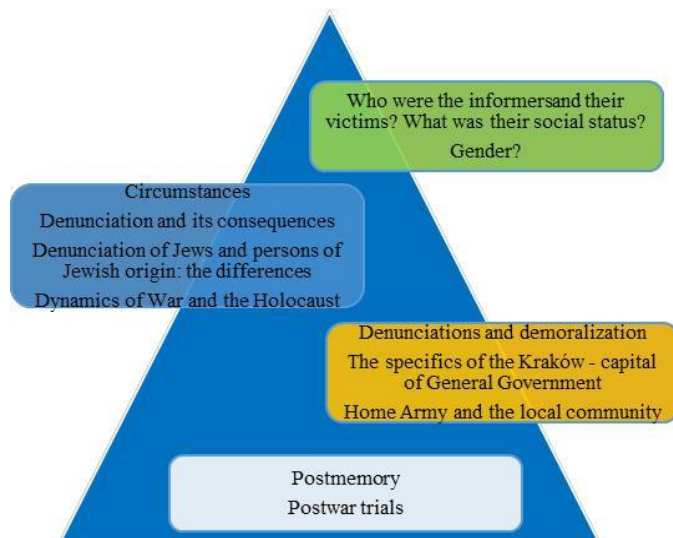


Title of the paper:

Denouncing as a symptom of anti-Semitism: the case of Krakow

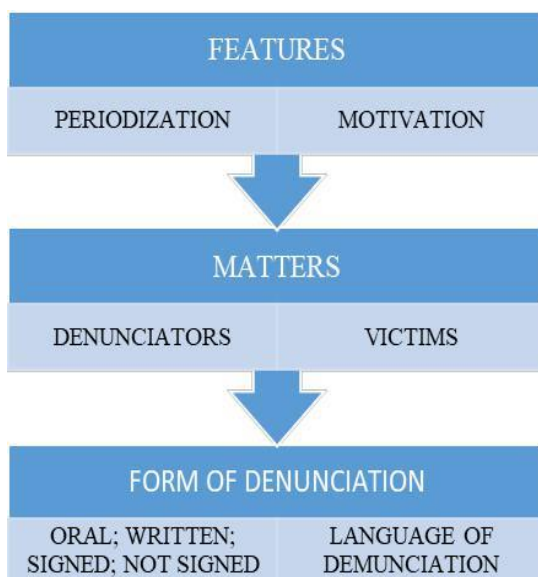
According to estimates made after the war, approximately 800–1000 people collaborated with the Krakow Gestapo during World War II, of the occupation the Gestapo could call on the services of 2000 informants. They came from various social and professional backgrounds, and their contacts with the German authorities were both regular as well as spontaneous, depending above all else on the dynamics of the occupation and the conditions at any given time. The subject of the present analysis is not entirely unknown to researchers; however, the source literature is rather limited. Many people took advantage of those circumstances to settle old scores, for example by denouncing their enemies to the Nazis. Some confidants and informers “specialized” in denouncing Jews living incognito on the “Aryan side”, which I shall mention only briefly in order to outline the problem. They were denounced not only by their neighbours and agents, but also by their friends and relatives.



The accomplishment of the project aiming at analyse the phenomenon of denouncing as a symptom of anti-Semitism on one another in the context of Polish-Jewish and Jewish-Jewish relations in Krakow during the II WW. I am particularly interested in its impact on the everyday life of the Poles and Jews living there. To get a more accurate picture of the issues

discussed above, especially the differences between informing and anti-Semitism, one may want to answer some further questions that crop up. Who exactly were the denouncers? What was their origin? What was their creed? Did those factors underlie their attitudes and undertakings? What was the role of the culprit's gender? What nationality were the denouncers – what portion of informers did the Poles, Jews and Ukrainians constitute? Did their origin determine their occupation behaviours? Hence, not only a critical analysis of the source texts but also an examination of the language used therein will help to address the questions posed above.

As rightly observed by Barbara Engelking, “the outbreak of war caused more reports to appear on the scene. This could be partially due to the new regulations flooding in and, by extension, new pretexts for flouting them.”



Preliminary conclusions will be presented on the basis of an analysis of the original letters of denunciations to the authorities of occupied Krakow over the period 1939-1944, captured by the Polish underground. Below I will present the current state of the of the outcomes of the project, conclusions and quantitative data on denunciations (denouncing letters), taking into consideration the context of time, place, social status, motivation and experience (e.g. connections with the pre-war criminal underworld).

Current state of the outcomes

It has to be mentioned that these abovementioned problems have yet to be investigated as, to date, they have only been addressed in a few analyses, and even then merely in passing. The most important are those by Barbara Engelking, Laurent Joly, Robert Gellately, Benn Williams¹, Józef Bratko,² Anetta Rybacka,³ Andrzej Chwalba,⁴ Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk,⁵

¹ ENGELKING, *szanowny panie Gistapo*; JOLY, *Antysemityzm i denuncjowanie Żydów we Francji*; GELLATELY, *Denunciation as a Subject of Historical Research, Historical Social Research*; WILLIAMS, *Letters of Denunciation in the Lyon Region*

² BRATKO, *Gestapowcy*. BEDNAREK, *Kraków – czas okupacji 1939–1945*.

³ RYBICKA, *Instytut Niemieckiej Pracy Wschodniej*.

⁴ CHWALBA, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5.

⁵ MŁYNARCZYK, *Pomiędzy współpracą a zdradą*, p. 103-132

Elżbieta Rączy,⁶ Ryszard Kotarba,⁷ Martyna Grądzka-Rejak,⁸ Witold Medykowski⁹ and Alicja Jarkowska.¹⁰ Many people took advantage of those circumstances to settle old scores, for example by denouncing their enemies to the Nazis. This kind of attitude was common in most cities of occupied Europe – for instance, in and around Lyon, France.¹¹ The situation in Western Europe was, however, different from the situation in Poland during World War II; there, death sentences were delivered without hesitation on a daily basis, by all the parties involved.

Name	City	Country
The National Archives in Krakow	Krakow	Poland
The Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance	Krakow	Poland
The Archive of the Chief Commission for Investigation of German Crimes in Poland	Krakow	Poland
The Archive of Independence Deed "Sowiniec"	Krakow	Poland
Archives of the Jagiellonian Library	Krakow	Poland
Yad Vashem Archives	Jerusalem	Israel
Ghetto Fighters' Archives	Acre	Israel
Visual History Archive. Shoah Foundation	San Francisco	USA
Jewish Historical Institute Archive	Warsaw	Poland
Bundesarchive	Berlin, Ludwigsburg	Germany
The Archive of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum	London	UK
United States Holocaust Memory Museum	Washington	USA

Information necessary to fully analyse the aforementioned subject are gathered in many archives. Collections of documents needed for analysis of the denouncing in occupied Kraków can be found in the National Archives in Krakow, Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance, Archives of the Central Commission for Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, the Archive of New Files, the ‘Sowiniec’ Archive of Act for Independence in Krakow, Archives of the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow, Archives of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Ghetto Fighters’ House Archive in Acre, Bundesarchive in Berlin and Ludwigsburg, Archives of the Polish Institute and the Sikorski Museum in London, Archives of the School of the Underground State in London, as well as Oral History Archive of the KARTA Institute and the DSH, Visual History Archive, the Shoah Foundation in San Francisco (audio recordings), and in private collectors’ materials.

⁶ RĄCZY, *Zagłada Żydów*.

⁷ KOTARBA, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie*.

⁸ GRĄDZKA-REJAK, *Kobieta żydowska*.

⁹ MEDYKOWSKI, *Przeciw swoim*.

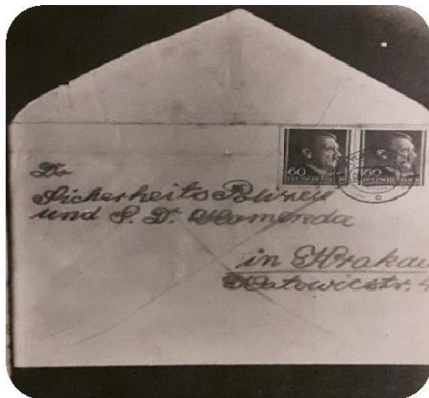
¹⁰ JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*.

¹¹ See: WILLIAMS, *Letters of Denunciation*, 136–152.

The selection of source material was determined by their non-rudimentary nature (many war documents have only been partially recovered, some have been lost or destroyed), the subject matter (the selection of post-war cases concerning only the fate of the denouncers) and the completeness of information (post-war accounts were often incomplete or devoid of specific data and needed to be verified).

I have carried out detailed analysis of the following archival documents:

- denunciation letters: anonymous and signed
- protocols on the arrest of denouncers by the Polish Criminal Police,
- files from investigations conducted by the Kraków prosecutor's office of the Municipal and District Court in Kraków
- reports of conspiracy;
- records of post-war criminal cases
- post-war witness accounts



During the speech I referred to the letters of denunciation. Current state of analysed documents include 142 denunciations of a social, economic, racial, and political nature made to the German authorities. There are also cases involving the blackmailing of Jews at the beginning of the war. The cases mentioned above concerned citizens of Krakow and its surroundings, geographically corresponding to the prewar Krakow province. Supplementary materials are accounts, memoirs, and personal files of denouncers, drawn up before, during, and after the war, as well as the files from the prison at Senacka street in Krakow, known as 'St. Michael's Prison.

Preliminary research outcomes



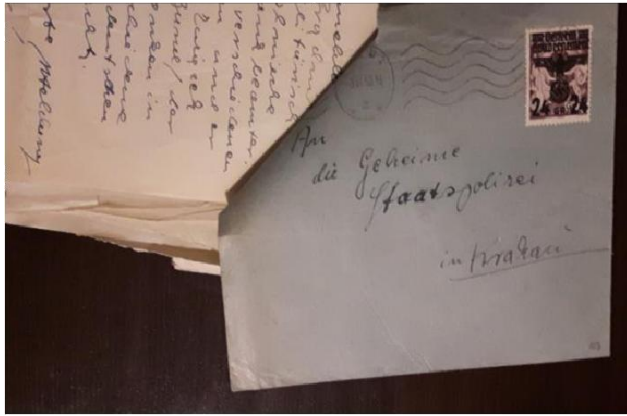
So far, I have critically analysed most of denouncing letters (in total, I possess several hundred original denunciation letters), reconstructing the circumstances surrounding these events and, in some cases, the post-war fate of the denouncers. Source materials for the study were preserved archival documents written (created) in the years 1939-1946 (1950s),

including original denunciations sent to the occupation authorities, captured by the local underground, received by the local court, as well as documents created by the local police (e.g. evidence, witness statements etc.), eyewitness accounts of these events, and the current literature.

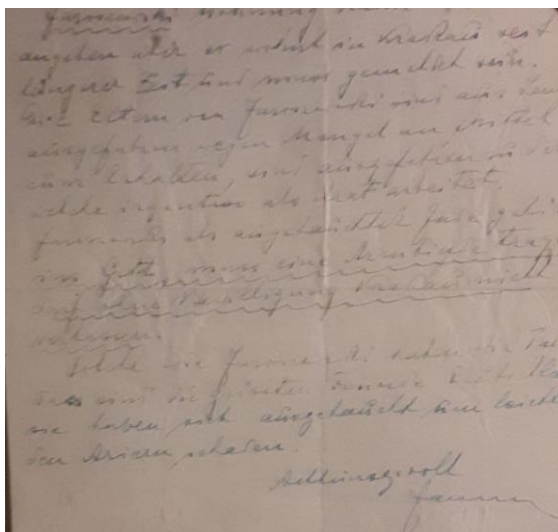
I have divided the denunciations into four categories.

1. Denunciations captured by the local conspiracy that never reached the recipients
2. Written denunciations received by recipients and subsequently by the Polish Criminal Police
3. Written denunciations submitted by informants
4. Oral denunciations based on conspiracy reports and witness testimony

In this paper I will refer more specifically to some of the categories



Witnesses reported that denunciations were usually written to the Gestapo, Kripo, and the Polish Criminal Police. According to preserved documentation, letters were also addressed to the civil administration of the GG, as well as to Governor General Hans Frank himself. The above-mentioned police formations forwarded denunciations to each other because of their competence. Thus, a letter addressed to the Gestapo and concerning a minor theft or a neighborhood disagreement would eventually be directed to the Polish Criminal Police, which was competent to handle such matters. In the same way, incorrectly addressed denunciations were redirected to the appropriate GG administration. The archives of the Cracow Gestapo have not survived, and the documents available to historians do not make it possible to draw conclusions about the scale of the phenomenon. According to Home Army reports, thousands of denunciations have been sent via Post Office.

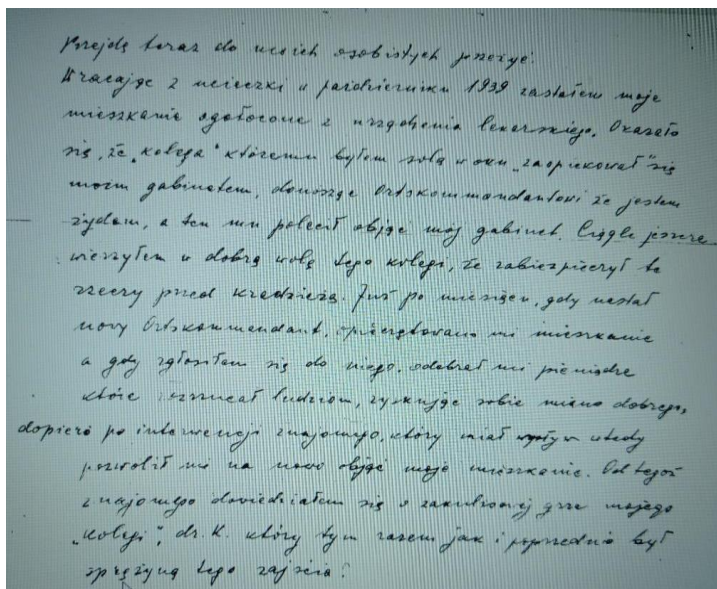


The consequences of reporting or writing denunciations during World War II in Poland were different, depending on the dynamics of the war, the subject matter, the recipients of the denunciations, and the actions taken by the police, prosecutors. From 1939 until the end of the war the consequence of the denunciation were: the investigation, arrest, imprisonment, transportation to a concentration camp, death, or even in the denunciator's being sentenced to

imprisonment for filing a false report. The reaction was quicker when it was connected with

underground activity and breaking the law (illegal trade, owning weapons, radio sets, spreading defeatism) and, from 1941, when it was connected with hiding Jews or helping them¹². However, many denunciations contained few details, which made it impossible to take specific action: no names or addresses were given or they were difficult to identify (Krakowska Street). The role of informers who gave oral reports was significant. The Gestapo searched the reported address or searched for hiding Jews in the reported property. Jews hiding their origins, indicated by informers, were also detained: after being arrested, their documents were verified and brutal interrogations were carried out.

Some confidants and informers “specialized” in denouncing Jews living incognito on the “Aryan side”, which I shall mention only briefly in order to outline the problem. They were denounced not only by their neighbours and agents, but also by their friends and



relatives. In October 1939, the German authorities seized possession of Henryk Stecki's medical practice after he had been accused of being a Jew. The informant was Stecki's colleague who had known him before the war.¹³ The Polish Underground State started to condemn these actions in the fourth year of the war, which I shall discuss in more detail

later. Many Jews from Krakow concealing their identities were blackmailed, and the blackmailers threatened to report them to the Germans. This was the reason why Anna Landermann was forced to move from place to place so as to avoid arrest.¹⁴

The content of denunciations reflects the current situation in the country, the attitudes and behaviour during the war and occupation, and the dynamics of these events. The first denunciations sent to the authorities of the occupied Cracow in 1939 concerned, among other things, forced evictions of Poles from apartments intended for Germans. They informed about

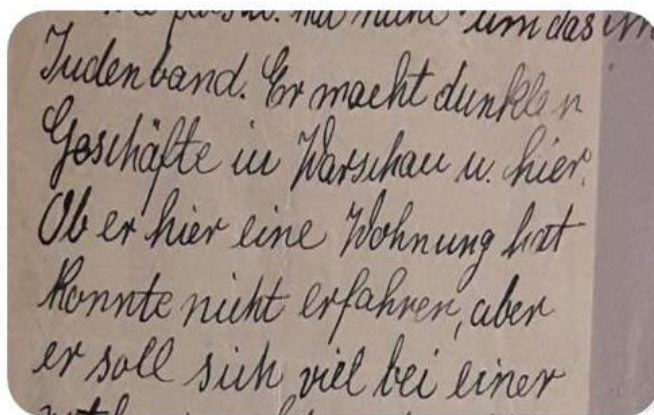
¹² On October 15, 1941, General Governor Hans Frank issued a decree by which he imposed the death penalty on Jews in the occupied Polish territories, who “leave the designated district without authorization.” All those who “consciously provide a hiding place to Jews” were subject to the same punishment.

¹³ AŻIH, sign. 301/445, an account by Henryk Stecki.

¹⁴ AŻIH, sign. 301/622, an account by Anna Landermann.

specific individuals who did not comply with the regulations, the possession of illegal radio receivers, and in the first half of 1941, they notified the Gestapo about Jews living on the so-called Aryan side of the ghetto. As the economic and financial situation worsened, which involved the introduction of food rationing, illegal trade in goods (most frequently in currency or stolen or smuggled goods) and services was reported. After the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto in March 1943, there were reports of people who provided shelter for Jews or helped them in any other way (which was punishable by death), and toward the end of the war - of people spreading defeatist rumours about the situation of the Third Reich at the front. An analogous dynamic can be observed in the case of denunciations submitted by incidental and permanent agents or informants of the German authorities. An extensive network of agents and informers was mainly at the disposal of Department III and IV of the KdS, which infiltrated circles connected with the underground, religious minorities etc.

If Jews were found hiding, the Poles involved would also be punished: a lack of evidence would result in brutal interrogations, or death if the victim was caught red-handed. There were also situations, when after a search the hiding Jews were not found, the informer to bear the consequences.



For the purposes of this paper, I shall present the dominant aspects of the denunciations. I have managed to study, along with their characteristic features. Letters of denunciation were usually handwritten; several were typewritten – the latter were longer and more detailed. Only in several cases is it justified to suspect that the authors of those

denunciations had – or did not have – elementary or higher education. Some conclusions might be drawn based on the vocabulary, grammatical or spelling correctness, overall coherency of the text, and the authors' ability to convey information. I am thinking particularly of denunciations written on postcards – some of them were logical, others chaotic. Subjects tackled by authors were either thematically related or completely devoid of sense. Some denunciations were written with a pen, others with a pencil. Some were very neat, others very sloppy.

The largest number of denunciations intercepted by the Kraków independence conspiracy came from 1940, the least from 1942 and 1943, nine letters of denunciations are undated. As far as I can establish, men denounced more often than women, although "collective" denunciations were most common. There were almost the same number of signed and anonymous denunciations. They were almost always written in German, but usually with numerous lexical, spelling, errors. Most of them were written in the so-called „Galician – German” language. About a fourth of the denunciations analyzed were directed against Jews and the authors were motivated by revenge, desire for profit and anti-Semitism. The authors of denunciations signed their denunciations or left a note "a patrician from Cracow", another one was "the resident of the house in Retoryka Street", and the last one was "the Residents of Olsza and Prądnik Czerwony". There have been cases of denunciators being sentenced by the court, e.g. one of the denunciators spent seven months in a prison. While the criminal proceedings against Stefania Noga were suspended on November 2, 1943, eight months after the investigation began, "because her whereabouts are unknown."

In my research I also refer to the comparative context, what were the differences and similarities of the activities of the informers in Cracow, Warsaw, France, and the Third Reich. Currently, I am continuing further queries and social-historical analyses. It can only be pointed out that, French authorities during World War II were to receive between 3 and 5 million letters of denunciations. Such estimates are impossible to determine in the case of Poland, much less Krakow. All we learn from the records made by the Kraków conspiracy is that during the occupation thousand of denunciations were captured from the Post Office.