

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Bailowitz, Philip and Joseph B. Bailowitz. "Life at Sobibor." In *A Promise at Sobibor: A Jewish Boy's Story of Revolt and Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland*, 70-96. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.

The title of this book references how, prior to the revolt of the Jewish prisoners at Sobibor, those planning to participate in the uprising made a promise to tell of what happened there. Bailowitz and his son worked together on this book because, as a survivor of Sobibor, Bailowitz wants to fulfill his promise. The book details both the terror that occurred at the death camp and the strength of those who fought back. The section used here specifically deals with the horrors of life at Sobibor, describing the brutality used to keep the prisoners in line and the systematic extermination of lives within the camp. Unlike the Dutch Jews who believed that they were going to a resettlement camp, the Polish Jews were acutely aware of what they were about to face, and many attempted resistance in their final moments, tearing up their money and swallowing their valuables in order to ensure that their wealth did not aid the Nazi cause. Edelsberg had family that went through Sobibor, and this book shows what they faced there and how they probably reacted their fate.

Bat-Chinka. "The Partisans Founders in Wlodawa." *The Nizkor Project: The Life and Fall of Wlodawa*. Accessed December 9, 2017.
<http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/places/poland/wlodawa/wlodawa-004.html>.

This is an account from a partisan woman in Wlodawa, the region of Paul Edelsberg's birth, and while the language is a little choppy in places, the description of what partisans went through in this account provides valuable insight into the complications of partisan life. It describes the first Jewish partisans in Wlodawa, where they camped out, how the group got supplies, and the struggles they faced concerning food. A confrontation with German soldiers is also detailed, as well as another incident in which the group had to cross a river while under German fire. The account also mentions how their partisan group participated in acts of terrorism by destroying trains, telephone lines, and bridges before the majority of the partisans joined the Russian army. This sounds remarkably similar to what happened to Edelsberg based upon the account given by my father. Even if this particular group is not the one Edelsberg was part of, accounts like this one provide insight into what life was like for a group of partisans living in this region at this time and the everyday struggles they experienced.

Blaskowitz, Johannes. "Memorandum Written By Colonel-General Johannes Blaskowitz, Commander of the Ober-Ost Military Region, Poland." In *The Rise of Fascism: History, Documents, and Key Questions*, by Patrick G. Zander, 167-169. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016.

This document is interesting because it was written in February of 1940 by a Colonel-General of the German *Wehrmacht*; by May of the same year, Hitler relieved him of his command based upon the remarks. In this memorandum, Blaskowitz expresses his opinion that the way the slaughter of Jews and Poles was being carried out was ineffective and unnecessary, as it would not have served to entirely eliminate the targeted groups. At the time, it was common for Jews to be forced to dig pits and then be gunned down in them by *Schutzstaffel* (SS) police squads known as *Einsatzgruppen*. The mass executions were seen as an effective way to rid German-occupied Poland of its Jewish population, but Blaskowitz did not agree. Rather, he argues that it gave enemies of the Germans propaganda material, worsened the army's reputation, inspired pity for the Jews, and would lead to Germany falling under the "rule of the thug." Drawing upon his own observations, he notes that the common soldier viewed the SS with disdain and that the Poles were not intimidated by such terrorism. Poland is Edelsberg's home country, so the described brutality of the SS directly threatened him. This is an interesting document because this Colonel-General is not disagreeing with the extermination of the Jews in Poland, but rather how public the whole matter was. He is essentially advocating for a more private way to put people to death that would not promote unnecessary violence within military forces and would not lead to such a large public outcry. It is presented in a way that was meant to be persuasive for a Nazi audience, and therefore tries to explain the benefits of moving away from the current methods. Based on Blaskowitz's quick dismissal, it is evident that any objection to the Nazi agenda was unacceptable.

Blatt, Thomas T. "Freedom-- The Illusion." In *From the Ashes of Sobibor*, 155-180. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997.

This book was written by a survivor of the Sobibor death camp in Poland. Blatt was younger than Edelsberg was during World War II, but only by a few years. Very few first-person accounts of Sobibor exist, so, despite the fact it was written decades after the events occurred, this book is a historically significant primary source. The chapter of the book that was used for this project follows what happens to Blatt after he flees Sobibor and is hiding in woods of Poland. As Edelsberg also fled a camp and went into the Polish wilderness, this source was useful in gaining insight into what the experience may have been like. The chapter describes how, while being in a camp most likely meant death was imminent, it was in some ways more secure than being on the run. In a camp, you at least knew what to expect, whereas on the run, you were engaged in a constant struggle to stay alive. Edelsberg probably felt some of this same fear, as like Blatt, years of his life were spent in a struggle to simply stay alive after fleeing his camp.

"Certificate Attesting that Pinkus Edelsberg Completed the Displaced Persons Police School." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Accessed December 4, 2017. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1179618>.

This document certifies that Edelsberg completed police training within his displaced persons camp. The school from which he received this certificate was Eucom D.P. Police School in Regensburg. The certificate is dated February 6th, 1948, almost three years

after Germany surrendered during World War II. This is significant because it shows how long people remained in displaced persons camps. This document gives us a bit of information on Edelsberg's character as well, as not many who had just gone through a war in which they faced such a great deal of trauma would be keen to go through police training. Furthermore, Edelsberg himself provided the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with access to this document, which shows that he hung on to this certificate for many years. It is slightly torn and has very strong creases running throughout it, but it was brought with him from Europe to America, which implies that this was something he deemed significant and valued deeply.

“Displaced Person and Refugee Card.” *Emigration Offices*, Munich, Germany, May 11, 1949.

This is a governmental document issued by the German Emigration Offices. Paul Edelsberg was residing in Bad Reichenhall, a displaced persons camp near Munich, Germany. At the time, he was still going by his birth name, Pinkus Edelsberg and was acting as a driver. These displaced persons camps were meant for people who had been displaced by World War II and had nowhere to call home; Edelsberg was just 24 years old at the time this card was made. It was created in May of 1949 and closed March of the following year. However, it was marked reopened. It now has “Left for America” stamped across it, with the date marked as August 31, 1951, and has been marked closed again. This historical record was intended to keep track of displaced persons so long as they were a part of the system as well as document emigration and is an interesting look at Edelsberg's life left in governmental records before he arrived in the United States.

Drileck, David, interviewed over telephone by author, November 15, 2017.

Paul Edelsberg was a family friend of my grandfather, Richard Drileck. My father, David Drileck, grew up around Edelsberg. He had heard many stories about the man both from my grandfather and from Edelsberg himself. My father noted that Paul was my uncle's godfather of sorts. He mentioned that Edelsberg was in a labor camp in Poland called Krychow Farm. My mother asked if Paul had a number tattooed on his arm, and my father asserted that he was not tattooed. He informed me that Edelsberg had run away from his labor camp after an altercation with a Nazi over his sister. He joined the Polish underground and eventually was taken in by the Soviets; during this time, he assisted with the demolition of bridges. My father says he cannot remember many more details, but referred me to my grandfather, who has been close to Edelsberg for decades. He notes that they both sold Fuller Brushes when they came to America, but Paul ended up opening up a pet supply manufacturing company. He now had a daughter and three or four grandchildren. The interview was very informal as my father simply was relaying information about a figure he grew up with and remembers fondly, but it provided many details that aided further research.

Klein, Gerda W. *All But My Life*, 3-55. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995.

This book was written by a Polish Jew, a teenage girl during World War II. She recounts what happened when Nazis invaded her hometown and the persecution of the Jews in Poland. The selected section describes Klein's experiences before she was forced into a camp. It details what happened to her and her family directly following the Nazi invasion. Her brother was forced out of their hometown, and so Klein describes very thoroughly her grief at being separated from him and the toll it played on the emotional wellbeing of her entire family. As Edelsberg was also separated from his family during the war, this provides perspective on how those closest to him probably felt when they lost contact with him. There are no accounts from Edelsberg's own family, so looking at accounts from those who went through similar circumstances as them gives us insight into the effects his departure from his home would have had beyond the effects on him personally.

"More Jews Rounded Up in Germany and Are Being Deported." *The Nevada Daily Mail*, June 9, 1939.

Written just months before the German invasion of Poland, this article describes mounting tensions between Poland and Germany. At this time, Germany admitted that the country took action against Polish Jews in Danzig. Established after World War I, The Free City of Danzig was a region that essentially became a no man's land between Poland and Germany, an epicenter of dispute. Germany was forcibly deporting Polish Jews from this area to Poland, one account stating that out of a group of 2000 Jews, only 80 actually made it to Poland. This shows that even prior to the invasion of Poland, Germany persecuted Polish Jews and tensions were high between the two countries. Germany had about 10,000 Polish Jews within its borders and was trying to intimidate them into fleeing the country. This article foreshadows the eventual conflict between Poland and Germany and the particularly bad treatment of the Polish Jews such as Edelsberg and his family.

"Nazi Camps Mean Death: Life Expectancy Placed at Nine Months." *The Deseret News*, August 27, 1943.

This article, published in a newspaper in Salt Lake City, Utah, was actually written in London. The United States had entered World War II about two years ago, and local newspapers tended to have sections devoted to news on the issue. The language used is meant to shock and horrify the general public, thereby justifying the war. Statistics on Poland are given, which makes this document helpful for my purposes, as it highlights how terrible things were in Poland at the time Paul Edelsberg was living there; it was estimated that in just three years, over one million Polish Jews were killed, either murdered or starved to death. That is a huge number, and truly emphasizes the inhumane nature of the Axis powers and portrays the Allies who wrote the article as the saviors in this situation, fighting for what is good and right, thereby promoting nationalism and support for continued involvement in the war.

“Nazi-Occupied Countries.” *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, June 13, 1941.

This article details the conditions in Nazi-occupied Poland. The conditions varied across the country, but in every region, Jews faced persecution. In the ghettos of industrial cities, Jews could not appear on the main streets. Jews were forced to wear the six-point star. Non-Jews could not drive Jewish passengers, and if they did so, they would have faced heavy punishment. Jewish businesses were not allowed to exist outside of the ghettos and Jews employed outside of the ghettos could only be transported in groups. Non-Jews were not allowed inside the ghettos. Curfews were in place, as well. The end of this article acknowledges the terrible conditions in labor camps and notes their position near Soviet territory. This is significant because Edelsberg escaped from a labor camp and ended up as a partisan aligned with Soviet forces. The fact that most of the labor camps were located near Soviet territory helps explain why that was possible.

“Notes from the Wannsee Conference.” In *The Rise of Fascism: History, Documents, and Key Questions*, by Patrick G. Zander, 167-169. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016.

This document is from a conference held on January 20, 1942, in which Hitler’s “Final Solution” project was being presented to a variety of representatives and officials. The “Final Solution” was the euphemism used to describe the total extermination of Jews in Europe. This meeting was run by Reinhard Heydrich, who was in charge of overseeing the operations of the project. The notes describe how, while initially the “evacuation” of Jews to the east, where they were forced into labor camps, was acceptable, it could not be a long term situation. A “natural elimination” of the Jews due to the severity of the forced labor was occurring, but it was not enough. The explanation was that the Jews who survived the labor would be the strongest of the Jews and create a population capable of rebounding. These notes are particularly horrifying because they describe the extermination of an entire population very casually. The Nazis did not see the Jews as people, so they describe ridding Europe of the Jews with the same amount of concern one may have for removing cockroaches from their home, approaching things from a “strategic” stance. They point to history to justify their concerns of the Jewish population enduring the current situation and to make the slaughter of millions palatable. This document is included in this portfolio to contextualize the environment Edelsberg faced.

“Petition for Naturalization: Paul Edelsberg.” *Northern District Court*, Chicago, I.L., circa 1957.

This document was filed with the United States Department of Justice. We do not know the exact date of the filing, but we know it was around five years after he arrived in America. The form shows he arrived on October 14, 1951, a month and a half after his Displaced Person Card marked him as “Left for America.” When he arrived in America, he was still going as Pinkus, but by the time the document is filed, he is referring to himself with the name Paul. He landed in New York, New York on the ship S.S. General J.H. McRae. This document cites his birthplace as Wlodawa, Poland and his profession is

listed as Stockman, which is probably a way of putting his job in sales in a more professional (and therefore more credible) light. This document, although just a simple governmental form petitioning for the rights of citizenship, is full of information that provides insight into the journey of Paul Edelsberg and his attempts to find a home.

“Polish Jews Drafted For Labor Duty.” *Gazette and Bulletin, Williamsburg, PA*, January 16, 1940.

This article from Berlin was published almost two years before America entered World War II in a newspaper in Pennsylvania. It mentions the forced labor of Jews in German-occupied Poland and how Jews in Krakow, Poland, were required to turn in all of their radio equipment. This was interesting to me because this was something that would have affected the life of my subject very much, yet it is given so little attention; a far cry from the newspaper article from 1943. This article was only four sentences, squeezed onto the side of the tenth page of the paper. Very little attention is brought to it. It is very matter-of-fact and does not try to condemn what is happening, simply just noting that the time could be expanded if seen fit. It is fascinating that something that drastically changed the life of people like Paul Edelsberg was barely even mentioned in American papers, just a quick note before publishing the town’s bookmobile schedule. It is a true testament to how little the general public in America cared until millions of lives were already lost.

Setton, Haym. “Doctor’s Note for Frederick Weinstein,” November 15, 1997.

This source, upon first glance, does not seem to fit in with the rest of this research; it is published at a much later date about a man who is not the subject of this research. However, while researching, this document was particularly compelling as it detailed the struggles of a man very similar to Paul Edelsberg later in life. Frederick Weinstein (originally Fryderyk Winnykamien) was a Polish Jew who ran away from a ghetto, survived the Holocaust, and spent time in a refugee camp before immigrating to America. Fifty years after the events, he lives with the aftereffects of the war, suffering from depression, insomnia, and heart issues. His doctor expresses the Weinstein feels guilty that he survived when his sisters died in the Holocaust. It is unclear who this note was intended for, but it is obvious that the doctor is very sympathetic for Mr. Weinstein and cognizant of his struggles. The situations of Weinstein and Edelsberg in their earlier lives are so similar that it would not be entirely unfounded to imagine that their coping with the past would not be entirely different, as such difficult things are likely to haunt anyone.

Walker, Fay, Leo Rosen, and Caren S. Neile. *Hidden: A Sister and Brother in Nazi Poland*, 3-98. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.

This book was written by a brother and sister who survived Nazi Poland, and it differs from some of the other books in this portfolio because within the book are two perspectives, as the siblings were separated and encountered different circumstances. The

section of this book that was used is relevant to this portfolio due to the significant discussion about whether they would be better off facing the Nazis or fleeing to the side of the Russians. Edelsberg ended up working with the Russians, but this book shows how there was not a history of positive interactions between the Soviets and the Jews prior to World War II, and that relationships such as the one Edelsberg had with the Soviets as a partisan were born out of necessity rather than trust. This section also shows how many Polish Jews were unaware of the atrocities that would accompany the arrival of the Nazis in Poland, and therefore were unable to seek refuge until it was already too late.

Secondary Sources

Cienciala, Anna. "Poles and Jews Under German and Soviet Occupation, September 1, 1939- June 22, 1941." *The Polish Review* 46, no. 4, 2001, 391-402.

This article is a scholarly resource that explores the relationships between Poles and Jews in relation to other groups who asserted control over Poland, particularly the Nazis and the USSR. The Nazis killed a number of ethnic Poles and a huge number of Polish Jews. However, most of the Poles simply wanted to keep their heads down, so while they did not actively attack Jewish citizens, most did not defend them either. Most just simply were trying to make ends meet and ensure their own safety, as helping the Jews resulted in death. When the Soviets arrived, the Jews saw freedom where the Poles saw more oppression. It was now the Poles being slaughtered. Jews in German-occupied Poland were not aware of Soviet atrocities and fought alongside the Soviets not because they loved communism, but because they wanted a shot at survival. Edelsberg fought alongside Soviets in Poland, and this was an interesting take on the issue I had not previously considered.

Leydesdorff, Selma. "Life as a Partisan." In *Sasha Pechersky: Holocaust Hero, Sobibor Resistance Leader, and Hostage of History*, 154-155. New York: Routledge, 2017.

This book was written about one of the key figures in the revolt at Sobibor who is often a forgotten figure in history despite spearheading a successful revolution at a death camp. The selected section is about partisan life and seeks to squash romanticized ideas of what the life of a partisan was like. The chances for death were extremely high, as Germans sought to make an example out of any partisan caught. The realities of hiding out in a forest meant that shelter was barely adequate and food was scarce. Poor sanitation led to disease spreading rampantly through partisan groups. Edelsberg was part of a partisan group, and while the idea of a rogue group living in the woods, fighting Nazis is easily dramatized, the realities Edelsberg faced were likely very brutal. The actions taken by partisans are certainly brave and often heroic, but their everyday lives were much more mundane and far less glamorous.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Child's Flowered Blue Dress Received by Girl in DP Camp: Contributor Biography." Last modified September 18, 2017. Accessed December 11, 2017. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn85156>

This was a bit of an odd find; under the archive for a dress donated by Paul Edelsberg's wife, there is a paragraph detailing both her mother's experience with the Holocaust and Paul's own. It notes Paul was born Pinkus and was the middle child of a middle class Jewish family in Wlodawa and fled his hometown amongst roundups of the Jews which led to the deportation of his younger sister. He hid with other Jewish partisans and became part of Soviet efforts to destroy infrastructure. When the war ended, he learned that his younger sister and his father were killed in the gas chambers of Sobibor while his mother and older sister were shot by Nazi forces. He moved into Bad Reichenhall displaced persons camp, where he became a police officer in the camp before selling goods in the town. He then sailed to America where he started both a business and a family. This article was found in an unexpected place, but gave excellent information on Paul Edelsberg and his general background.

Webb, Chris. "Appendix 1: The Sobibor Area Labor Camps." In *The Sobibor Death Camp: History, Biographies, Remembrance*, 381-386. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2017.

This source provides information concerning the labor camps in the Sobibor area. There were seventeen such camps in the swampy area around Sobibor, in the Lublin and Warsaw districts. The source details how the work at these camps was brutal and often resulted in death. Much of the death occurred from starvation, yet some of the workers were executed for making contact with the local Poles, in attempts to receive food. Krychow, located southwest of Sobibor, was the largest of the labor camps in the area and described by German commanders as a place where Jews enjoyed a great deal of freedom, despite the constant armed supervision and brutal forced labor. The source provides information on what went on in camps in the same region as Krychow as well, giving the reader a more concrete idea of what it would have been like inside one of these labor camps. As Edelsberg worked at Krychow for some time, this source gives us information on the struggles he would have faced.

Images

Concentration Camps Maps: Camps in Poland and Lithuania. Map. From Jewish Virtual Library. Accessed November 18, 2017.
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/map-of-concentration-camps-in-poland-and-lithuania>

This map shows a number of labor camps and death camps across Poland, where Paul Edelsberg lived. He was at Krychow, a labor camp that fed into Sobibor, for a while. Sobibor is where some of his family died, so there is a personal connection to him there. It is a bit horrifying to think that this wasn't even all of the sites where things like this happened even within the region; for instance, Krychow is not labelled on this map (it would be southwest of Sobibor, near Lublin). This map is important because it can sometimes be hard to visualize a system where millions are killed, but being able to see how widespread the death camps were really puts it into perspective. Furthermore, it

highlights how risky it was to run away from one camp or ghetto, as the next one is never too far away and the Nazi presence had permeated all of Poland. There was nowhere safe to try to get to; the land was saturated with death. Being able to look at a map allows people to grasp the scale of these atrocities.

Gilbert, Martin. *Principal Deportations to Sobibor, 1942-1943*. Map. In *The Sobibor Death Camp: History, Biographies, Remembrance*, by Chris Webb. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2017.

This is a map that shows Poland under German occupation. This map is focused on the Sobibor death camp, and illustrates the origins of people who arrived at Sobibor. Sobibor is the only camp represented on this map, and every other dot represents a city or region. It is evident from looking at the map that railroads played a key role in the transportation of people into Sobibor, as many of the arrows indicating the flow of traffic towards Sobibor tend to follow along these railroads, often converging in major cities. From each of the major cities south of Sobibor, railroads were used to bring the prisoners to the camp. This map is interesting in relation to this portfolio because it is very easy to see how close Edelsberg's home region of Wlodawa was to the Sobibor death camp. On this map, it is clear that Wlodawa is not far north of Sobibor, and therefore the Jewish population of Wlodawa was probably heavily impacted by the camp.

"Jewish forced labor on a bridge in Wlodawa, 1942." Photograph. Wlodawa, Poland, 1942. *Remember Jewish Wlodawa - Genealogy Group*. Accessed December 4, 2017. <http://chelm.freeyellow.com/wlodawa.html>.

This image was found alongside an article trying to preserve the history of the Jewish people in Wlodawa. In this image, Jewish men in a labor camp near Wlodawa are building a bridge. This 1942 photo depicts what occurred at a labor camp. One of the immediately noticeable things in this photo is the lack of women, as in labor camps such as these, men and women were often kept separate. Furthermore, it shows the men engaged in rather difficult physical labor. The fact that it is a bridge that is being built is also significant, as transportation and infrastructural development through forced labor were key components of the Nazi agenda. This image was chosen because Edelsberg's labor camp likely did similar work to these men and Edelsberg probably appeared similar to these men, as Edelsberg came from Wlodawa initially. Furthermore, in the photo, the Jewish men are building a bridge and the idea of a controlled Jewish man being forced to build contrasted with the freedom of a Jewish partisan who destroyed bridges in order to help resistance movements was fascinating and seemed fitting.

"Portrait of Soviet Jewish Partisans Kola, and Pinkus Edelsberg." Photograph. Bad Reichenhall, Germany, 1945.

This is a photograph of Paul Edelsberg and one of his friends, taken in their displaced persons camp, Bad Reichenhall. They were both Soviet Jewish partisans before they arrived at the camp. In the picture, they are clean-shaven and look quite young. They are

both in uniforms and decorated with medals for their service. This is a portrait for which they posed, and they seem to have dressed up, so one can assume that this may have been a way of honoring them and their accomplishments and recognizing their role during the war. It is a bit jarring to see them and realize that this was taken after the war had concluded and these young people had suffered unimaginable amounts and done unthinkable things. It is odd to think of those who endured such tragedy and experienced things most of us have nightmares about would be so baby-faced when they came through it all.