztajer* (Jewish Holocaust Center Publishing House, 2018).

50. Gitta Sereny, *Am Abgrund: Gespräche mit dem Henker*, 3rd. ed. (Piper, 1997).

51. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*.

Chapter 1. Space, Networks, and Escape

1. For information on the Franz trial, see Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide*.

2. Originally titled “*Treblinka: Totenlager [sic] Erinnerungsskizze*,” or “Treblinka: Death Camp Sketch from Memory,” this map is held by the Duisburg Branch of the State Archive of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Hereafter referred to as “Duisburg Map,” Unknown Author, “Duisburg Archive Treblinka Trial Map—Originating from the 1964–1965 trial of Kurt Franz *et al.*” (Treblinka Extermination Camp, May 30, 1964), *Gerichte Rep.* 388, Nr. 781, Band 37, p. 66, Duisburg Branch—State Archives of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. For more on this map, see Chad S.A. Gibbs, “Treblinka Geography: Nazi Building, Jewish Breaking, Historical Reconstructing,” in *Space in Holocaust Research: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Spatial Thinking*, ed. Janine Fubel, Alexandra Klei, and Annika Wienert (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2024), 259–74.

3. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 180; see also Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*; Glazar, *Die Falle mit dem Grünen Zaun*; Richard Glazar, Oral History Interview with Richard Glazar [sic], video, October 1981, RG-50.234.0014, Permanent Collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed October 2015, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn513313>.

4. Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, section 66, parts 8–9 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961); Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*; see also House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes,” pp. 120–125.

5. Two of Treblinka’s known female survivors, Bronka Sukno and Sonia Grabinska-Lewkowicz, were both Camp 2 prisoners. I consciously avoid giving a gender to the creator of this map because it is possible, however improbable, that one of them was the source. Sukno did give evidence for the Franz trial; see Bronka Sukno, Trial of Kurt Franz *et al.*—Investigative Interview of Survivor-Witness Bronka Sukno, February 7, 1965, *Gerichte Rep.* 388, Nr. 781, Band 37, 243–52, Duisburg Branch—State Archives of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

6. For Wiernik's extensive testimony, writings, and interviews on Treblinka, see Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*; Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961); Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*.

7. For representations of the height of the clothing piles see also Testimony of Abraham Krzepicki, "Eighteen Days in Treblinka"; Plates 2 and 3 in Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*. Glazar also describes the sorting area: Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*.

8. See Plate 2 and Plate 3 in Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*.

9. See Plate 2 in Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*.

10. See Plate 3 in Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*.

11. Paul Jaskot et al., "Visualizing the Archive," in Knowles, Cole, and Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, 177.

12. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 179.

13. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 181.

14. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 25; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 116; Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 198.

15. The term "Court Jew" dates to at least the early modern period in Europe, particularly in the German-speaking lands of the Holy Roman Empire and Austria. For Nazi authorities at the time Treblinka operated, the moniker would have conjured images of the antisemitic 1940 propaganda film *Jud Süß*. I use the term here, with understanding of its problematic nature, because of its ubiquity in testimonies, memoirs, and virtually all other primary and secondary sources on Treblinka. For some coverage of the historic term and its Nazi valences through the propaganda film, see Mintsker, *The Many Deaths of Jew Süß*.

16. Testimony of Kalman Teigman, Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Session 66, Parts 4–7 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961), emphasis added. Kalman Teigman and Kalman Taigman are the same person. The spelling varies depending on the source.

17. For a recent and wide-ranging analysis of Jewish resistance, see Wolf Gruner, *Resisters: How Ordinary Jews Fought Persecution in Hitler's Germany* (Yale University Press, 2023).

18. Michael Marrus, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, no. 1 (January 1995): 83–110, 86.

19. Marrus, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust," 91.

20. Werner Rings, *Life with the Enemy: Collaboration and Resistance in Hitler's Europe, 1939–1945* (Doubleday, 1982).

21. Marrus, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust," 93, emphasis added.

22. Sam Goldberg, family interview with his son, Dr. Shlomo Goldberg, 1991, transcription pp. 7–8.

23. Marrus, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust," 94.

24. Israel Meir Lau, *Out of the Depths: The Story of a Child of Buchenwald Who Returned Home at Last*, trans. Jessica Setbon and Shira Leibowitz Schmidt (Sterling Publishers in conjunction with Oxford University Press, 2011); Dudek Lewkowitz, "What I Saw in Treblinka," in *A Tale of One City* (Shengold Publishers in cooperation with Piotrkow Trybunalski Relief Association, 1991), 227–36.

25. Marrus, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust," 93.

26. See Krzepicki, "Eighteen Days in Treblinka," 131; Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, location 562; Auerbach, "In the Fields of Treblinka," 63.

27. Adam Czerniaków, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków: Prelude to Doom*, ed. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Joseph Kermish (Ivan R. Dee, 1999).
28. Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (Aaron Asher Books, 1992), 172.
29. Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 40–41; Lanzmann, *Shoah*, DVD; Isadore Helfing, Isadore Helfing, Treblinka Death Camp Survivor: Selected extracts from USHMM interview held on the 3 September 1992, Website—Transcribed Text, September 3, 1992, transcript, p. 8, USHMM, provided by Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team, accessed August 2018, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/survivor/helfing.html>; Isadore Helfing, Oral History Interview with Isadore Helfing, Video, December 3, 1983, Permanent Collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed September 2018, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn503616>.
30. Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 41.
31. Eichmann Trial, 1–9 at Section 66, Parts 7–8.
32. Hermann Langbein, *Against All Hope: Resistance in the Nazi Concentration Camps, 1938–1945* (Paragon House, 1994), 393.
33. Stolpersteine Project Website. “Stolpersteine FAQs,” FAQs, March 15, 2021, https://www.stolpersteine.eu/fileadmin/pdfs/FAQs_English_2021.pdf.
34. Some start with other inscriptions like “Here worked” or “Here studied,” though most denote the last residence with “Here lived,” or “Hier wohnte.”
35. See section on “Inscriptions” at “Steps,” Stolpersteine Project Website, May 2018, <https://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/steps>.
36. Konrad Kwiet quoted in Marrus, “Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust,” 98.
37. Kwiet quoted first and then Marrus, from Marrus, “Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust,” 98.
38. Marrus, “Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust,” 96.
39. Browning, *Fateful Months*, 28.
40. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 77.
41. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 77. Auerbach herself would go on to survive the Warsaw Ghetto and the Holocaust. After the war, she immigrated to Israel and became a longtime archivist at Yad Vashem. Her chapter “In the Fields of Treblinka,” in Alexander Donat’s edited volume *The Death Camp Treblinka* and in the 1947 Yiddish language work from which it is excerpted, is the only known writing on the camp authored by a woman from that early period. The overwhelmingly male voice of Treblinka sources and historical interpretation is a matter to which I return later. Auerbach, “In the Fields of Treblinka,” 19–74; Oyerbakh, *Oyf di felder fun treblinka: reportazsh*.
42. Zenon Golaszewski, Trial of Kurt Franz et al.—Investigative Interview of Survivor-Witness Zenon Golaszewski, transcript, December 9, 1965, 280, *Gerichte Rep.* 388, Nr. 781, Band 32c, pp. 276–80, Duisburg Branch—State Archives of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Translation by the author. In his oral history interview, survivor Morton Mattel recounts another instance of escape for the purpose of warning the outside world. In his description, the escape took place very early in the Treblinka timeline, and the escapee was a woman; see Morton Mattel, Oral History Interview with Morton Mattel, Audio Recording, July 29, 1981, Permanent Collection, United

States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed July 2015, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn520413>. Glazar adds the story of David Brat's escape with the intent of warning the Warsaw Ghetto. See Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 22.

43. Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka," 145.

44. Ignac Litwak, Trial of Kurt Franz et al.—Investigative Interview of Survivor-Witness Ignac Litwak, transcript, December 9, 1964, 283, *Gerichte Rep.* 388, Nr. 781, Band 32c, pp. 281–83, Duisburg Branch—State Archives of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

45. Litwak, Trial of Kurt Franz et al., 283.

46. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 195–96; Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 198.

47. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 116.

48. David Lieberman, Oral History Interview of David Lieberman, Video, July 10, 1990, Permanent Collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed July 2015, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504626>.

49. Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 194, 198; Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka," 145; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 25.

50. David Lieberman Interview, transcript, 7.

51. Jaskot et al., "Visualizing the Archive," 182.

Chapter 2. Defending the Few

1. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 26; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 25–28.

2. Arad, chap. 12 in *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*.

3. While no previous works credit Jewish prisoners with much control over the selection process, Yitzhak Arad comes closest to acknowledging workers' influence upon the survival of others. Witold Chrostowski's book, however, places all responsibility and power over arrival selection in the hands of the SS. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*; Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*.

4. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 179.

5. Gitta Sereny credits Franz Stangl for the reorganization of Treblinka operations given his "talent for organization," though she and Manfred Burba agree that much of the reordering of camp life was accomplished during the two-week interim command of Inspector of Aktion Reinhard Camps Christian Wirth. See Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 181; Burba, *Treblinka*, 14; Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 88.

6. Interviews of Treblinka SS guard Franz Suchomel, in Lanzmann, *Shoah* (DVD); Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 97–98.

7. Sperling, "Treblinka—Eye-Witness Report," 246; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 166–67.

8. Testimony of survivor Eliahu Rosenberg, Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, 66, parts 7–8 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961).

9. Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*.

10. Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 60.

11. Account of SS guard Franz Suchomel in Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 45; Lanzmann, *Shoah* (DVD), 1985.

12. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 210; Testimony of Josef Czarny in *United States v. Fedorenko*, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979), vol. 4, 418–24; Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 58.

13. Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 60.
14. Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 60.
15. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 119.
16. Testimony of Kalman Teigman, Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Session 66, Parts 4–7 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961).
17. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 27; Account of Kalman Teigman in Alan Tomlinson, *Treblinka's Last Witness*, DVD, documentary (Tomlinson De Onis Productions LLC, 2014); Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961).
18. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, "H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes," pp. 122–24; Samuel Rajzman, "The End of Treblinka," in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 231–51.
19. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, "H.J. Resoe lution 93—Punishment of War Crimes," pp. 122–24; Rajzman, "The End of Treblinka."
20. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, "H.J. Resoe lution 93—Punishment of War Crimes," pp. 122–24; Rajzman, "The End of Treblinka."
21. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 186.
22. Rajzman, "The End of Treblinka"; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*; Mattel, Oral History Interview.
23. Account of SS guard Franz Suchomel in Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 98.
24. Tomlinson, *Treblinka's Last Witness*; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 20.
25. Tomlinson, *Treblinka's Last Witness*.
26. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 28.
27. It is possible that this is the same incident that took the lives of two hundred workers as mentioned by Weinstein; however, solid dating evidence to confirm this has not emerged.
28. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, "H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes," p. 123.
29. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, "H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes," p. 123.
30. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, "H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes," p. 123.
31. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 37–38.
32. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 37–38; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 96, 97–98; Kolski, Abraham Kolski, RG-50.030.0113, JTHOHA, USHMM.
33. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 127–36; Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 206–7; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 98, 122–23; Kolski, Abraham Kolski, RG-50.030.0113, JTHOHA, USHMM; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 220, 236.
34. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 61, 129; Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 192–93.
35. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 61, 129; Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 192–93.
36. For descriptions of *Hoffjuden* work assignments and access to geography, see Testimony of Eugen Turowski, United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979); Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka"; William Schneiderman, Oral History Interview with William Schneiderman, video, September 21,

1994, Permanent Collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed July 2015, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504771>; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*.

37. In his book *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, Witold Chrostowski states that none of the original local-born *Hofjuden* survived Treblinka. However, sources discovered in my research show that at least two did. William Schneiderman was from the nearby village of Stoczek-Lukowski and was transported to Treblinka by truck before the first trains arrived. He participated in the building of the camp and survived its entire tenure as a *Hofjude*. Samuel Goldberg, a close friend of Schneiderman, was also from a nearby community and survived Treblinka from its earliest days. For their stories, Chrostowski's analysis of this group, and other supporting information on this camp population, see Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*; William Schneiderman Interview; Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka"; Kohn, "The Treblinka Revolt," 227; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 142; Testimony of Kalman Teigman Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961); Goldberg, Sam, Interview 30760, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, July 13, 1997, accessed September 8, 2020; Sam Goldberg, family interview with his son, Dr. Shlomo Goldberg, 1991, in possession of the author courtesy of Karen Treiger, daughter-in-law of Sam Goldberg. See also Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*; Shmuel "Samuel" Goldberg, "Between Stok and Treblinka [*Tsvishn stok un treblinka*]," in *The Chronicle of Stok (Near Wengrow): An Eternal Memorial [*Pinkes stok (bay vengrow): Matseyve netsekh*]*, ed. Y. Tsudiker (Organization of Stokers in Israel; Stok Community Group "Society" of North America; Stok Community Group of Argentina; Stoker Group of Canada, 1974), 429–34.

38. Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka," 141–42; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 25–26. See also Glazar [*sic*], Oral History Interview.

39. Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka," 142.

40. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 55.

41. William Schneiderman Interview, transcript, p. 23; Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 199, 206; Testimony of Kalman Teigman Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961); Strawczynski, "Ten Months in Treblinka," 178; Moyshe Klaynman, unpublished memoir of Moyshe Klaynman, written between 1944 and 1947, M.49, File 118, Item 3547904 (YVA).

42. Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1961, B162/3825 (BL), p.1875. Former Treblinka commandant Franz Stangl also told Gitta Sereny that Jewish women were allowed in the SS barracks to clean it. See Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 166.

43. Unpublished memoir of Moyshe Klaynman, written between 1944 and 1947, M.49, File 118, Item 3547904 (YVA), p. 60

44. Sam Goldberg, Interview 30760; Sam Goldberg, family interview with his son, Dr. Shlomo Goldberg, 1991; Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*.

45. Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, November 8, 1959, B162/3818 (BL); Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, June 23, 1960, B162/3824 (BL); Goldberg, Sam, Interview 30760.

46. Jonas Kornhendler, Interview 30369, Tape 1 of 4, 20:00–26:00, and Tape 2 of 4, 00:15–13:30. See also PIQ Report, pp. 3,5,7, and 14, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, June 30, 1997, accessed September 10, 2020.

47. Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*, 6.
48. Statement of Elias Rosenberg, December 24, 1947, in O.3, File 4548, Item 3558557 (YVA), p. 11; Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 116.
49. Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, November 8, 1959, B162/3818 (BL); Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, June 23, 1960, B162/3824 (BL), p. 179; Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1961, B162/3825 (BL), p. 1877.
50. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 22, 139.
51. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 130–32.
52. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 54; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 166–67.
53. Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, 46.
54. Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, George L. Mosse Series in Modern European Cultural and Intellectual History (University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 85.
55. Browning, *Collected Memories*, 85.
56. Langer, *Versions of Survival*, 72.
57. Browning, *Collected Memories*, 78–84; for more information on the Starachowice camps and the killing of prisoner functionaries, see Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (Norton, 2011); Christopher R. Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
58. Helfing, Isadore Helfing Interview, December 3, 1983; Helfing, Isadore Helfing Interview, September 3, 1992.
59. Langbein, *Against All Hope*; Wachsmann, *KL*.
60. Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, location 696; United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979), vol. 3, p. 388.
61. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 141; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 208–9; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2014), 265–66.
62. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 208–9, see also Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*; Glazer [sic], Oral History Interview.
63. Survivor Tanhum Grinberg even states that all Kapos had a pistol on the day of the revolt. The assertion that all Kapos were combatants might be supported by the fact that none of them survived the revolt. See Tanhum Grinberg, “The Revolt in Treblinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 214–23.
64. United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979), vol. 3, p. 294.
65. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 188, 190, 244.
66. In a USC Shoah Foundation interview, Samuel Goldberg recounts meeting a former Treblinka Kapo at Grossinger’s resort in upstate New York. For his part, Herschl Sperling recounted meeting Joseph Siedlecki at Grossinger’s, though Sperling did not call him a former Kapo. Siedlecki was interviewed for Gitta Sereny’s book, though he did not speak about what his role was in the camp in these passages. While sources differ on Siedlecki’s role in the camp, it is clear that he was not well connected or well regarded. Siedlecki’s own statement that he kept to himself—whether or not intended as an evasion of his actual past—is in keeping with a prisoner not brought into resistance planning. Karen I. Treiger, “A Kapo at Grossinger’s,” *So You Want To Write A*

Holocaust Book? (blog), February 8, 2016, <https://soyouwanttowriteaholocaustbook.wordpress.com/2016/02/08/a-kapo-at-grossingers/>; Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*; Treiger, “The Kapo at Grossinger’s—Revisited”/; Sam Goldberg, Interview 30760, Transcript, pp. 41–42; Sam Goldberg, family interview with his son, Dr. Shlomo Goldberg, 1991; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 188, 190, 244; Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*, 144.

67. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 247. Per Glazar, Küttner was a prison guard in pre-war life and was therefore the best at discovering infractions and conspiracies among the prisoners. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 47.

68. Franz Suchomel quoted in Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 247.

69. Franz Suchomel quoted in Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 247.

70. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 85–87.

71. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 85.

72. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 87.

73. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 35–36.

74. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 36.

75. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: If This Is a Man*, trans. Stuart Woolf (BN Publishing, 2008), 172.

76. Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” 196–97. The first brackets in this quote are in the original; the second are mine.

77. In his memoir, Glazar refers to a man who is likely Willenberg “Willinger.” Glazar’s Willinger holds the same job that Willenberg held in the camp at the time described, seemingly speaks in the same way, has a description that matches that of Willenberg, and also came from Czestochowa. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 49, 68.

78. Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” 197.

79. Langer, *Versions of Survival*, 106.

80. Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*, 6.

81. Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*, 2.

82. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (Basic Books, 2010); see also Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (Tim Duggan Books, 2015).

83. At particularly the macro scale, Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca’s edited volume *Hitler’s Geographies* is also an important spatial analysis of the Third Reich.

84. Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*, 6.

85. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 84–85; Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 161–62.

86. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 84–85.

87. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 92–94.

88. Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 161–64.

89. Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 161–62.

90. Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1962, Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg (hereafter BL), B162/3825, p. 1875.

91. Unpublished memoir of Moyshe Klaynman (in Yiddish), written between 1944 and 1947; in M.49, File 118, Item 3547904, Yad Vashem Archive (hereafter YVA), p. 44.

92. Weinstein, Edward, Interview 2694, Tape 3 of 7. 00:20–19:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, May 17, 1995, accessed

September 4, 2020; for a more detailed description, see Eddie Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka: Daring to Resist, and Refusing to Die*, 4th ed. (Yad Vashem Publications, 2009).

93. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 206; Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 273; Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 154, 161. Women's actions as couriers for resistance groups during the Holocaust are better explored in reference to ghettos and partisan activities than inside the Nazi camps. Judy Batalion's recent work demonstrates the actions of Jewish women as messengers for resistance and their other forms of support for fighting organizations, including participation in armed combat. Judy Batalion, *The Light of Days: The Untold Story of Women Resistance Fighters in Hitler's Ghettos* (HarperCollins, 2020).

94. Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1962, B162/3825 (BL), p. 1875; Klaynman, M.49, File 118, Item 3547904 (YVA), p. 60. Stangl stated that Jewish women were allowed in the SS barracks to clean it, thus giving them regular access to this highly restricted area. See Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 166.

Chapter 3. Taking Up Arms

1. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 110, brackets in original.

2. Shalom Kohn (sometimes Stanislaw Kon and other spellings), "The Treblinka Revolt," in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 225–26; see also Testimony of Shalom Kohn, *United States v. Fedorenko*, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979).

3. Sources use various spellings of Yaakov Miller's name depending on the language of the original document and where it was recorded. He appears variously as Yaakov, Ya'akov, Jacob, Müller, Muller, Miller, and Miler in a source translated from Yiddish. In Isaiah Trunk's volume, he is anonymized as "Y.M." Yaakov Miller, "Eyewitness Testimony 47. The Uprising in Treblinka," in *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, ed. Isaiah Trunk (Stein and Day, 1979), 264.

4. Testimony of Eugen Turowski, *United States v. Fedorenko*, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979), vol. 2, p. 228.

5. Sam Goldberg, Interview 30760; Sam Goldberg, family interview with his son, Dr. Shlomo Goldberg, 1991. See also Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*.

6. Glazar told Gitta Sereny he believed that revolt planning began in November 1942. Other accounts give varying later dates. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 197.

7. William Schneiderman interview; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 188–90.

8. Unfortunately, the source does not explain why this was called Plan H or indicate whether this means there were a group of ideas labeled A to G. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 69–82.

9. Bloch was from Preschau, present-day Prešov, in Slovakia. He arrived at Treblinka on a transport from Warsaw and associated himself with the Czech group of prisoners in the camp. Most accounts that mention his nationality refer to him as a Czech, though new research by Christopher Webb and Michal Chocholatý reveals that Bloch was a Slovak Jew who went by the first name Zoltan prior to his time in Treblinka. (As most primary sources refer to Bloch by the name Zelo or a phonetic equivalent, I will do the same.) Their work also confirmed that Bloch was an officer in the Czechoslovak Army from 1934 to 1936 and again in 1938. Webb and Chocholatý, *The*

Treblinka Death Camp (2021), 303–4; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 22, 69; Kohn, “The Treblinka Revolt,” 225.

10. Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” 236, 241; House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes”; Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 138, 174; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 47–48, 83–87; Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” 198; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 22, 56–57, 138–39.

11. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 303–4. Camp 2 survivor Chil Rajchman calls the second man, Bloch’s companion, “Adolf.” Though not all sources agree, I am confident the man called Adasch by some and Adolf by others is the same person. Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 120.

12. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 157–58; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 80–81.

13. Kohn, “The Treblinka Revolt,” 226; Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L. 570, L. 605; Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Section 66, Parts 3–4 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961).

14. House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes,” pp. 123; Chil Rajchman, RG-50.030.0185, JTHOHA, USHMM, December 7, 1988, accessed April 10, 2015, transcript, p. 9; Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 58, 120–21.

15. Quotes derived from Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Section 66, Parts 3–4 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961). See also Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L. 570, L. 605.

16. Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Section 66, Parts 3–4 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961).

17. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 92, 135; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 221; Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 38; Testimony of Jankiel Wiernik, in Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Section 66, Parts 3–4 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961); Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*, 247; Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 58, 120–121; Grinberg, “The Revolt in Treblinka,” 221.

18. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 92, 135; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 221; Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 38.

19. Abraham Kolski, RG-50.030.0113, JTHOHA, USHMM, March 29, 1990, accessed April 10, 2015, transcript, p. 9; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 205–6; Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” 204.

20. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 161; *United States v. Fedorenko*, 597 F.2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979), vol. 3, p. 301.

21. Grinberg, “The Revolt in Treblinka,” 217; Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 175–76.

22. Grinberg, “The Revolt in Treblinka,” 217; Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 175–76.

23. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 142.

24. This approximate date emerges from accounts of this time period by Richard Glazar and Samuel Willenberg, though neither pinpoints the timing of events exactly. This date fits the flow of their narratives, and the other events they mention taking place at roughly the same time. See Glazar (in all other sources including his own book, Glazar), Oral History Interview; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*; Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka.”

25. The term “originated” is used because testimonies vary on his place of birth; however, he arrived from the Czestochowa Ghetto. See Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 267; Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 165–67; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 69.

26. Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L.734; Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 264–65; Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” 240; House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes”; Rajchman, Chil, RG-50.030.0185, JTHOHA, USHMM, December 7, 1988, accessed April 10, 2015, transcript, pp. 9–10; Helfing, Isadore, RG-50.042.0014, JTHOHA, USHMM, March 9, 1992, accessed October 20, 2019; Helfing, Isadore, RG-50.005.0024, JTHOHA, USHMM, December 3, 1983, accessed October 20, 2019; Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*, 251; Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 138, 174, 178; Kohn, “The Treblinka Revolt,” 225; Grinberg, “The Revolt in Treblinka,” 215.

27. Fellow Camp 2 prisoner Avraham Lindwasser’s testimony confirms Wiernik’s role as Camp 1 to Camp 2 communication channel. See Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Section 66, Parts 8–9 (Jerusalem District Court, 1961).

28. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 179.

29. Kolski, Oral History Interview 49970, USC Shoah Foundation VHA, Tape 5 of 8, 03:00–13:20.

30. It is also quite likely, though direct and conclusive evidence for this area of the camp has not come to light, that SS guards brought Jewish women into their barracks area for the purposes of sexual exploitation. This practice, though almost certainly brutal and incredibly difficult to endure, would have provided Jewish women further opportunities to learn guard movements and gather information and resources. The victimization of Jewish women in this way is well documented at other camps, while Edward Westermann’s work points out the questionable relationship of at least one Treblinka guard with the Jewish women employed in the Camp 1 laundry. Westermann, *Drunk on Genocide*, 104; Kevin Prenger, *A Judge in Auschwitz: Konrad Morgen’s Crusade Against SS Corruption and “Illegal” Murder* (Pen & Sword Books, 2021), 70.

31. Kornhendler, Interview 30369; Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1961, B162/3825 (BL), p. 1875; unpublished memoir of Moyshe Klaynman, written between 1944 and 1947, M.49, File 118, Item 3547904 (YVA), p. 60. Franz Stangl stated that Jewish women were allowed in the SS barracks to clean it. See Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 166. {repeated from chap. 2}

32. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 181.

33. Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1961, B162/3825 (BL), p.1875; unpublished memoir of Moyshe Klaynman, written between 1944 and 1947, M.49, File 118, Item 3547904 (YVA), p. 60; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 166.

34. Peter Neusner, *Mut der Verzweiflung: Widerstand in Vernichtungslagern am beiseite Treblinka und Sobibor, Teil 1*, Documentary (Österreichischer Runkfunk [ORF], 1985), 49:00.

35. Abraham Kolski, RG-50.030.0113, JTHOHA, USHMM, March 29, 1990, accessed April 10, 2015, transcript, p. 10.

36. This is an overall number including both Germans and Ukrainians.

37. For testimony indicating the gate was open on the day of the revolt, see Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*, 135; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 92, 135; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 221; Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L.614, L.626, L.789; Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Section 66, Parts 3–4 (Jerusalem District Court 1961).

38. See map in Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*, 135. A statement by SS guard Franz Suchomel indicates that some prisoners elected to take a southerly escape route through Camp 2. See Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 247.

39. Eliahu Rosenberg, “The Death Camp Treblinka” [Das Todeslager Treblinka], Vienna, December 24, 1947, O.3, File 4548, Item 3558557, YVA, pp. 12–14; Neusner, *Mut der Verzweiflung Teil 1*.

40. Yitzhak Arad cites Camp 2 survivor and construction foreman Jankiel Wiernik in these sections. See Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 284–85.

41. Camp 2 survivor Chil Rajchman credits a Jewish foreman whom he calls “Adolf” with getting the guards to agree to other movements of prisoners on the day of the revolt. I believe the person he calls Adolf is actually Zelo Bloch’s companion Adasch, who was transferred to Camp 2 at the same time. Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 126–27.

42. See the Testimony of “Y.M.,” or Ya’akov Miller, who was a member of this detail, in Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 262–68.

43. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 110; Testimony of “Y.M.” in Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 265; Kohn, “The Treblinka Revolt,” 227.

44. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 41.

45. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 98.

46. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 168; Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, 89.

47. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 20.

48. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 28.

49. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 22, 28.

50. Alfred Boehm and his contributions to the Treblinka uprising were so etched in the memory of Samuel Willenberg that he depicted Boehm and his stroller in one of the bronze sculptures of Treblinka history that he created in later life. A picture of this sculpture is located in the back of his book. See Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 177, 179, sculpture on 328.

51. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 179–80; Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka”; Tomlinson, *Treblinka’s Last Witness*; Adam Kemp, *Death Camp Treblinka: Survivor Stories*, streaming broadcast, documentary (BBC, 2012); Kohn, “The Treblinka Revolt,” 228.

52. Solomon “Sol” Lachman stated in his interview that only those with military backgrounds received weapons. He noted that he did not get to handle a gun because he was not a veteran. Sol Lackman, Interview 16282, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 4, 1996, 26:20 and 29:30, accessed June 2023. In his interview, nonveteran revolt survivor Isadore Helfing stated that weapons went to “certain people who knew how to handle it,” seemingly referring to military veterans; Isadore Helfing, Interview 5512, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, August 15, 1995, 26:50, accessed June 2023.

53. Shalom Kohn refers to Zelo Bloch by military rank; see Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 225–26. Avraham Lindwasser also speaks of Bloch's military service; see Statement of Abraham Lindwasser, July 6, 1960, B162/3824, BL, p. 1673; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 303. Dr. Julian Chorazycki was an officer in the Polish Army (see Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 280; and Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* [2021], 309). Although I have not been able to confirm this, Manny (or Marian) Platkewicz (Platkevitz) calls Alfred Galewski a captain in the Polish Army; see Testimony of Marian Platkevitz, June 1979, YVA, O.3, File 4229, Item 3561380, p. 5. Rudolf "Rudi" Masarek served as an officer in the Czechoslovak Army; see Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 348–49.

54. The fourteen confirmed military veteran revolt survivors are Hensch Brenner, Aron Gleit, Sam Goldberg, Tadeusz Grinberg, Shalom Kohn, Ya'akov Miler, Manny Platkewicz, Berek Rojzman, Wolf Schneidermann, Josef Siedlecki, Oscar Strawczynski, Chaim Sztajer, Eugen Turowski, and Samuel Willenberg. Treblinka escape survivors include a further five known veterans. Their names are Czeslaw Augustyniak (Leo Blaustein), Jonas Kornhendler, Abraham Krzepicki, Avraham Rapp, and Frank Stiffel. Statement of Henry Brenner, May 7, 1968, B162/3832, BL, p. 4067; Testimony of Aron Gleit, November 1971, YVA, O.3, File 3989, Item 3558403, pp. 1–2; Sam Goldberg, Interview 30760, transcript, pp. 14–16; Statement of Tadeusz Grinberg, January 19, 1961, B162/3825, BL, p. 1862; Testimony of Tanchum Greenberg, December 1961, YVA, O.3, File 568, Item 3557277, p. 1; Testimony of Shalom Kohn, United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979); Testimony of Yaakov Miler, March 1982, YVA, O.3, File 7913, Item 3563554, pp. 2–6; Testimony of Marian Platkevitz, June 1979, YVA, O.3, File 4229, Item 3561380, p.7; for Rojzman, see Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 185; and Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 289; William Schneiderman interview, transcript, p. 11; for Siedlecki, see Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 187; Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 125; Zylbersztajn, *L'Chaim: The Exceptional Life of Chaim Sztajer*, 10–11; Statement of Eugeniusz Turowski, August 28, 1960, B162/3824, BL, p. 1595; Statement of Samuel Willenberg, B162/3832, BL, p. 918; Statement of Czeslaw Augustyniak, December 14, 1967, B162/3831, BL, p. 4007; Jonas Kornhendler, Interview 30369. See also PIQ Report, p. 14; Testimony of Menachem Krzepicki, 1967, YVA, O.3, File 3220, Item 3557351, p. 2; Testimony of Avraham Rapp, December 12, 1946, YVA, M.11/M1.E, File 627, Item 3542274, p. 2; Frank Stiffel, *The Tale of the Ring: A Kaddish*, Mazal Holocaust Collection (Pushcart, 1994), 34–35. Thanks are owed to Grace Shaffer, Zucker/Goldberg Center for Holocaust Studies Research Assistant, for her help identifying Jewish veterans at Treblinka.

55. Prisoners were erecting a water boiler at the SS barracks on the day of the revolt. Willenberg, "I Survived Treblinka," 209; Rajzman, "The End of Treblinka," 243; House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, "H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes," pp. 124.

56. Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L.789, L.813.

57. Mattel, Oral History Interview.

58. Knowles, Cole, and Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, chap. 1, 22–24; Jaskot et al., "Visualizing the Archive."

59. Kohn, "The Treblinka Revolt," 228.

60. Kohn, “The Treblinka Revolt,” 228.
61. Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L.813.
62. Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” 244; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 115, 139.
63. Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” 244; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 115, 139; see also Glazar, Oral History Interview; 26, House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes.”
64. Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” 244.
65. Statement of Richard Glazar in Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 239.
66. Statement of Richard Glazar in Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 239.
67. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 182–83; Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” 210; Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” 244; Kolski, Abraham Kolski, RG-50.030.0113, JTHOHA, USHMM, transcript, p. 11.
68. Samuel Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 231–51, 244–45; House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes,” pp. 120–25.
69. Survivor Jankiel Wiernik recalled prisoners using gold and valuables to lure the guards out of the towers. Chil Rajchman also recalls prisoners luring them out and adds that some of the guards surrendered. Given their identity and the course of the war by August 2, 1943, I find it plausible that the Ukrainians would not be entirely energetic in their defense of Treblinka or incredibly willing to risk their own lives to fight against the uprising. Antisemitic as they were, they were prepared to kill, though I hold doubts about their willingness to die for a German cause. Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L.825; Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 127.
70. Survivor Avraham Goldfarb stated that he helped throw a guard down the well, after which he said that Bloch shot three guards. Statement of Avraham Goldfarb, Tel Aviv, Israel, March 3, 1961, O.3, File 4181, Item 3558301 (YVA), p. 26; survivor Aron Gleit stated that he was assigned to help attack the guards at the well with Zelo Bloch and his group, but the early start of the uprising meant that he was not in place when fighting began. After he heard the shot, he ran to the well, only to discover the guards had already been thrown in. See Statement of Aron Gleit, Tel Aviv, Israel, November 1971, O.3, File 3989, Item 3558403 (YVA), p. 10.
71. Chil Rajchman states that a butcher named Kalman was able to sharpen and prepare butchering tools without raising the suspicion of guards because it happened that prisoners were supposed to be receiving a horse to eat around this time. Rajchman further confirms Zelo Bloch’s possession of a rifle. Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 125.
72. Interview with Sonia Levkovicz [Lewkowicz], no location given, undated, O.3, File 4181, Item 3558301 (YVA), p. 4.
73. Though I find the term “brothel” distasteful, I recognize that its use does appear to be in keeping with current phrasing in the field of Holocaust studies more broadly, while a suitable replacement is elusive. For work on camp sites of forced sexual exploitation and use of the term “brothel,” see Sommer, *Das KZ-Bordell*; Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel, eds., *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust*, HBI Series on Jewish Women (Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, 2010).

74. Statement of Szlomo Helman, June 7, 1961, O.3, File 2267, Item 35555994 (YVA), p. 14.

75. Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 127; Testimony of Eugen Turowski, United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979), vol. 2, p. 244.

76. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor*, 135. Since Wiernik was wounded on the run by a guard from Treblinka I, which was located to the south of Treblinka II, it is highly likely that he took the south escape route, though his testimony does not clearly confirm this. See Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, L.825 and L.850; Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, 127. Kalman Teigman was present near the ghetto barracks and took a southerly escape route. See Testimony of Kalman Teigman, Adolf Eichmann Trial, 1–9, Section 66, Parts 4–7 (Jerusalem District Court 1961).

77. Strawczynski is the exception to this generalization. He was near the ghetto barracks as the revolt broke out and headed out the east gate. See Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 181.

78. Grinberg, “The Revolt in Treblinka,” 222; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 182; Tomlinson, *Treblinka’s Last Witness*; Glazer [sic], Oral History Interview; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 144. Rajzman’s account also states that he fled in this direction with survivor Arie Kudlik. See Rajzman, “The End of Treblinka,” 246; Kolski, Abraham Kolski, RG-50.030.0113, JTHOHA, USHMM, transcript, p. 11.

79. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 182–83; see also Willenberg’s sculptures of revolt fighting and prisoners hung up on the east fence wires, 328.

80. Mattel confirms that his friend Galewski died in the revolt but does not say how. Mattel, Oral History Interview; Testimony of Leon Perelstein states that Galewski took his own life outside the wire. See Webb and Chocholaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 236, 244.

81. Sources do not agree on the manner of Galewski’s death. Morton Mattel stated that he died in the revolt but did not mention suicide. Mattel, Oral History Interview.

82. Samuel Willenberg thought that as many as 350 made it out on the day of the revolt, while Samuel Rajzman estimated that between 150 and 200 made it out. Historian Yitzhak Arad estimated this number of people who fled during the revolt as high as 350 to 400. See Samuel Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 189–213, 212; House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes,” pp. 120–125; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 248; Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 298; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284.

83. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 247–48.

Chapter 4. “There Was No Women”

1. Yaakov E., Mssa.hvt.3371, Part 2, Segment 17, 00:24:51, Yale University Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (FVA), June 19, 1992.

2. Alexander Donat’s list of Treblinka survivors includes Bronka Sukno, Sonia Lewkok wicz, and Sonia Grabinski. Grabinski, however, is the unmarried name of Sonia Lewkowicz. For the original list, see Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284–91. In her memoir, Anneliese Johnson (born Wegner) states that she survived the Treblinka revolt and briefly describes that day. Her account is problematic for several reasons. First, Johnson is a Ger-

man Jew from the *Altreich* and tells that she was deported to Treblinka by train from German Pomerania in the summer of 1943. There were no transports of German Jews to Treblinka from her town or area and very few transports arriving in summer 1943 at all. The timing of her arrival, her origin, and other details of her memoir seem to indicate either faulty memory or that she was actually at a different camp. Johnson, *Yesterday's Today's*.

3. While there are as many as three women survivors of the Treblinka revolt, seven more women either escaped the camp before the revolt or passed through its confines briefly as Nazi authorities transported them to another location. Each of these seven can tell us much about the camp but not about the uprising itself or long-term life inside. The seven additional confirmed women survivors are Minia Berman, Vivian Chakin (formerly Sidranska), Zelda Gordon, Riva Kremr, Linda Penn (formerly Luba Kremr, daughter of Riva Kremr), Helen Schwartz, and Feny Zycherman. Minia Berman is included on the updated Treblinka Muzeum list. I do not know how she survived; see Edwarda Kopówki and Aliny Skibińskiej, “Resistance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka,” accessed September 28, 2019, <https://muzeumtreblinka.eu/en/informacje/resistance-and-uprising/>. For the other six women, see Chakin, Vivian, Interview 7457, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, November 21, 1995; Gordon, Zelda, Interview 15, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, July 15, 1994; Penn, Linda, Interview 38042, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, January 11, 1998; Penn, Linda, Interview 55144, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, January 24, 1992; Schwartz, Helen, Interview 2889, Tape 3 of 6. 07:20–15:00 and archival PIQ Report, p. 5, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, May 29, 1995. Helen Schwartz also gave a prior, shorter, less-detailed interview to the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre of Greater Toronto, a USC Shoah Foundation partner institution. She does not mention Treblinka in this interview. Schwartz, Helen, Interview 54305, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, May 4, 1988; Zycherman, Feny, Interview 1228, Tape 2 of 3. 02:30, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, February 27, 1995.

4. Yaakov E., Part 4, Segment 31, 00:00:36, Fortunoff Video Archive.

5. David Silberklang, “Foreword,” in Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, ix–xiii, x.

6. Unpublished memoir of Moyshe Klaynman, written between 1944 and 1947, YVA, M.49, File 118, Item 3547904; see also Gibbs and Greene, “Briv funem archiv.”

7. Moyshe Klaynman’s memoir anonymizes all characters under work titles or personal descriptions. As such, though he only refers to the main female character in his writing as *dos meydl*, Klaynman’s writing is not one of those sources that tends to leave out the names of women while naming men. In this manuscript, no one is named.

8. Klaynman, File 118, Item 3547904, p. 27.

9. Klaynman, File 118, Item 3547904, pp. 59–60.

10. Klaynman, File 118, Item 3547904, pp. 61–63.

11. Justine Meberg, “The Logic of Protection: The US Army and Enemy Women in the Second Seminole War and Mexican War, 1835–1848” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2021), 16–17.

12. Oskar Strawczynski penned his memoir in 1944, though it did not reach publication until 2007. His manuscript resides in Yad Vashem. See Testimony of Oskar Strawczynski, YVA, O.3, File 313I, Item 3557650, published as Oskar Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” in Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 117–82.

13. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 158.

14. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 154.

15. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 154.

16. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 154.

17. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 158.

18. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 176; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 100; see also SS guard Franz Suchomel’s recollections of Tchechia Mandel in Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 195. Chapter 7 discusses the later fate of Mandel.

19. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 181.

20. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 132, 177.

21. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 132.

22. In his foreword to the English-language edition of Glazar’s memoir, Wolfgang Benz provides a history of Glazar’s writing and publication. Benz states that Glazar wrote his manuscript in the years just after the war in Czech, although it was not published until some forty years later in German translation. The English version appeared a few years after this, in 1995. Benz mentions that Glazar edited his memoir in the 1990s before it appeared in English or German. Without access to his original Czech version, it is impossible to say what sort of mediation may have taken place between his immediate memories and what he chose to release those decades later. Wolfgang Benz, “Foreword,” in Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, ii–ix; Richard Glazar, *Die Falle mit dem Grünen Zaun: Überleben in Treblinka* (Fischer Taschenbuch, 1992); Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*.

23. Strawczynski, “Ten Months in Treblinka,” 154.

24. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 57–58.

25. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 124–25.

26. Kolski, USC Shoah Foundation VHA, Tape 5 of 8, 03:00–13:20.

27. Sam Goldberg Interview 30760; Sam Goldberg, family interview with his son, Dr. Shlomo Goldberg, 1991. See also Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*; Shmuel “Samuel” Goldberg, “Between Stok and Treblinka [*Tsvishn stok un treblinke*],” 429–34; Tsudiker, *The Chronicle of Stok*.

28. Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, November 8, 1959, B162/3818 (BL), p. 179; Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, June 23, 1960, B162/3824 (BL), p. 1658.

29. Abraham Bomba Interview 18061, Tape 3 of 7, 21:27, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, August 14, 1996.

30. Lanzmann, *Shoah* (DVD); Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 102–8.

31. Abram Kolski’s level of detail in his recollection of a razor attack by a woman arriving at Treblinka is not sufficient to determine whether he is remembering a separate incident or one of those already noted.

32. Jonas Kornhendler was deported to Treblinka from the Czestochowa Ghetto around Yom Kippur (September 20–21) 1942. He escaped with one other man from

Czestochowa over the fences after two weeks in the camp. See Jonas Kornhendler, Interview 30369, and also PIQ Report, pp. 3,5,7, and 14.

33. Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*, 17.

34. Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 58; Richard Glazar Interview 8552, transcript, p. 60 of 86, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. February 5, 1996.

35. Sonia Lewkowicz told an American court that she was not transferred to Camp 2 until March 5, 1943. Her citation of this quite specific date indicates that this was a particularly strong memory for her. See Testimony of Sonia Lewkowicz, United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979).

36. Abraham Bomba escaped from Treblinka in December 1942 or January 1943. Bronka Sukno arrived at Treblinka on January 18, 1943, so it is possible that they were also in the camp at the same time, though this cannot be stated with certainty. Lewkowicz arrived at Treblinka on December 14, 1942, so it is more likely that she and Bomba endured some number of days at the camp at the same time. See Statement of Sonia Lewkowicz, June 23, 1960, B162/3824 (BL), p. 1658; Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1962, B162/3825 (BL), p. 1874.

37. Goldberg/Treiger Family Treblinka Survivor Reunion Video (in Hebrew, Yiddish, and English), February 2000, in possession of the author courtesy of Karen Treiger.

38. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, chapter 15, “Women Prisoners,” 114–18; Arad, *The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, chapter 16, “Women Prisoners,” 150–54. The 2018 edition of Arad’s book repositions his work in the historiography and revises his statements on the place of the Operation Reinhard camps in the wider context of the Holocaust. His work on the camps themselves is unchanged. As there are no differences between Arad’s original and his updated rerelease in their core primary source research, I cite only the original.

39. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 116.

40. For the quote in his book, Arad cites “YVA O-3/4039, p. 11, testimony of Eli Rozenberg (in German)” (hereafter Rosenberg). Rosenberg was from Warsaw and worked in the extermination area.” A statement by Rosenberg under this archival file number exists; however, it is not the correct document. Yad Vashem has reorganized its collections since the time of Arad’s original research. For the original citation, see Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 412, Arad’s quotation of Rosenberg appears on p. 116. Rosenberg’s statement in German with this quote on a page with the original numbering “11” can now be found in Statement of Elias Rosenberg, December 24, 1947, O.3, File 4548, Item 3558557 (YVA), p. 11. Translation from the German of this longer excerpt is my own.

41. Though I find the term “brothel” distasteful, I recognize that its use does appear to be in keeping with the field more broadly and that a suitable replacement is elusive. For work on camp sites of forced sexual exploitation and use of the term “brothel,” see Sommer, *Das KZ-Bordell: Sexuelle Zwangsarbeit in Nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern* (Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009); Hedgpeth and Sidel, eds., *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust*.

42. Statement of Elias Rosenberg, April 17, 1961, B162/3826 (BL), p. 1919; Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1962, B162/3825 (BL), p. 1876.

43. Histories of women's lives, gender, sex, sexual violence, sexuality, masculinity, and related studies are—at long last—burgeoning areas of Holocaust research. For a few of the important works and authors on these topics, see Elizabeth Roberts Baer and Myrna Goldenberg, eds., *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust* (Wayne State University Press, 2003); Waitman Wade Beorn, “Bodily Conquest: Sexual Violence in the Nazi East,” in *Mass Violence in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, ed. Alex J. Kay and David Stahel (Indiana University Press, 2018), 195–216; Carey, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust*; Anna Hájková, *Menschen Ohne Geschichte Sind Staub: Homophobie Und Holocaust*, Hirschfeld-Lectures, Band 14 (Wallstein, 2021); Anna Hájková, “Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide; Hedgepeth and Sidel, eds., *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*; Marion Kaplan, “Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust?” (Academic talk, Shapiro Scholar Public Lecture on the Holocaust, USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research, May 1, 2019), <https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2019/05/24876-%E2%80%99Cd-id-gender-matter-during-holocaust%E2%80%99D-marion-kaplan-skirball-professor-modern>; Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1999); Björn Krondorfer, *Male Confessions: Intimate Revelations and the Religious Imagination* (Stanford University Press, 2010); Denisa Neštáková et al., eds., *If This Is a Woman: Studies on Women and Gender in the Holocaust* (Academic Studies Press, 2021); Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds., *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (Paragon House, 1993); Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds., *Rape: Weapon of War and Genocide* (Paragon House, 2012).

44. Edward J. “Eddie” Weinstein, Interview 2694.

45. Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 56.

46. Hájková, “Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide”; Beorn, “Bodily Conquest: Sexual Violence in the Nazi East.” 195–216.

47. Mary Louise Roberts, “Beyond ‘Crisis’ in Understanding Gender Transformation,” *Gender & History* 28, no. 2 (August 2016): 358–66.

48. Leon Diskin Interview 17082, Archival Pre-Interview Questionnaire (PIQ) Report, “Spelling Verification Form” insert, p. 2 of 6, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, July 14, 1996, accessed September 3, 2020.

49. I would like to thank USC Shoah Foundation Collections curator Crispin Brooks for conversations on this topic and others. For USC Shoah Foundation interviewer training on the topic of sexual assault and the practice of interviewing subjects alone (that is, with only the interviewee, interviewer, and videographer in the room), see “Interviewer Guidelines,” USC Shoah Foundation, The Institute for Visual History and Education, October 2020, pp. 13, 43.

50. Sam Goldberg Interview 30760, transcript, pp. 32 and 33.

51. Adek Stein, Interview 3169, Tape 2 of 12, 06:45–11:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation, June 13, 1995.

52. Whether or not family members or others are nearby during the interview process is not routinely recorded in archival metadata and becomes apparent only if the individuals in the background or adjacent rooms of the home make themselves known. While it is not policy to allow an audience, research shows it was often unavoidable. Since many may have listened silently, statistics on how many interviews had an audi-

ence beyond the interviewer and videographer would be impossible to compile with any accuracy.

53. I compiled these statistics with the help of spreadsheets provided by Martha Stroud of the USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research. With the help of my sister, Kammie Gibbs, I first set aside some 1,722 interviews for which the identity of the interviewer is not recorded and then chose the sex of each identified interviewer on the basis of their first names. The sex of interviewees is recorded in USC Shoah Foundation metadata, though the sex of interviewers is not. Therefore, some level of inaccuracy may exist if, for example, an interviewer named Alexandra recorded her name as Alex, though this should not be so significant as to profoundly affect the outcome of this statistical work. Similar statistical work for the Fortunoff collection is not possible given the large number of interviews conducted by multiple interviewers and the manner in which archival metadata are recorded for this collection.

54. In his oral history interview with a male interviewer, survivor Richard Glazar discusses instances of rape during the Holocaust. See Glazar, Interview 8552, transcript, p. 39 of 86.

55. Statement of Bronka Sukno, June 14, 1962, B162/3825 (BL), p. 1875.

Chapter 5. Surviving Treblinka

1. For some, this grief and the trauma of all they had endured or their despair about the future became too much. According to his brother and fellow survivor, Frank, Martin Stiffel committed suicide in Rome in September 1947. His many personal losses and what he saw as the continued ill-treatment of Jews after the Holocaust tore down his will to go on. In a note, Martin revealed a sadness caused by dashed hopes and his vision of a life “without a tomorrow.” Though his death by his own hand was, as far as I know, the first in the postwar years, it would not be the last. Treblinka survivor Hershl Sperling, then a widower, took his own life in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1989. Richard Glazar walked the same path a week after the death of his wife, in 1997. Both men lived with the horrors of what they had seen and endured for many years, finally, perhaps, becoming overwhelmed by their memories after the loss of their wives. It was Glazar who wrote so beautifully about the power of relationships in his memoir. While a complete analysis or accounting of suicide after Treblinka is lacking, and while the psychology of postwar traumatic stress is beyond the scope of this book, it seems likely that the loss of relationships—loved ones capable of pulling these men from the darkness of their memories—contributed to their decisions. Frank Stiffel, *The Tale of the Ring: A Kaddish*, Mazal Holocaust Collection (Pushcart, 1994), 346–47; Mark S. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling* (The History Press, 2010), 227–32; Ilona Flażyńska, “Richard Glazar,” Muzeum Treblinka, accessed May 8, 2021, <https://muzeumtreblinka.eu/en/informacje/richard-glazar/>.

2. Stories of escape with the purpose of warning the outside world abound in the Treblinka archive. To name just a few, David Brat escaped Treblinka with the intention of returning to the Warsaw Ghetto to warn people about what transport really meant; Chris Webb and Michal Chocholatý state that the two Cienki brothers escaped Treblinka to warn those still living in the ghetto of their origin, Miedzyrzec Podlaski, where

they were turned over to the Germans by ghetto authorities and killed. Jacob Rabinowicz was a journalist who escaped Treblinka and went back to the Warsaw Ghetto. Yitzhak Arad explained that it was his information that led to the Bund's dispatch of Zalman Friedrich Sigmund to investigate what Treblinka really was. Sigmund met the escapee Azriel Wallach (or Walach) in Sokolow while in the process of fulfilling his mission, gaining further information he could take back to Warsaw. What Sigmund learned from Walach was published in the Warsaw underground newspaper *Oyf der wakh* on September 30, 1942. Joseph Kermisz, *Jewish Underground Newspapers in Warsaw*, vol. 6 (Yad Vashem, 1997); Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 244, 247, 260–61; Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence*, 22; Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 268; see also explorations of the Polemic Resistance intent of escapes in this book as discussed in the words of escapee Zenon Golaszewski: “Zenon Golaszewski, Trial of Kurt Franz et al.—Investigative Interview of Survivor-Witness Zenon Golaszewski,” transcript, December 9, 1965, 280, *Gerichte Rep.* 388, Nr. 781, Band 32c, pp. 276–80, Duisburg Branch—State Archives of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

3. Yaakov Miller's account of the revolt, written in the immediate postwar years, is filled with statements about revenge and the need to honor the dead by fighting and killing the guards. His account is representative of how these opinions or reasonings change over time. Those who wrote later or gave interviews tended to speak, as Rajchman does, of the need to bear witness and of revolt as a way to pursue justice through the statements of survivors. Yaakov Miller, “Eyewitness Testimony 47. The Uprising in Treblinka,” in *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, ed. Isaiah Trunk (Stein and Day, 1979), 262–68. Mentioning prisoners' attempts to warn the outside world, Yitzhak Arad states that they wanted to carry out an uprising, at least in part, for the same reasons they wanted to escape. Survivor Abraham Goldfarb remembered another way prisoners attempted to ensure that the crimes of Treblinka could never be erased. A Camp 2 worker near the burial pits, Goldfarb stated that prisoners sometimes secretly reburied complete skeletons that they were supposed to destroy and hid messages in bottles among the remains as the SS were attempting to burn all the evidence at the camp. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 176, 270.

4. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*.

5. Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, “Interview with Franz Suchomel.” Accession Number 1996.166.1 (no RG number given), USHMM; Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (DVD); Lanzmann, *Shoah: The Complete Text of the Acclaimed Holocaust Film*. Suchomel also spoke to Gitta Sereny, again only after he had been convicted and released. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*.

6. The museum previously listed only sixty-eight names. This list came directly from Alexander Donat's book. “Opór i Powstanie” (Muzeum Walky i Męczeństwa Treblinka, December 13, 2013), accessed August 2015, <http://www.treblinka-muzeum.eu/index.php/historia/oboz-zagłady/opor-i-powstanie>. The museum's recent update of its list to include eighty-six entries comes with a citation of Donat's book, a Yizkor book entry by the survivor Abraham Bomba (Bombe), and the work of Edwarda Kopówki and Aliny Skibińskiej. A typographical error dividing one survivor's name over two lines means that this list actually stands at eighty-five: see Edwarda Kopówka and Aliny Skibińska, “Resis-

tance and Uprising—Muzeum Treblinka,” accessed September 29, 2019, <https://muzeum.treblinka.eu/en/informacje/resistance-and-uprising/>.

7. Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness* (Cornell University Press, 2006).

8. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*. For more on Donat himself and what he endured during the Holocaust, see his memoir: Alexander Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom: A Memoir* (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1999).

9. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284.

10. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284–91.

11. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284.

12. See Czeslaw Augustyniak/Leo Blaustein, Oskar Bergère, Abraham Bomba, Aron Gelbhard, Abraham Goldfarb, and Abraham Lindwasser, in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284–91.

13. Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 288.

14. See Testimony of Sonia Lewkowicz, United States v. Fedorenko, 597 F. 2d 946 (Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit 1979); Michael A. Nevins, *Dubrowa: Memorial to a Shtetl (Dabrowa Bialostocka, Poland)*, Yizkor Project (JewishGen, 2010); Statement of Zygmunt Gostynski, December 21, 1959, B162/3819 Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg, pp. 586–88; Statement of Tobias Mieczyslaw, November 13, 1959, B162/3818 Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg, pp. 375–76.

15. Abraham Krzepicki, “Eighteen Days in Treblinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 77–145; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284–91.

16. Krzepicki, “Eighteen Days in Treblinka”; see also Auerbach, “In the Fields of Treblinka”; Ringelblum-Archiv, Robert Moses Shapiro, and Tadeusz Epszstein, eds., *The Warsaw Ghetto Oyneg Shabes-Ringelblum Archive: Catalog and Guide* (Indiana University Press, 2009), 394.

17. For Liebeskind’s song recorded in Polish as translated from the Yiddish-language original “A viglid far mayn yingele in krematoryum,” see “Kolysanka dla synka w krematorium,” *Music and the Holocaust*, accessed October 31, 2016, <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/camps/death-camps/treblinka/lullaby-for-my-little/>.

18. Langer, *Versions of Survival*.

19. Isadore Helfing, RG-50.042.0014, JTHOHA, USHMM.

20. Isadore H. Mssa.hvt.0413. Part 1, Segment 5, 00:27:01, Segment 8, 00:45:41, and Segment 9, 00:50:49. Yale University Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (Hereafter FVA), December 3, 1983, accessed January 22, 2019.

21. Zelda Gordon, RG-50.005.0018, JTHOHA, USHMM, March 6, 1984, accessed April 15, 2021; Ben Lerman. RG-50.431.0469, JTHOHA, USHMM, June 26, 1997, accessed May 7, 2021; Ben Lerman, MUA_GA_Lerman, The Generation After Oral History Project of Milwaukee, WI, Marquette University Libraries, October 5, 1983, accessed January 9, 2020; four local newspaper stories covering Ben Lerman provided to the author courtesy of Jay Hyland and Ellie Gettinger of the Milwaukee Jewish Museum; telephone conversations and correspondence with the daughter of Ben Lerman in possession of the author.

22. Zelda G. Mssa.hvt.0448, Part 1, Segment 4, 00:23:44, FVA, March 6, 1983, accessed January 22, 2019. See also Sam E. Bloch, ed., *From Holocaust to Redemption: Bearing Witness* (World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, 1984), 238.

23. Linda P. also survived in the same group as Zelda G. and stated that her mother, Riva Kremr, was another member of this group that survived and lived in the United States at the time of her interview. See Linda P. Mssa.hvt.1962, Part 1, Segment 3, 00:12:08, FVA, January 24, 1992, accessed January 22, 2019; Chakin, Vivian, Interview 7457, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, November 21, 1995, accessed February 28, 2021; Kremr, Riva, Interview 38051, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, January 10, 1998, accessed February 28, 2021.

24. Ben L. Mssa.hvt.1023, Part 2, Segment 13, 00:13:48, Segment 14, 00:19:48, FVA, April 22, 1987, accessed January 8, 2019.

25. Yaakov E. Mssa.hvt.3371, Part 1, Segment 4, 00:30:08, Segment 6, 00:37:59, Segment 7, 00:42:15, FVA, June 19, 1992, accessed January 23, 2019; Bomba, Abraham, Interview 18062, Tape 5 of 7, 28:00, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, USC Shoah Foundation. August 14, 1996. Accessed September 15, 2020.

26. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 188, 190, 244.

27. Samuel Willenberg thought that as many as 350 made it out on the day of the revolt, while Samuel Rajzman estimated that between 150 and 200 did so. Yitzhak Arad estimated the number of people who fled during the revolt as high as 350 to 400, though he believes that only about 100 survived the next few days. See Samuel Willenberg, “I Survived Treblinka,” in Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 189–213, 212; House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Samuel Rajzman Testimony, “H.J. Resolution 93—Punishment of War Crimes,” pp. 120–125; Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 248; Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 298; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 284.

28. Revolt survivor Chil Rajchman’s memoir contains particularly vivid memories of a non-Jewish Polish man attempting to capture him for a “reward” while a woman pleaded for his release. See Chil Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka: A Survivor’s Memory, 1942–1943*, trans. Solon Beinfeld (Pegasus Books, 2011), 135–37. Historians Jan Grabowski and Barbara Engelking have published extensively on this topic. For examples, see Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2013); Barbara Engelking, *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day . . . : Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942–1945* (Yad Vashem, 2016). Yitzhak Arad further addresses killings by local non-Jewish Poles while noting that many Revolt Survivors found reliable help as well. See Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 342.

29. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 247–48.

30. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 247.

31. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 250.

32. Testimony of Kalman Jankowski, August 25, 1960, YVA, TR.21, File 93, Item 7217722, pp. 132–46, 133; Statement of Kalman Jankowski, November 16, 1959, BL, B162, F3819, pp. 403–8, 406; Statement of Kalman Jankowski, November 16, 1959, BL, B162, F3819, pp. 403–8, 406; Statement of Kalman Jankowski, May 29, 1970, BL, B162, F3839, pp. 5595–98, 5596.

33. Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 195, 250.

34. Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, 96.

35. Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 194–95.

36. With this third group, the majority of Stangl’s 105 postrevolt prisoners are accounted for. Altogether, between twenty-five and thirty went to Sobibor, eighteen to

twenty-five went to Treblinka I with Kalman Jankowski, and twenty-five to thirty were shot at the end of the camp's existence. Taking the highest numbers from all each, this gives us the fate of 85 out of 105 prisoners. Though what happened to the other twenty or more Jews is unknown, it seems likely they were killed by guards for one reason or another between August and November 1943. Some level of daily killings or deaths from exhaustion and disease was the norm in all phases at Treblinka. There is no readily apparent reason to assume this was not the case after August 2, 1943, as well. I do not, however, wish to close the door on discovery of further escapees from this period in the future. With a reduced guard force and extensive damage to the camp, it is possible some number of these last 105 Jews escaped after the revolt. Escapes in this period are at least no less likely than Stangl getting wrong the number of postuprising prisoners.

37. Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 195.

38. For information on the departure of the guards from Treblinka and their reassignment to antipartisan warfare in the area of Trieste, Italy, see Berger, *Experten der Vernichtung*, 2; Baxter, *The SS of Treblinka*.

39. Volha Charnysh and Evgeny Finkel, "The Death Camp Eldorado: Political and Economic Effects of Mass Violence," *American Political Science Review* 111, no. 4 (2017): 801–18. The work of Jan and Irena Grudzińska-Gross is also informative on this topic. See Jan Tomasz Gross and Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust*.

40. For one example of a Treblinka survivor discussing the lack of prisoner union forms, see Stein, Interview 3169, transcript of interview, 22.

41. Leon Diskin, Interview 17082, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation. July 14, 1996, accessed September 3, 2020; Eddie Weinstein names Michael Fischmann as an individual who escaped with him. See Edward Weinstein, Interview 2694; Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*.

42. Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 187.

43. I have not managed to find any existing criteria on the concept of a time-based restriction on who is regarded as a survivor of a specific location of Holocaust perpetration in the existing scholarship.

44. During interviews with Franz Stangl, Gitta Sereny probed the commander's daily routine. Sereny succeeded in eliciting frank descriptions of how the system at Treblinka made fast work of mass murder. Guards and prisoners unloaded trains early each morning—normally twenty railcars all at once—with Stangl stating that by the time he finished morning paperwork at about eleven o'clock, "they were well ahead with the work up there." Sereny clarified Stangl's emotionless statement, saying, "He meant that by this time the 5,000 to 6,000 who had arrived that morning were dead: the 'work' was the disposal of the bodies." Stangl woke up, had breakfast, and worked in his office, and by the time he sat down to lunch his men had exterminated six thousand or more human beings. Survivor witnesses corroborate Stangl's statement that the entire process from arrival to murder took about two hours for an entire transport. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 167–71; Burba, *Treblinka*, 7; Chrostowski, *Extermination Camp Treblinka*, 25–27, 29–30; Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka*, 18–19.

45. Kuperhand states that Kapos and the SS did notice the two additional men in their selected group of 150 but let this go as they were well aware most of these men

would be dead soon regardless. Despite his actions to save their lives on arrival at Treblinka II, Kuperhand's brothers Yakov-Hirsh and Usher would both later be killed inside Treblinka I. See Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 104–10.

46. Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 109, 173; "Testimony of Biniamin Rok," undated, O.3 File 4843 Item 3558739, Yad Vashem Documents Archive, 9.

47. Israel Cymlich, "My War Experiences," in Cymlich and Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka*, 1–116.

48. David P. Boder, "David P. Boder Interviews Benjamin Piskorz; September 1, 1946, Tradate, Italy: Voices of the Holocaust Project," Online Archive, trans. David P. Boder, *Voices of the Holocaust*, Paul V. Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology (2009), accessed September 3, 2017. https://voices.library.iit.edu/interview/piskorzB?search_api_fulltext=Piskorz.

49. Ben L. Mssa.hvt.1023, Part 2, Segment 13, 00:13:48, Segment 14, 00:19:48. FVA, April 22, 1987, accessed January 8, 2019.

50. Flaws, *Spaces of Treblinka*; Flaws, "Sensory Witnessing at Treblinka."

51. Flaws, "Sensory Witnessing at Treblinka," 43.

52. Ralph B. Mssa.hvt.0801, Part 1, Segment 8, 00:45:17, FVA, November 9, 1986, accessed January 8, 2020; Irene S. Mssa.hvt.0098, Part 2, Segment 15, 00:16:35, Segment 17, 00:32:59, FVA, April 18, 1980, accessed January 8, 2020; Eisner, Yetta, Interview 3143, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, June 1, 1995, accessed October 2, 2020; Apelowicz, Doba, Interview 29753, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, May 28, 1997, accessed October 8, 2020.

53. Gitta Sereny discusses the arrival of these two transports with Polish railway worker and underground member Franciszek Ząbecki. Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 249.

54. Sara Bender, "Białystok," in *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933–1945*, trans. Andrew Koss (Indiana University Press and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2012).

55. Ralph B. Mssa.hvt.0801; Irene S. Mssa.hvt.0098, Part 2, Segment 17, 00:32:59, FVA, April 18, 1980, accessed January 8, 2020.

56. Eisner, Yetta. Interview 3143, Tape 2, 08:20.

57. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 298, 363.

58. Apelowicz, Doba, Interview 29753, Tape 4, 06:15.

59. "Last Treblinka Death Camp Survivor Samuel Willenberg Dies," BBC News, February 20, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35623492>.

60. "Last Treblinka Death Camp Survivor Samuel Willenberg Dies"; Monique O. Madan, "Samuel Willenberg, the Last Surviving Treblinka Prisoner, Dies at 93," *Miami Herald*, February 20, 2016; Sara Miller, "Samuel Willenberg, Last Survivor of Treblinka Revolt, Dies at 93," *Times of Israel*, February 20, 2016.

61. Amanda Borschel-Dan, "There Are Still Treblinka Survivors Living, One Tells His Tale," *Times of Israel*, February 22, 2016; T.O.I. Staff, "President Pays Tribute as Last Survivor of Treblinka Revolt Is Laid to Rest," *Times of Israel*, February 22, 2016.

62. Borschel-Dan, "There Are Still Treblinka Survivors Living, One Tells His Tale." As noted in chapter 4, Anneliese Johnson has recently come forward with a memoir recounting survival of the revolt at Treblinka. I find her account problematic for the several reasons I discuss in that earlier footnote and therefore am not describing her

here as the last survivor of Treblinka, although I have added her name to my list of survivors as a Questionable account. See her memoir for her account of survival at Treblinka. Johnson, *Yesterday's Todays*.

63. Borschel-Dan, “There Are Still Treblinka Survivors Living.”

64. As an example, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum states, “The Museum honors as survivors any persons, Jewish or non-Jewish, who were displaced, persecuted, or discriminated against due to the racial, religious, ethnic, social, and political policies of the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. In addition to former inmates of concentration camps, ghettos, and prisons, this definition includes, among others, people who were refugees or were in hiding.” See “Who Is a Survivor?,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed February 27, 2021, www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-survivors.

Conclusion

1. Heinrich Himmler, “Speech at Posen,” printed in *The Third Reich Sourcebook*, ed. Anson Rabinbach and Sander L. Gilman, Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism 47 (University of California Press, 2013), 785–91, quote on p. 787.

2. Arad, *The Operation Reinhard Death Camps; Arad, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*.

3. Greg Stanton, “Genocide Watch, Ten Stages of Genocide,” Genocide Watch, 1996, <https://www.genocidewatch.com/tenstages>.

4. Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness* (Cornell University Press, 2006).

5. I wish to thank the families of Ben Lerman, Samuel Goldberg, Samuel Willenberg, and Shmuel Goldstein in particular, as well as all those with whom I have enjoyed brief contact during the research for this book.

6. Paul Goldstein, son of Shmuel Goldstein, is currently writing a book about the experiences of his father at Treblinka. For descendant books already in press, see Treiger, *My Soul Is Filled with Joy*; Zylbersztajn, *L’Chaim: The Exceptional Life of Chaim Sztajer*.

Appendix

1. Wójcik, *Der Aufstand von Treblinka Revolte im Vernichtungslager*; Wójcik, *Treblinka* 43.

2. Webb and Chocholaty, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2014); Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021).

3. Webb and Chocholatý list Adele Blau (née Wallisch) as a survivor of Treblinka in their 2021 edition. I do not consider her a survivor because she was transferred to Sobibor after the revolt along with Treblinka guards in the final days of the camp. There she and her husband, Karl Blau, committed suicide. Both were transferred in the same doomed group of Treblinka inmates sent to Sobibor. Those other than the Blas were murdered by the SS. I believe the guards never had any intention of releasing Adele and Karl Blau but allowed them to commit suicide because of Karl Blau’s acquaintance with Franz Stangl. As such, I do not consider them survivors—it was still the forces of Treblinka that decided their fate. Next, Alfred Galewski appears on the Webb and Chocholatý list because he took his own life in the frantic moments of the revolt just outside the camp. I do not consider him a survivor either because he did not

truly break free from the grasp of Treblinka. It seems he took his own life to avoid what he saw as imminent recapture. Webb and Chocholatý list David Milgrom as a survivor of Treblinka, though I believe “David” is actually just another name used by Naftali Milgraum/Milgroym, who is already on the list. Citing the survivor Jerzy Rajgrodzki, Webb and Chocholatý list a “Moishele” as a survivor of Treblinka, although they note that he was shot in the chest during his flight and died. Because Moishele did not find lasting safety from Treblinka forces, I do not consider him a survivor of the camp. Finally, Webb and Chocholatý cite Richard Glazar in naming a “Schlojme” as a survivor of Treblinka because he also temporarily made it out of the camp on the day of the revolt. As was the case in the death of Moishele, however, Glazar further stated that he witnessed Moishele being shot and killed. Like Schlojme, who did not make it clear of the lethal power of the camp and the forces it could summon to quash resistance, I do not consider Moishele a survivor although he died beyond the fences. Webb and Chocholatý, *The Treblinka Death Camp* (2021), 265, 271, 280, 285.

4. I have removed three names present on Alexander Donat’s list. These are Sonia Grabinska/Grabinski, Zygmunt Gostynski/Zygmunt “Selig” Gostinski, and Tobias Mieczyslaw. Grabinski/Grabinska was the birth name of Sonia Lewkowicz, and archival sources located for both Gostynski and Mieczyslaw indicate that they survived the Treblinka I labor camp, not Treblinka II. Sonia Lewkowicz (AKA Sonia Gabowski-Letkowitz), Treblinka Survivor—Testimony—Selected Extracts: Fedorenko Trial Fort Lauderdale, USA 1978, Website—Transcribed Text, 1978, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/survivor/sonialewkowicz.html>; Michael A. Nevins, *Dubrowa: Memorial to a Shtetl (Dabrowa Bialostocka, Poland)*, Yizkor Project (JewishGen, 2010); Statement of Zygmunt “Selig” Gostinski, December 21, 1959, B162/3819 Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg [hereafter BL], pp. 586–88; Statement of Tobias Mieczyslaw, November 13, 1959, B162/3818, BL, pp. 375–76.

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- Duisburg Abteilung, Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen [Duisburg Section, State Archive of North Rhine-Westphalia] (DA). Duisburg, North Rhine–Westphalia, Germany.
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Index

Page numbers in italics indicate illustrations.

- Aktion Reinhard system, 7–11, 52, 100, 112, 123
Amir, Ehud, 106
Apelowicz, Doba, 103–4
Arad, Yitzhak, 9, 64, 83–85, 112, 191n38
Auerbach, Rachel, 28, 93, 176n41
Auschwitz concentration camp, 10–11, 67, 94

Belzec extermination camp, 7, 9–11, 100
Benz, Wolfgang, 190n22
Beorn, Waitman, 86
Bialystok Ghetto, 103–5
Blau, Adele, 199n3
Blau, Karl, 45, 199n3
Bloch, Zelig “Zelo,” 59–62, 66, 69–71, 182n9, 187nn70–71
Bluhm, H.O., 16
Boehm, Alfred, 36–37, 65–66, 185n50
Bomba, Abraham, 26, 81–85, 191n36
Borschel-Dan, Amanda, 106–7
Browning, Christopher R., 8, 43–46
Bühler, Josef, 8–9

Chelmo extermination camp, 7–8
children, 10–11
Chochołatý, Michal, 121
Chorazycki, Julian, 61, 66

Chrostowski, Witold, 97–98
Cole, Tim, 41, 50–51, 168n9
Communist Party, 8
concentration camps (general), 7–11, 18, 41, 44, 50, 91–101, 106, 110, 122; and labor, 7, 11–12, 19, 33, 44, 82, 101
Court Jews. *See* Hofjuden (Court Jews); Treblinka camp: and prisoner hierarchy
Cymlich, Israel, 101
Czerniaków, Adam, 25

death camp (term), 170n40. *See also* concentration camps (general)
Desbois, Patrick, 8
disabled prisoners, 10, 103
disease, 52, 59
disembarkation, 5–6, 10–11, 21–25, 34–35, 95, 101, 105, 110, 122
Diskin, Leon, 87, 99
Donat, Alexander, 92–96, 102, 108, 188n2, 200n4

Eberl, Irmfried, 9–10, 33
Eichmann, Adolf, 20, 23, 84
Eisner, Yaakov, 73–76, 81–85, 88–89, 95, 99
Eisner, Yetta, 103–4

- euthanasia. *See* gas chambers
 eyewitness accounts, 4, 12–18, 56–57, 66–76, 80–92, 105–6, 113, 172n49
- Fedorenko, Feodor, 56
 Final Solution. *See* Holocaust (general)
 Fischmann, Michael, 99
 Flaws, Jacob, 102–3
 Franz, Kurt “Lalka,” 10, 17, 28, 61–63
- Galewski, Alfred, 35–39, 43–46, 51–53, 59–71, 110, 188n82, 199n3
 gas chambers, 7–11, 17, 25, 39, 52, 82, 99, 104; development of, 8–9
 gender, 5–7, 12–13, 41, 73–89, 111–12; segregation, 10, 41–42, 80, 83. *See also* masculinity; women prisoners
 geography. *See* resistance methods: spatial use; spatial analysis/history; Treblinka camp: geography
 Glazar, Richard, 4–5, 16–26, 33–42, 47–49, 54–64, 68, 79–80, 86, 91, 190n22, 193n1
 Gleit, Aron, 187n70
 Globocnik, Odilo, 7, 9–10
 Golaszewski, Zenon, 28–29
 Gold, Arthur, 78–79
 Goldberg, Esther, 87
 Goldberg, Samuel, 24, 41, 57, 83, 87, 179n37, 180n66
 Goldfarb, Avraham, 187n70
 Goldjuden. *See* Hofjuden; Treblinka camp: and prisoner hierarchy
 Gordon, Zelda, 94–95, 100–101
 Gostynski, Zygmunt, 93
 Gottlieb, Roger, 23
 Grabinska, Sonia. *See* Lewkowicz, Sonia
 Grinberg, Tanhum, 61
- Hájková, Anna, 86
 Hartheim euthanasia center, 9
 Helfing, Isadore, 26, 44, 94–95, 185n52
 Helman, Szlomo, 69–70, 84
 Hilberg, Raul, 25–26
 Himmler, Heinrich, 7, 109, 113
 Hitler, Adolf, 7
- Hofjuden (Court Jews), 22–23, 39–42, 54, 63–64, 78, 175n15. *See also* Treblinka camp: and prisoner hierarchy
 Holocaust (general), 6–15, 23–27, 50, 71, 75, 82, 85, 88, 91–94, 98–111, 122
- informants, 28–31, 43–50, 53, 71, 77
- Jankowski, Kalman, 97–98, 103
 Jaskot, Paul, 18, 30, 67
 Johnson, Anneliese, 188n2, 198n62
- Klaynman, Moyshe, 40–41, 52, 76–78, 88, 189n7
 Kohn, Shalom, 3, 56–57, 64
 Kolski, Abram, 81–85
 Kornhendler, Jonas, 82, 190n32
 Kronenberg (prisoner), 46–47
 Krzepicki, Abraham, 28, 93–94
 Kuba (barrack supervisor), 45, 71
 Kuperhand, Saul, 101–2, 197n45
 Kurland (Kapo), 59, 61–62
 Küttner, Kurt “Kiewe,” 3, 46–49, 68–70
 Kwiet, Konrad, 27
- Lachman, Solomon “Sol,” 185n52
 Langbein, Herman, 26, 44
 Langer, Lawrence, 6, 44, 49, 79
 Lanzmann, Claude, 82, 91
 Lau, Moshe Chaim, 24–25
 Lerman, Ben, 94–95, 100–101
 Levi, Primo, 47–48
 Lewkowicz, Dudek, 24–25
 Lewkowicz, Sonia, 41, 71, 81–83, 89, 93, 188n2
 Lewkowski, Irena “Irka,” 52–53, 69
 Liebermann, David, 29–30
 Liebeskind, Aron, 94
 Litwak, Ignac, 29
- Majdanek camp, 11, 94–95, 101, 106
 Mandel, Tchechia, 79, 98
 maps, *viii–xii*, 17–20, 32, 55, 70, 74; and Duisburg Map, 17–20
 Marrus, Michael, 23, 27
 Masarek, Rudi, 62, 66

- masculinity, 6, 13, 83–88, III. *See also*
 gender; women prisoners
 Mattel, Morton, 36, 66–68, 176n42
 Meberg, Justine, 77, 86
 memoirs. *See* eyewitness accounts
 methodology, 12–14
 Mieczyslaw, Tobiasz, 93
 Miete, August, 51
 Milgrom, David, 200n3
 Miller, Yaakov, 56–57, 182n3, 194n3
 Moniek (Kapo), 62

 Nazi Germany. *See* Third Reich (general)

 Perelstein, Leon, 70
 Piskorz, Benjamin, 101
 Poland, 8–9, 28, 96, 99, 102
 prisoner violence, 43–49

 Rajchman, Chil, 90
 Rajzman, Samuel, 31, 36, 39–41, 60,
 67–69
 Rakowski (Kapo), 61, 79
 resistance methods, 4, 15, 23–30, 51, 58,
 82, 91–96, 100–114, 123; early
 attempts, 23–30, 41, 53–56; and
 escapes, 27–31, 35, 53, 58, 61, 82, 93,
 98–100, 193n2; selection of workers, 5,
 10–12, 33–37, 47, 65, 110; and spatial
 use, 5, 16–23, 29–35, 50–56, 68; warn-
 ing others, 28–31, 123, 193n2
 revolt. *See* Treblinka revolt
 Ringelblum, Emanuel, 28, 93
 Rings, Werner, 23–24
 Roberts, Mary Louise, 86
 Rojzman, Berek, 36
 Rok, Biniamin, 101
 Rosenberg, Eliahu, 26, 34, 64, 69, 84–85,
 191n40
 Russia. *See* Soviet Union
 Rytz, Leon, 105–7

 Schneiderman, William, 179n37
 Schutzstaffel (SS) guards, 4, 7–12, 14–17,
 35, 43, 63, 78, 88, 96, 100; and living
 quarters, 18–21, 63, 66; and post-war
 punishment, 91, 113; violence of, 20,
 24, 33, 43, 46, 98. *See also* Ukrainian
 guards
 Sereny, Gitta, 14–15, 22, 45, 71, 91,
 96
 sexuality: and brothels, 6, 69–70, 72–75,
 84, III, 187n73; and sexual violence, 6,
 69–74, 78–79, 83–89, III
 Shnayder, Moyshe, 69–70
 Shoah documentary, 82
 Shoah Foundation archives (USC), 86–
 87, 180n66, 192n49, 193n53
 Siedlecki, Joseph, 45, 96, 180n66
 Smith, Mark S., 4–5
 Snyder, Timothy, 50
 Sobibor extermination camp, 7, 9–11,
 97, 100
 Sommer, Robert, 6
 Soviet guards. *See* Ukrainian guards
 Soviet Union, 8, 109
 spatial analysis/history, 5–6, 22, 50–51,
 108, III–12. *See also* maps; resistance
 methods: spatial use; Treblinka camp:
 geography
 Sperling, Herschl, 180n66, 193n1
 spirituality, 24–25
 Stangl, Franz, 9–10, 14–15, 33–35, 71, 91,
 96, 177n5, 197n44
 Stein, Adek, 87
 Stiffel, Martin, 193n1
 Strawczynski, Oskar, 28–29, 40–41, 61,
 78–80, 86, 188n77
 Suchomel, Franz, 45–46, 49, 91, 97–98
 Sudowicz (engineer), 59, 62
 suicides, 25–27, 48–49, 70–71, 77, 193n1,
 199n3
 Sukno, Bronka, 40–41, 52–53, 71, 81–85,
 88–89
 survival: process of, 16, 51, 90–91, 94–95,
 100–108, 112–14
 survivors, 4, 90–91, 124–66; attrition of,
 105–9; definitions/categories of, 13–15,
 92–108, 112, 121–24; numbers of, 4, 13,
 15, 66, 71, 95–96, 102, 108, 112,
 196n27; silence of, 6–7, 13, 72–76,
 80–89, 109, III–13

- Teigman, Kalman, 22–23
- testimonies. *See* eyewitness accounts
- Third Reich (general), 7–8, 15, 24, 50, 82, 99–101, 107
- transport, 7–8, 10, 19, 37–38, 94–105
- Treblinka camp: construction of, 7, 9, 22, 29–30, 67–68; design of, 7, 9–11, 18, 22, 30; division of labor, 33–42; efficiency/lethality of, 9–10, 33–35, 93, 105, 108–9, 197n44; function of, 10–11, 17–23, 26, 29–34, 44, 57–58, 64; geography of, 5, 10–11, 16–23, 29–30, 39, 51, 64, 67, 82, 100; maps of, *viii–xii*, 16–19, 32, 55, 70, 74; and murder rate, 10, 28, 33–35, 82, 93, 96–98, 105, 196n36, 197n44; phases of, 17, 22, 26–36, 40–42, 49, 57–58, 62; and prisoner demographics, 9, 13, 22, 33–44, 50, 59, 62, 96; and prisoner hierarchy, 22, 34–36, 39–44, 54, 59, 62, 97; and regulations/operations, 5, 7, 11, 17–20, 29, 33, 64, 99, 103; sections of, 10, 18–23, 40–42, 59–71, 80, 83, 93, 97, 101; and social networks, 4–12, 17–21, 33–38, 43, 50, 59, 65, 110
- Treblinka revolt: and escapees, 4, 64, 70–71, 93–98, 112–13, 196n27; execution of, 3–4, 69–71, 109–10; and military experience, 59, 62, 66, 77, 185n52, 186n54; obstacles to, 23, 31, 35, 71, 77; participants, 3, 17, 40, 42–45, 51–53, 58–68, 73–89; planning of, 4, 17, 21, 32–40, 45, 50, 58–68, 109–10; secrecy of, 59–61, 67, 77; timing of, 3, 67–71, 98; and weapons, 3–4, 6, 54, 63, 65–70, 74, 81, 84
- Turowski, Eugen, 56
- Ukrainian guards, 10, 17–21, 34–35, 43, 60–70, 78, 96, 187n69
- Wachsmann, Nikolaus, 44
- Wannsee Conference, 8–9
- Warsaw Ghetto, 9, 25, 28, 36, 42, 51, 62, 65, 93–94, 101, 104
- Webb, Chris, 121
- Wehrmacht, 8
- Weinstein, Eddie, 34–35, 52, 85, 88, 99
- Wiernik, Jankiel, 19–20, 60, 66
- Willenberg, Samuel, 21, 29–30, 36–37, 46–52, 62–66, 70, 91, 105–9, 114, 181n77; as last survivor, 105–7
- Wirth, Christian, 9–10, 46, 177n5
- Wojcik, Michael, 121
- women prisoners: and academic treatment, 83–85, 88–89, 111; as couriers, 182n93; demographics of, 41, 81, 84, 96–98; and living/work space, 19, 41, 75, 78–84; as resisters, 6–7, 12–15, 24, 40–41, 53, 63, 69–89, 94, 111; and sexual exploitation, 6–7, 69–70, 72–73, 78–89, 111, 184n30; survival of, 96–99, 189n3
- Yiddish language, 56, 60, 122

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