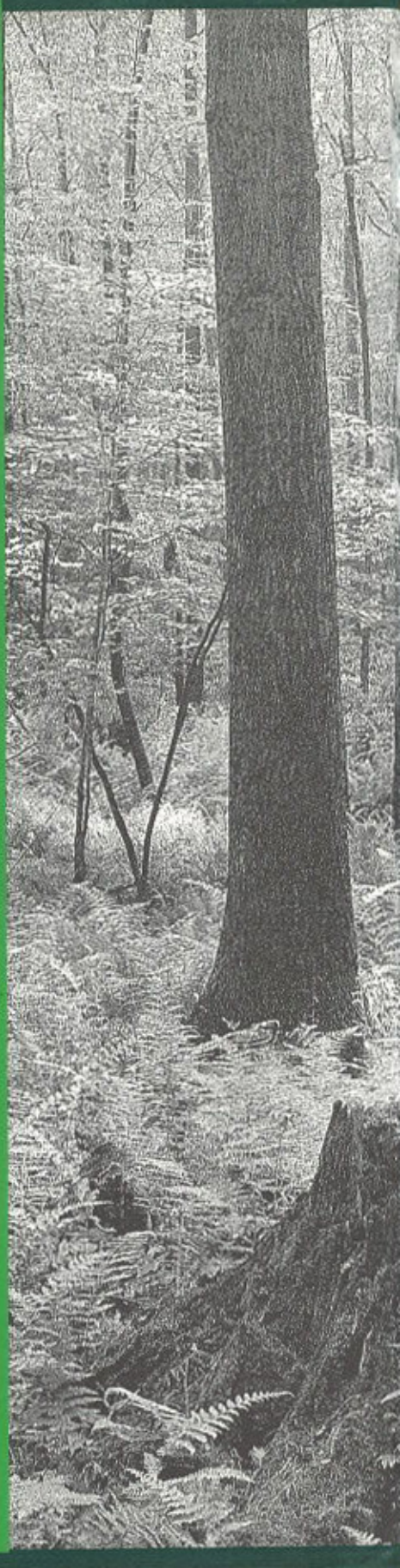
The Diary of Aaron Wilf

THE BLOODSOAKED SAGA OF SKOLE

Translated by Raphael Posner



Aaron Wilf 1902-1977



The Diary of Aaron Wilf

THE BLOODSOAKED SAGA OF SKOLE

Translated by Raphael Posner

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The Families of Rose Englander, Moshe Wilf, Meir Wilf and Dov Lieblein



לזכר
קדושי קהילת סקוֹלֶה והסביבה
(גליציה המזרחית)
שנהרגו ונרצחו על קדוּש השם
בימי השואה במלחמת עולם השניה
ה'ד
יוצאי סקולה

In Memory of
The Martyrs of Skole and the Vicinity
(Eastern Galicia)
Who Were Murdered in Sanctification of The Holy Name
In the Holocaust in World War II
May God Avenge Them

Former Residents of Skole

The text of a plaque in the Holocaust Museum, Mt. Zion, Jerusalem.

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Dear Reader,

In bringing this book to press, I have had very mixed feelings.

On the one hand, I have felt a certain relief that notwithstanding the delays and difficulties we have succeeded in adding another reliable document regarding the days of grief and holocaust of the Jews of Skole and the vicinity.

On the other hand, I have felt pain because it would be right to do much more to commemorate the Jews of Skole and the vicinity whose names are not known and who will be forgotten. May they forgive us.

I want to thank everybody who helped me in the preparation of the material and I particularly thank Mr. Shalom Segal for his faithful translation into Hebrew of the original Yiddish and his editorial contribution. The English translation was made from the Hebrew by Dr. Raphael Posner.

I also want to express my gratitude to my friend and fellow Skolian, Dan Landman, for his tireless help and encouragement, to Shalom Kweller for the five illustrations which appear in the book which faithfully represent the hiding places and which were drawn on the basis of a verbal description alone, without seeing the sites.

My thanks also to Meyer Wilf and his family, to Moshe Wilf and to the Englander family for their help, both in the form of good advice and in the form of financial aid. May they be blessed.

Dov Lieblein

Editor's Introduction

In this diary, Aaron (Olchio) Wilf fulfils the vow he made to the Jews of his town, Skole, before he went into hiding from the Nazi and Ukrainian murderers in 1942. He vowed: "If I survive, I will tell of [the Jews'] suffering until they were exterminated in the most cruel ways," and, he continues, "I want to tell the whole world the whole truth (with, however, some exceptions) about our Ukrainian neighbors who were ten times crueller than the German executioners." Aaron left Skole with its persecuted Jews and went into hiding at a Ukrainian friend's house in October 1942.

While in hiding Aaron Wilf recorded his and his family's experiences almost daily, and, on occasion, even hourly. As he himself put it, "... I experienced these terrible happenings myself, physically and spiritually, and I described them as they were, day by day."

He also recorded in the diary the news he heard from his benefactors and read in the newspapers they brought him about the general progress of the war and, in particular, about the extermination of the Jews of Skole and the other towns and villages.

In Aaron Wilf, the old adage, "From a high roof to a deep pit" (Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah 5b) was realized almost literally, since during the first period he was hidden under the roof of a barn, and then, later, in a deep pit in the forest.

The diary itself was begun on November 1st, 1942, when he arrived at the house of Mykhailo Svystun in the village of Korostów, situated 15km from Skole. From a chronological point of view the diary can be divided into four periods:

1. From the outbreak of the war on September 1st 1939 until June 22nd 1941. During this period Skole and the whole of East Galicia were under Russian communist rule. Our diarist, like other Jews of his class who were classified as "bourgeois," tried, with occasional success, to

integrate himself into the new system in order, as he put is, "to live decently."

2. From June 22nd 1941 until August 1942. For a short while at the beginning of this period, Skole and its environs were under the rule of the Hungarian army, which passed severe economic decrees but did not molest the Jews physically. Later the Germans occupied the area and, with the active aid of collaborators - some Poles, the *Volksdeutsche* and, in particular, the Ukrainians - robbed and plundered the Jews and persecuted them brutally, until the "Final Solution" - the death camps.

3. From September 2nd 1942 until October 1st 1942. This is the period of the *Aktions*, with the application of the "Final Solution" in full swing. The Jews in great desperation sought any possible way to escape, mostly to no avail because of the cooperation of the Ukrainians with the Nazis.

Wilf succeeded in finding a hiding place for himself and his family with a Ukrainian family - Mykhailo Svystun, his wife Polaha, and their son, Vasil, in the nearby village of Korostów. (Yes! There were exceptional people in that hell - Righteous Gentiles.) There, as stated above, Aaron Wilf wrote detailed records until the liberation when he returned for a short time to Skole at the end of September 1944.

4. The period of transition - from the liberation until he left that blood-soaked country and emigrated to a free country, U.S.A., in 1946, after many difficulties, problems and devious solutions.

It is only natural that the reader of the diary feels close to the author and identifies with him. However, most of all one is filled with astonishment. Aaron Wilf was a merchant and a small industrialist who had never experienced want in his whole life. Where did he find the physical strength to endure the great suffering he underwent? And where did he find the spiritual strength not to submit to despair and apathy?

The only possible answer is that the tradition of the eternal Jew gave him hope and reinforced his will to survive under all circumstances - if only in order to keep his promise to tell the world what happened -

the terrible tragedy which befell the Jews, a tragedy unique in human history.

Aaron Wilf was absolutely determined to struggle with himself and with the fiercely hostile surroundings in order to stay alive by using any available means. Indeed, he survived. He fulfilled his vow. He realized his hopes.

The diary is special in the consistency with which Wilf followed events from his hiding place and in the detail in which he recorded even minor matters, such as the accounts he kept of the food supplied by his benefactor - the items, the amounts, and the cost in currency, gold, jewelry, or clothing. There can be no better testimony to his mental health, his physical endurance and his credibility.

The Wilfs' benefactors, the members of the Svystun family, put their own lives in great danger by hiding Jews, even though there was scant chance of receiving any reward. Not only did they not desert the Wilfs, they consistently encouraged them and gave them moral strength. Taking into consideration the hostile Ukrainian surroundings, the Svystuns exhibited true friendship and sacrifice. Indeed, after the war, in 1946, Mykhailo and Polaha Svystun paid with their lives when they were burned to death in their house by their neighbors.

In my translation from Yiddish into Hebrew, as well as in the editing, I have taken great care to preserve the original contents and style of the diary, including statistical information with regards to the number of Jews before and after the war, although it is not always in agreement with official figures.

In conclusion, it can be said that the diary of Aaron Wilf is not only the fulfillment of the vow he made to his fellow Jews in Skole - it is also an important contribution to the study and research of that darkest of periods - the Holocaust.

Shalom Segal

The English translation was made from the Hebrew version, and, like Shalom Segal, I, too, have tried to remain faithful to the style. The English version contains the complete text appearing in the Hebrew.

Raphael Posner

Aaron Wilf — A Biographical Sketch

When I attempt to evaluate the personality of Aron Wilf - and this even after the decades that have passed - I cannot but be entranced by his personality and astounded by his courage and coolness and by his wisdom and ingenuity, in a period when despair, frustration and terror gripped everybody. In that period he focussed all his spiritual and physical energies on the task of ensuring the survival of his own family and the relatives who were with him.

He also set himself the task of documenting the history of the Jews of Skole in the period when nearly all of them were exterminated.

When I consider the significance of his writing his diary in that period and under those conditions, I am forced to the conclusion that he did it out of a deep sense of responsibility and because of a burning determination to tell all the survivors and, indeed, the whole world, the tragic story of the Jews of Skole. His concept of survival went far beyond his aim to save his and his family's lives.

Writing the diary at that time was a symbol of his determination to survive and articulated his proud religious belief and conviction that the Jewish People lives.

By publishing Aaron Wilf's diary we are executing his spiritual will and testament and repaying our deep moral debt to him.

Aaron Wilf was born in Galicia in 1902 into a large family nine of whose children died in a typhus epidemic in that period. Only two children survived - he and his brother Asher (Alter). His father, Eliyahu Wilf, who originated from Borislaw, was engaged in business, - mainly in skins, agricultural produce and mushrooms - in the Austro-Hungarian region the center of which was the town of Debrecin.

Aaron and his brother Asher-Alter continued in the family business but concentrated mainly in the raw materials for the leather and fur industries. Aaron developed wide connections in this field, particularly with the foresters who supplied the skins.

When he was about twenty-five years old he married Chaya Lieblein and they had two children - Rose, who lives in the USA, and Moshe, who lives in Israel. They both have children and grandchildren of their own. Aaron saved two other relatives together with his own immediate family - Dov Lieblein and Meir Wilf.

Aaron Wilf was well known in Skole and both respected and liked. He was always prepared to help others and was a proud Jew even to the point of fanaticism. For example, when Shechitah (the Jewish ritual slaughter of meat) was forbidden in Poland, he took the initiative in organizing a clandestine operation and risked imprisonment.

He saw that as a symbolic of the struggle for a Jew's right to maintain his religion and traditions. He was proud of his faith and his tradition, but his outlook on life was liberal, with a wide understanding of the world around him. He maintained good relationships with everybody with whom he came in contact which found expression in the help he consistently offered in all areas and in particular in the financial help he extended in the form of interest-free loans.

When the war started he was at the height of his economic success, and in its wake everyhing was destroyed.

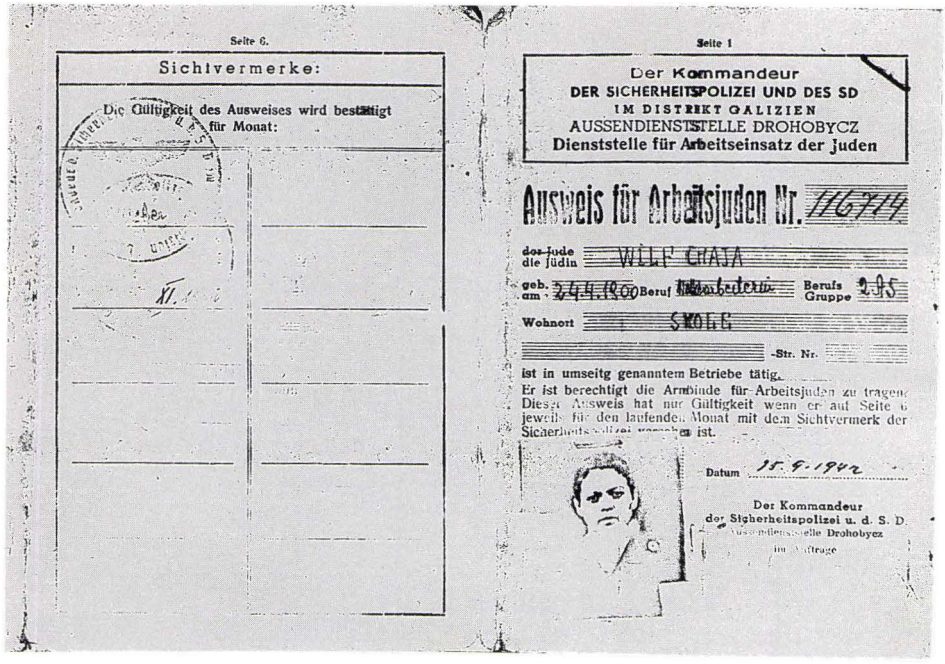
Aaron Wilf died in New York on December 12, 1977 - Kislev 29, 5736. His wife Chaya died there on January 3, 1977 - Tevet 13, 5735. May their memory be blessed.

I, Meir Wilf, the son of his brother, and Dov Lieblein, the son of his brother-in-law, both owe our lives to Aaron Wilf; we are the only survivors of our families.

Meir Wilf



Aaron Wilf, his wife Chaya (née Lieblein), his daughter Rose and his son Moshe (Munyo)



Seite 6.

Sichtvermerke:

Die Gültigkeit des Ausweises wird bestätigt für Monat:

XI.

Seite 1

Der Kommandeur
DER SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI UND DES SD
IM DISTRIKT GALIZIEN
AUSSENDIENSTSTELLE DROHOBYCZ
Dienststelle für Arbeitseinsatz der Juden

Ausweis für Arbeitsjuden Nr. 116714

~~der Jude~~ / die Jüdin WILF CHAJA

geb. am 24.4.[illegible] Beruf [illegible] Berufs Gruppe 2.05

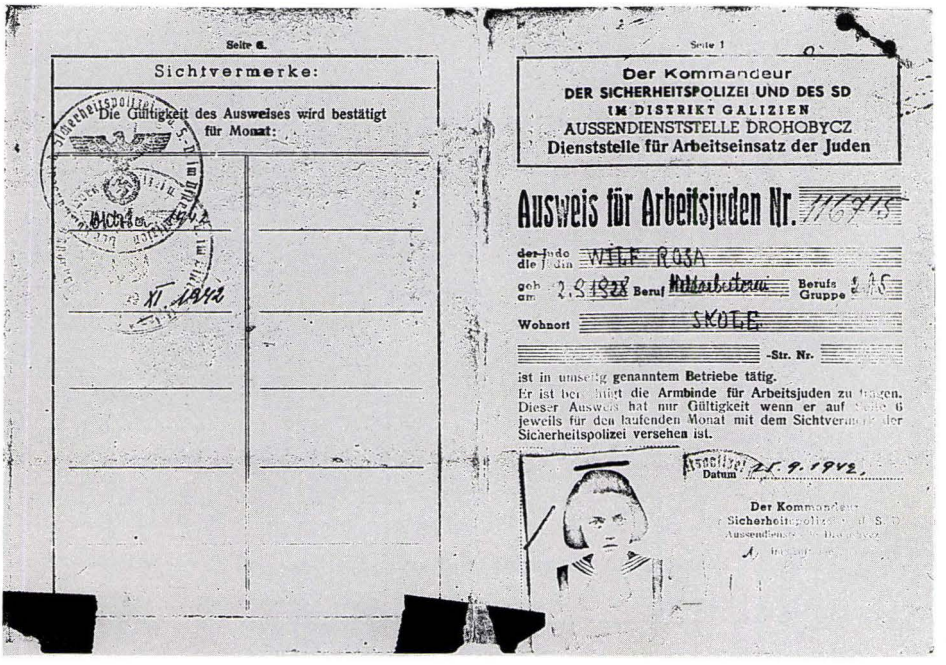
Wohnort SKOLE

-Str. Nr.

ist in umseitig genanntem Betriebe tätig.
Er ist berechtigt die Armbinde für Arbeitsjuden zu tragen. Dieser Ausweis hat nur Gültigkeit wenn er auf Seite 6 jeweils für den laufenden Monat mit dem Sichtvermerk der Sicherheitspolizei versehen ist.

Datum 15.9.1942

Der Kommandeur
der Sicherheitspolizei u. d. S. D.
Aussendienststelle Drohobycz
Im Auftrage



Seite 6.

Sichtvermerke:

Die Gültigkeit des Ausweises wird bestätigt für Monat:

XI. 1942

Seite 1

Der Kommandeur
DER SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI UND DES SD
IM DISTRIKT GALIZIEN
AUSSENDIENSTSTELLE DROHOBYCZ
Dienststelle für Arbeitseinsatz der Juden

Ausweis für Arbeitsjuden Nr. 116715

~~der Jude~~ / die Jüdin WILF ROSA

geb. am 2.8.1924 Beruf [illegible] Berufs Gruppe 2.05

Wohnort SKOLE

-Str. Nr.

ist in umseitig genanntem Betriebe tätig.
Er ist berechtigt die Armbinde für Arbeitsjuden zu tragen. Dieser Ausweis hat nur Gültigkeit wenn er auf Seite 6 jeweils für den laufenden Monat mit dem Sichtvermerk der Sicherheitspolizei versehen ist.

Datum 24.9.1942

Der Kommandeur
der Sicherheitspolizei u. d. S. D.
Aussendienststelle Drohobycz
Im Auftrage

Work Permits

In Memory of

Mykhailo Svystun

"A Righteous Gentile"

who paid with his life for having saved
the author of this diary and his family



Mykhailo Svystun and his wife, Polaha



The plaque commemorating Mykhailo Svystun in
The Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles in Yad Vashem

YAD VASHEM
HarHazikaron
Jérusalem



יד ושם
הר הזיכרון
ירושלים

תעודה
ATTESTATION

Mykhailo Svystun

שם נפשו בכפו להצלת יהודים בתקופת השואה.
AU PERIL DE SA VIE A SAUVE DES JUIFS PENDANT L'HOLOCAUSTE

נטע עץ בשדרת חסידי אומות העולם
A PLANTE UN ARBRE DANS L'ALLEE DES JUSTES

LE 13 Mai 1985 ביום כב אייר תשמ"ה

בשם הועדה לציון חסידי אומות העולם
Pour la Commission des Justes

בשם רשות הזיכרון יד-ושם
Pour l'Institut du Souvenir Yad Vashem

...ונתתי להם בביתי ובחומותי יד ושם... אשר לא יכרת. ישעיהו נ"ו
...JE LEUR DONNERAI UNE PLACE ET UN NOM... QUI NE PERIRA PAS... ESAIE, 56

The certificate of attestation declaring
Mykhailo Svystun "A Righteous Gentile"

The Characters in the Diary

Aaron (Olchio) Wilf	The author
Hayah Wilf	His wife
Roshka Wilf	His daughter
Monio Wilf	His son
Meyer Wilf	His nephew
Dov Lieblein	His brother-in-law's son
Mykhailo Svystun	His savior, a forester and a peasant
Polaha	His wife
Vasil (Vasilcheo)	His son
Anna	Mykhailo's sister-in-law
Elko Sauchin	Mykhailo's brother-in-law
Hoshko	A forester
Kafka	A forester
Breitfogel	Supervisor of foresters for the German Authorities
Suslenic	Leader of Ukrainian gangs around Skole; murdered many Jews
Topolnicki	Teacher, neighbor of the Wilf family; Ukrainian nationalist
Dr. Rares	Chairman of *Judenrat*; well-known lawyer; one of the important inhabitants of Skole before the war
Eisenstein	Chairman of *Judenrat* after Dr. Rares' murder
Gredel	An apostate Jew (from Austria); owner of the large sawmill near Skole

The Blood-Soaked Saga of Skole

My Vow - An Introduction

I, Aaron Wilf, the last remnant of the Jews of Skole until 1945, have come to fulfil the vow I swore to the Jews of my townlet in 1942, when I decided to flee to the forests from the murderers. My vow was that if I survived I would tell of the tribulations and persecutions they suffered until they were killed in all kinds of inhuman ways.

When we parted none of us believed that any of us would survive. Nevertheless, out of a weak hope, we comforted each other that perhaps one of us would stay alive and tell of the bloodbath that engulfed and drowned the Jews of Skole and the vicinity.

I want to tell the world the whole truth about our Ukrainian neighbors whose cruelty was ten times worse than that of the German hangmen.

The Jews of the Carpathians had plenty of possibilities of hiding from the German murderers, but their Christian neighbors - Ukrainian and Polish - betrayed them. The Ukrainians searched everywhere - in cellars and attics, in fields and forests - to find Jews and hand them over to the Germans or to kill them themselves. Many of them took Jews into their homes as though out of pity for their terrible plight, but then robbed them of all they had, even the very shirts on their backs, and then killed them or handed them over to the Germans.

In the townlet of Skole and the forty-eight surrounding villages there were approximately six thousand Jews on the eve of the outbreak of World War II in 1939. When the Russians took over the area they formulated very harsh economic decrees, but when Germany attacked Russia in 1941, about three hundred Jews fled eastwards with the Russians. Many of them were inducted into the Red Army and fell in the war against the Germans; others died of cold and starvation. Only one hundred and fifty Skole Jews returned to Poland from Russia after the

war; some of them emigrated to the Palestine while others went to the USA. Of the other Jews of Skole who survived the war, fifty had hidden in the forests around Skole and fifty had managed to cross over into Hungary. All of them survived by indescribable miracles.

Thus, of Skole's six thousand Jews only about two hundred and fifty survived. The slaughter started a week after the Germans invaded. The first to enter Skole were the Hungarian soldiers. As soon as they arrived, the Ukrainians began to rob and murder Jews without being told to. The Hungarians also plundered the Jews, but they did not kill them. This was only a prelude to what was to happen a few weeks later when German motorized troops arrived. Immediately upon arrival they demanded that a *Judenrat* be established to help them implement their orders. All Jews between the ages of fourteen and sixty were ordered to register and were given various jobs. Already on the first day four Jews were shot for not performing their tasks properly. This was the sign that from now on Jewish lives were no longer protected and that Jews could be killed with impunity. There was nobody to complain to since any complaint was punished by death. We could not even think of resisting since that would lead not only to the death of the resister but also to the death of whole groups of Jews.

In the nearby village of Rozhanka they hung three youths by their heels and set fire to them. All fifteen Jews of the village were murdered.

In Koziowa one of the Lander family was done to death with a spiked club.

In Trukhanov thirty-two Jews were burned alive in their homes.

In Sinevudzko the Ukrainians ordered the Jews to pack their most valuable belongings and then put the Jews into carts to take them, so they said, to the ghetto in Stryi. Three kilometers from the village the Ukrainian cart-drivers killed them all. Those who were only wounded were beaten to death with spades. The Ukrainians dug a pit there and threw the bodies into it.

The Ukrainians in nearly all the villages did not wait for orders from the Germans. On their own initiative they began slaughtering the Jews in order to plunder their belongings.

Some of the "intelligent and learned" Ukrainians, among them a priest, a teacher and the forest supervisor, took Jews into their homes

as though to conceal them from their Ukrainian persecutors, but then robbed them of all they had and made sure that they would be "discovered" and then killed or handed over to the Germans. Those Jews who were assigned to various jobs slowly starved to death and every day we had to bury fifteen such victims.

In the evening of Wednesday, September 2, 1942, a large number of trucks filled with German SS men arrived in Skole. Some of them went into the neighboring villages to round-up the surviving Jews and the rest stayed put. At exactly midnight the town was surrounded by a ring of German soldiers and police with an SS man stationed at every fifty paces. When the commanding officer let off a shot as the starting signal, the units, each comprised of two Germans, a Ukrainian and a Jew, advanced on the houses. They went from house to house and dragged out approximately 2,100 Jews and took them to the concentration point in the courtyard of the courthouse. A few Jews who tried to escape on the way were shot dead on the spot. In all, one hundred and three Jews lost their lives that night.

In the courtyard the Jews were not even allowed to approach the well to get a drink of water and these poor people were kept there in that state until Thursday night, when they were taken to the railway station. They were pushed by force into freight waggons - more than one hundred in each car. Once they were all loaded, the waggons were locked and the "passengers" - aged and children alike - were left without air to breathe. That is how the train left Skole.

Those in the transport had no doubts about the fate which awaited them. The Jews in two of the cars managed to break open the doors and jumped from the fast-moving train a few kilometers from Skole. They left behind them about fifty Jews who had died of suffocation. Approximately one hundred of the escapees were killed or injured when they jumped from the train and only sixty came out of the experience unharmed and ready to return to Skole. They divided themselves into two groups - one followed the railway tracks back to Skole and the other went through the forest. When the train arrived in Stryi and the Germans saw the two freight cars broken open with only dead Jews in them they alerted the police and the SS who were sent to scour the whole length of the railway tracks. The Jews who had decided to follow

the tracks were caught at once and all of them were shot dead. Of the group which went through the forest, twenty reached Skole but they too were killed in the next slaughter.

On October, 18 1942, for the fourth time, five thousand Jews were transported from Stryi for extermination and in order to fill the quota the Germans came once again to Skole to find Jews, bring them to Stryi and from there to ...

This time, however, they only succeeded in finding one hundred and seventy-five Jews, of whom nine were shot while trying to escape. On the following day the police issued a decree that the Jews who were employed had to live in shacks at their place of work. The rest were required to move to the ghetto in Stryi.

Once again - panic, fear, terror... searches, enquiries... About a thousand Jews were alloted to five or six places of work and about five hundred others succeeded in hiding in dugouts in the nearby forests or with Christian neighbors. Only about one hundred Jews were taken to Stryi, knowing full well what was in store for them.

It was a night of horror. Despairingly we promised each other that the survivors - if there were any - would scream out against the world for the cruel extermination of our people. I, my wife and two children and two children - one of my brother and the other of my brother-in-law - got to the forest of Korostów, about 15km from Skole and there we were helped by a good friend, a Christian. We hid there until the area was liberated two years later. Every day we heard of more Jews whose hiding places were discovered and who were executed and also of Jews who gave themselves up of their own accord because they were unable to bear the terrible conditions in the dugouts and bunkers they were hiding in. They came out of their own accord and asked to be killed.

I heard that even the Jews who were confined to their place of work were also killed. Only about forty of them succeeded in escaping to the forests or to Hungary. When the Russians liberated Skole in 1944 there were only fifty Jews left and even they were hated by the Ukrainians who did everything they could to finish them off together with the Christians who had hidden them. This time they were not interested in the belongings of the Jews, because the Jews no longer had anything.

They wanted to destroy any Jew who could bear witness to what they had done under the German occupation.

The two Christians who helped us to survive were murdered by their fellow Ukrainians and their house was burned to the ground with their bodies in it. This happened during the Russian occupation after the war.

This book is my cry against the world and with it I am keeping my oath to my brothers and sisters to tell the bloody saga of Skole.

I am giving this indictment to Eliyahu Rothbard for publication after my death since I promised my Christian saviours not to publicize the acts of the Ukrainians.

Aaron Wilf

Chapter One

Skole 1939-1942

(An introduction to the diary, which was started in hiding)

1.9.1939 Germany has attacked Poland. By the time the Polish government managed to conscript the army, large parts of the country were occupied by the German forces. The Germans had spies in the senior officer corps of the Polish army as well as among the civilian population. They also had spies among the Ukrainians and the *Volksdeutsche* who had given them information about every location in the country, about the state of the army, the economy and society. Two days after the outbreak of war the government began to requisition vital supplies for the army, such as food and clothing. The supplies were put into special warehouses but the *Volksdeutsche* sabotaged everything and kept the advancing Germans informed by secret radio transmissions.

The Polish police began to collect finished hides for shoes for the army. They requisitioned 141 hides from me and gave me a receipt. I took the receipt and travelled to the tax office of the treasury department in Stryi.

I went to the tax office in Stryi to get what was due to me for the hides but it was closed and bombs were falling in the market. In Alner's house twenty people were killed when the house received a direct hit in this raid.

The army unit which was stationed in Stryi tried to get to Hungary by way of Skole while the Russian army was advancing along the Stryi-Stanislavov road. When the Polish unit arrived in Koniochow, 5km along the road to Skole, it was ambushed by four German tanks which charged out of the forest from the direction of Drohobycz.

The Polish general with four detachments managed to reach Skole while the rest of the force was forced to retreat to Stryi leaving three

hundred dead along the way. The Ukrainian villagers plundered the dead soldiers and even stripped them of the their clothing and boots.

In the nearby village of Sinevudzko, the Ukrainians fired on the Polish troops who retaliated by burning down some of the houses.

When the general arrived at the Hungarian border with what remained of his force, he ordered the soldiers to burn their weapons and gave them the choice of accompanying him into Hungary or returning to their homes. Seventy-five of them chose the latter course and returned to their homes by way of Drohobycz. In the village of Soput some of the soldiers were given a place to stay the night by one of the local farmers. He put them in his barn and when the soldiers had all fallen asleep the villagers set fire to the barn after locking it securely. The soldiers who tried to escape by jumping out of the windows were shot by the Ukrainians. In the village of Povok, near Skole, the Ukrainians murdered twelve unarmed soldiers. At the same time, Ukrainians from Skole led by Yesha Bolk went to the neighboring village of Sinevudzko and incited the villagers to plunder the Jews of Skole and kill them. When the plan became known to the Jews they organized self-defense groups and even appealed to the German troops to maintain order. Thus they were able to repel the mob who approached the town with empty sacks in their hands, to plunder and kill Jews and Poles.

The German troops stationed in Stryi were required by the Soviet army to leave the city in accordance with the Russo-German agreement.

After a few days of robbing, plundering and murdering Jews, the Germans retreated to Przemyśl and in their place came the Russians who immediately instituted a Communist regime.

The Ukrainian murderers joined the Jewish and Polish Communists and overnight became Communists and loyal servants to their Russian masters. They began to evict people from their houses and requisition goods in their shops. Valuable requisitioned goods were sent to Russia while the less valuable goods were taken by the Russians, leaving hardly anything for the local Communists, most of whom were Ukrainian collaborators. All this was done in the cause of "nationalizing the property of the Jewish capitalists", as they put it.

Commerce was totally forbidden and everybody was required to go out to work. Those who did not could not get identity cards. And anyone who did not have an identity card was considered to be an enemy of Russia and could be sent to forced labor in Siberia.

Salaries were hardly enough to buy dry bread and so everybody began to look for jobs from which one could bring home food or items which could be exchanged for food. At first everything was fine, but soon people began informing on each other and anybody who was found to have extra food or items of the kind which could be bartered was arrested and sentenced to five or ten years imprisonment and even exiled to Siberia.

Any expression of discontent with the regime had one punishment - Siberia. Workers soon began to complain about the living conditions which were even worse than under the Polish regime, but they were afraid to voice their complaints publicly.

Late arrival at work, even a half an hour, was punished by two years' imprisonment and the doctor did not even consider a high temperature to be a sufficient excuse to stay away from work. As an expert in hides and furs, I received a special permit and began to work in this field. In Russia of 1939/40 there were two kinds of prices: 1. The official price according to which the ruble was valued at 20 cents; and 2. the unofficial price which was dependent on the possibility of export (in itself illegal), according to which the value was from 50 to 300 times lower. The second alternative was dangerous, since illegal commerce was considered a serious crime akin to forging money.

When the Russians entered Poland they nationalized all the large factories and their directors had to stay on as workers in their own plants under supervision of Russian commissars. After a time they were fired and some were even sent to Siberia. Others managed to go into hiding.

I managed to avoid such a fate immediately by getting rid of my stock. I began to work as a furrier together with another four and in partnership with a hundred cobblers, a hundred men's tailors and a hundred women's tailors in a cooperative called "Artil Kirova". I felt much more free. We repaired furs for the military and although the pay was not good, three-quarters of the time allotted by the authorities for

the work was in fact free time and the workers were able to work for themselves.

Every month I received from the army about five hundred furs to repair. Ten to fifteen of the furs were of low quality and were meant to be used for preparing the good furs. However, we managed to do the job with one or two furs and we reworked the remainder and for them we got flour, potatoes, butter and eggs, and somehow managed to eke out a living.

You should know that rubles could not buy anything. During this period my brother worked with the Russians as a tanner and I supported him since he could not live on his salary.

I travelled to Bolechow and bought finished hides from former tanners; the Russian commissars allowed them to secretly take some hides from the tannery in recognition of their loyal services. I sold these hides in Lvov and Stryi. I made a good profit as long as I was not caught. When I was caught I had to share the goods with the policeman who caught me and I was lucky to get away with that.

Once, in a village near Stryi, they confiscated thirty hides from me. The policeman refused to give them back and was determined to hand me over to the authorities. What did I do? I rushed to Kulik, the police commandant in Stryi. I got there just as he was giving a talk to the policemen of the Stryi area, ordering them to crack down on private commerce, to confiscate the goods and bring them to him, after filing charges against the merchants. He, so he said, would punish them as severely as the law allowed.

I had nothing to lose, so immediately after this gathering I approached him and told him that they had taken thirty hides from me. I asked him not to punish me.

He reacted by laughing out loud and ordered me to make him a fur coat which, according to my judgement, would be worth not more than two hides. I promised to make him such a coat and he gave me a note to the policeman who had confiscated my hides in which he ordered him to return the hides at once. I got my goods back and I sent the commandant the fur coat he wanted soon after.

One day a Russian Jew from Kiev, named Lifshitz, came to see me. He was the inspector of trade in hides and furs in Stryi, and he insisted

that I stop buying sheepskins in order to make furs, since it hindered his work. He threatened to hand me over to the authorities unless I made him a leather coat and boots. I promised to do so within a month. However, when he came to collect the coat, he did not like it since it was deerskin and he had wanted a black box-leather coat, which the furriers were unable to make. I could not provide such a coat. I invited him home and over a bottle of good liquor and cookies I begged him to leave me alone and I would do all I could to satisfy him but it would take some time.

My entreaties were to no avail. He absolutely refused and threatened to inform on me immediately particularly since he knew that I had buried American dollars in a bottle. I became so enraged that I picked up a chair to hit him. He left and, as he had threatened, entered a complaint against me with the prosecutor. Together with another furrier I appeared before the prosecutor and he asked me whether it was true that we made furs for the peasants, and how many hides did we take from every peasant to make him one fur. When I told him that we took four hides, the prosecutor remarked that that was not enough and that we should take eight skins so that we would have enough left over to make furs for him and others like him. I got the hint. I made him a fur coat and everything was straightened out.

The Jews of Western Poland are Expelled to Siberia

One Saturday morning the Russians gathered more than two hundred thousand Jewish citizens who had fled from the German-occupied territories into the Russian zone but had not taken out Russian identity cards. They loaded them like salted fish onto trucks, transported them to the railway station and from there by special trains to Siberia. (Among the expellees were also Jews from Eastern Europe who were, according to the Russians, "disloyal".)

On the 21st of Kislev 5700 (December 3, 1939) my father passed away.

Before he died, he told us, his sons, "Children, you do not like the Russians? Be aware that the Russians only take our belongings, but Hit-

ler takes our lives. So be content. You can always acquire more belongings as long as you are alive."

I collected skins of all sorts of animals - otters and martens, among others - cheaply and hid them for after the war when they would be worth ten times as much as I paid. I took great care in this because at every turn lurked the danger of imprisonment and expulsion to the coal mines in the Siberian forests.

Russian officials did everything they could to increase the numbers of those sent for forced labor, because it improved their prospects for promotion. If an official could not produce the required number of deportees he himself could face deportation. Each official had to meet a quota. If he exceeded it he was a considered a Stakhanovite and decorated with medals. All the officials were supervised by the Party. If one dressed better than the rest or exhibited a higher standard of living, he became suspect immediately and was put under surveillance. It did not take long until he was arrested. His claim that he made his money under the Polish regime would not help him, since it proved that already then he was a capitalist and as such he was not welcome in Communist society.

Germany Attacks Russia

On June 22 1941 the Germans attacked Russia. The Russians retreated and took with them everything they could.

A few days later the Hungarians also declared war and invaded our area. About two hundred Jews from Skole joined the retreating Russians. Some of them returned within a few days; others were killed in German air attacks on the way, but most of them succeeded in reaching Russia.

The Hungarian army conquered the area of the Carpathian Mountains, including Skole. The soldiers looted and beat people but only rarely murdered. One day a major came to see me in his car and demanded the keys to my warehouse. When I gave them to him, he opened the warehouse, looked around and locked it again, and took me away for questioning at army headquarters. He wanted to know

where I - and the other Jews - had hidden our goods, which he had not succeeded in locating. I explained to him that the Russian, on their arrival, had confiscated our houses, our warehouses and our goods. They had sold our goods in their shops and they had been snatched up. What they had not sold, they had taken with them when they left. Besides this I had no knowledge whatsoever of hidden warehouses.

In reaction to my explanation they stood me on a chair and tied a length of electric wire around my neck with the other end attached to a ceiling beam. They warned me that if I did not reveal where the Jews had hidden their goods within five minutes, they would remove the chair and leave me to hang. When I saw that they were not joking, I asked them to untie me and told them that I knew where there were stores of skins. When they untied me I told them the location of such a warehouse the Russians had left. They went there but soon returned and beat me severely saying that they had known of that warehouse already yesterday and that I was to tell them of warehouses they did not know. They beat me until I lost consciousness and when I came to I found myself wallowing in mud in the courtyard. From there I crawled home.

On the following day they loaded everything in my warehouse on a truck and took it away.

The Ukrainians Begin to Kill Jews

As soon as the Russians withdrew the Ukrainians began murdering Jews in the neighboring villages and in the town itself. They kidnapped Jews, locked them up and killed them at night in the cruelest ways imaginable. They buried what remained of the bodies and nobody knows where they are buried.

Appeals to the Hungarian officers did not help because the Ukrainians told them that the Jews were Communists. When, finally, the Hungarians were convinced that the Jews were not - and had never been - Communists, it was too late, because most were already dead. The village Jews who survived abandoned their homes and their belongings and fled to the town.

In the town hunger reigned and became more intense from day to

day; even if you had money you could not buy food. For a suit of clothes you could get between 5 and 10kg of oats. Jews died of hunger in the streets, about fifteen a day. We could not help them at all and most returned to their villages even though they knew what awaited them there.

Out of hundreds of Christian friends, with whom I had had business relations and to many of whom I had paid in advance for goods and thus enabled them to buy fields and build houses, only three from time to time gave me some corn or potatoes which I shared with my brother.

These three Christians did not owe me anything, whereas the others wanted to see me dead so that they would not have to repay the money they owed me from before the war.

After two months the Hungarians left and the Germans came: ten to fifteen policemen, a similar number of border-police, two railway supervisors, a few postal officials and others in the fields of commerce and industry. To these you should add the Gestapo officers who visited the town from time to time from Drohobycz. One day a Ukrainian who dealt in raw skins came to see me and my brother. He told us that all the Jews would be taken away for forced labor under German supervision and that they would be lucky to stay alive. The Ukrainian therefore suggested that I and ten other Jews work with him as buyers of skins and that he would even get official permits for us from the district governor which would exempt us from forced labor by the Germans. To do this he wanted one hundred dollars from each of us.

We got the promised permits in exchange for the valuables and dollars we gave him. Both my brother and I really did work at tanning the skins but neither of us received any payment for the work or for the skins.

The Establishment of the *Judenrat*

The German police ordered Dr. Rares to establish a *Judenrat*, i.e., a council of Jews to implement all the demands of the authorities regarding the Jewish community. Dr. Rares convened a meeting of ten Jews and they set up the required council with the Rabbi as chairman and four members. They also established a Jewish militia of ten to fifteen

men. German demands increased from day to day. They imposed heavy taxes and all Jews above the age of fourteen were required to work. Work was not lacking since the Russians, as they withdrew, had destroyed the power station and the railway bridges as well as other facilities. However, the workers did not receive any wages - not even a piece of dry bread, but they were consistently beaten brutally and occasionally even thrown off the bridge into the river. If a worker survived the drowning, he was beaten to death with hammer blows to the head as he tried to emerge from the water. In the mines they also acted this way. Jews were thrown down from heights of a hundred meters. Four Jews - Reinhartz, Sigolim, Luks and Teicher - came late to work one day and they were forced to dig a pit and lie in it to be buried alive. In the villages Ukrainians raped three Jewish girls and then hung them up by the heels. They lit a bonfire under them and burned them alive. In one village - Rozhanka Vizhna - they took a young Jew and his two-year-old son, cut open their stomachs and stuffed them with salt.

The Murder of the Village Jews

In the village called Sinevudzko Ukrainians loaded about a hundred Jews onto waggons, telling them that they were being taken to Stryi and that they should take their most valuable belongings with them, because they would not be returning. The Jews did as they were told and they were taken approximately 3km from town to the forest where they were shot that evening. The following day they came to collect the bodies and bury them. Among the victims were babies still clinging to the nipples of their mothers. In Trochenov 40 Jews were butchered with knives and their houses burnt to the ground. In Wolosianka they gathered all the young Jews and took them to the forest where they were all shot to death. The remaining Jews were driven out of the village. In Klimiec the Germans killed all seventy of its Jews.

Thus, at the start of the German occupation some 75% of the village Jews were murdered. In town, all males between the ages of fourteen and sixty were conscripted for work. Children tried to look older than fourteen and the old people tried to look younger than sixty in order to be sent to work and not have to move to the ghetto, from which trans-

ports were being sent to the extermination camps. In other towns they killed all the Jews for whom they could not find work.

A few weeks later the Ukrainian from Bolechow who had supplied us with the work permits, appeared again. He took all the skins without paying for them and demanded payment for the permits he had gotten us which enabled us to work as independents without German supervision. My brother and I paid him, but he took away the permits from the other Jews. Despite the payment, he took the keys of the warehouse from us and gave them to a young Ukrainian called Bohdan Norechko. He told us to obey the young man's orders and even demanded that we teach him the trade. He told Norechko to learn the trade quickly because we would not last much longer and he, Norechko, would get the house and the warehouse.

Within a few days our supply of food ran out and, despite the danger involved, I was forced to travel to Stryi to buy provisions notwithstanding the fact that Jews were forbidden to travel on the main road. Every Jew had to wear a white band on his sleeve with a Magen David of 10cm. on it. Any Jew caught without this Jewish badge was shot on the spot. The following day at dawn I travelled by truck to Stryi, a distance of 37km. I bought some rye at a dollar a kilo and some potatoes at 35 cents a kilo. I had some fox furs in Stryi from before the war and I now took them back home with me. When I arrived back in Skole that night, a Ukrainian policeman, a collaborator, stopped me and took me and the truck to the police station. On the way I threw out the furs because Jews were not allowed to have any furs. By good fortune I met a Ukrainian I knew at the station and after he relieved me of some of my purchases he let me go.

Three days later two Ukrainian policemen came and claimed that the truck had contained saccharin and gold and that unless I gave them a large sum of money they would arrest me. All my entreaties and objections were to no avail and they did indeed arrest me. I was kept in custody for a day and both I and my wife, who came to beg for my release, were severely beaten. After we bribed the policemen, Shilov and Szcherba, with a large sum of money, in addition to the skins and the furs and shoes and liquor, they let me go.

Both Germans and Ukrainians used to come to the *Judenrat* every day

demanding various things, such as textiles, skins, silver cutlery, cigarettes, furniture, tools and suchlike. Everything had to be supplied immediately. The *Judenrat* imposed taxes on the Jews; they brought silver, gold and valuables in order to satisfy the demands of the Germans and the Ukrainians.

The authorities issued a decree that no Jew was allowed to have even one fur coat and that all furs were to be brought to the *Judenrat* where the German police would collect them for transfer to Stryi. The Jews obeyed even this decree and only a few deposited their furs for safe keeping with Christian acquaintances. I handed over two furs and several hides to the Germans; I burned two furs and I gave the most valuable furs to my Christian friends, Topolnicki, a school-teacher, and Demovsky, both of them Ukrainian. (Previously, I had hidden hundreds of pelts of martens, skunks, silver-foxes, red-foxes and otters.)

I was called to the *Judenrat* to sort and pack the furs which had been collected. Some I tore and burned and some I took away and hid. The packed furs were handed over to the authorities as required.

However, the Germans were not satisfied with this. From time to time German and Ukrainian policemen would go to Jewish homes and take everything they could lay their hands on. In my case, for instance, on one occasion they took a kitchen cabinet and on another they took a sofa, as well as two bottles of wine. Once Germans entered the home of Zlata Meller, who had owned the largest clothing store in town before the war, and stole whatever they found - suits, hats and shoes among other items. Zlata's daughter, who lived above her mother on the second floor, saw what was happening and when she happened to see my nine-year old son she asked him to call over her own eleven-year old boy who was standing nearby. When her son came she took off from around her neck a small bundle, threw it to the boys who were standing under the window and told them to run away immediately. The boys did as they were told, but one of the Germans in the vicinity saw it all and began to shout and chase the boys. They got away. The Germans stole from Zlata and her daughter, Yetta Rozen, everything they wanted and then went to the *Judenrat* and told them about the boys who had run away. They threatened that if the children were not delivered to them within the hour they would call in the Gestapo from

Drohobycz who would kill all the Jews. The chairman of the *Judenrat*, Dr. Rares, immediately sent a few Jewish policemen to bring the boys in. They came to question me and I told them that I knew nothing about the episode. However, I had seen the boys running away and my son had shouted, "Daddy! Lock up the house and flee!" As to their location at present, they might be at my brother's or with the Rozen family. The policemen found the boys and handed them over to the Germans. The children said that they did not know anything about a bundle and that they had run away simply out of fear of the Germans. I was called to try and persuade my son to reveal where the bundle was. I pleaded with him that because of a few rings and some dollars which were apparently in the bundle they were endangering the whole community, but my son said, "No, Father! I will not tell! Anyway both of us will be killed, but perhaps the mother and her daughter can save themselves by using what's in the bundle!" I did not succeed in persuading them and they would not tell me who they had given the bundle to.

The Germans, after a consultation among themselves, decided to release the boys. Later on, my son told me that they had hidden the bundle in a heap of firewood at the house of Rozen's brother, Gedaliah.

Jews Begin to Hide

Many Jews in Skole began to dig bunkers and prepare various kinds of hiding places for themselves. Similarly they laid in stores of food for a long period as news filtered in that the situation was deteriorating rapidly in other towns. There they were grabbing thousands of Jews, cramming them into freight trains in airless waggons and taking them off in an unknown direction without food or water. Many were shot to death. Ukrainians acquaintances are promising to hide Jews in return for all their belongings. Rich Jews are handing over their most valuable possessions in accordance with these promises. In Podhorez the Germans confiscated raw hides from a Christian who had taken them from a Jew; they brought them to me demanding payment and told me that after I had tanned them I had to hand them over to the authorities. When I did this one of the policemen complained to his commanding officer that I bought them for too cheap a price. I argued that I made no

profit on the deal and that I had paid the official price. The commander reprimanded the policeman to his face and told me to go on with what I was doing because anyway I would not last much longer. To this I answered that no man knows what is in store for him tomorrow, and I left. Norechko is causing us trouble. He took the salt which was allocated to us for tanning, sold it and pocketed the proceeds.

To try to get some grain I went to my acquaintance Banklovicz in the village of Plave. For a bear-skin fur and some tanned hides I got some rye and potatoes and he brought them to me in his waggon. On the way some Ukrainian policemen stopped him and when they saw what was in the waggon they wanted to arrest him for helping Jews to survive by supplying them with food. They told him that Jews should be used to fertilize the fields. It was only with difficulty that he came away alive.

The First *Aktion*

In my house I prepared hiding places in case the Germans came to conduct a search. The result of such searches was that Jews were sent in freight trains to an unknown destination - some say to forced labor, others, to death. Some people say that the Jews who are working for the Germans in vital jobs are in no danger.

All these rumours which come from other towns and cities are making life unbearable for most Jews. The Germans, so we hear, have reached Stalingrad on the Volga. We have no more food or belongings and the Christians are eyeing whatever we still have left. Even the few good ones are frightened to help us in any way because of the younger ones who are collaborating with the Germans. Whenever a Jew is taken from his house it is immediately occupied by a Christian.

I turned to my best friend, the teacher Topolnicki, who is the son of a priest and a rich man, and asked him to hide me and my family in his cellar. I suggested that he build a wall in one of his cellars in place of the door and leave a small opening so that it could easily be opened and closed. In return I was prepared to pay him one hundred dollars a month. Topolnicki agreed and told me to move everything in my house to his large house and should there be any danger of Jews being grabbed, to run to him with my family to the hiding place in the cellar.

I did as he said and transferred everything I had hidden until then. He hid what I brought in his barn in which he had built a double wall. I also put in a supply of food for a few months.

2.9.1942 In the late afternoon of Wednesday I saw Yosele, the Rabbi's son who serves in the Jewish police, standing near my house and I asked him what was going on. He told me that the Gestapo with German and Ukrainian soldiers had just arrived headed for the neighboring villages where they would collect all the Jews. Soon, he said, an *Aktion* would begin in town. When I heard this I sent my son to inform my brother, my brother-in-law and others. I took two loaves of bread and with my wife and two children I hurried over to Topolnicki's as we had agreed. Other Jews also ran there; altogether we were thirty souls, not at all poor who had brought all their valuables with them. We all laid down quietly in the barn and outside, too, silence reigned. At exactly midnight we heard shooting and the noise of doors and windows being smashed open from all directions. Following this din we heard the weeping and wailing of women and children. It went on all night and things quietened down only towards dawn. It was quiet all day long

In the evening we heard that they were taking a whole transport of Jews who had been caught in the *Aktion* and that Christians had broken into the deserted houses and taken everything they could lay their hands on.

Mrs. Topolnicki came and told us what had happened: Yesterday, in the evening, about eighty trucks had arrived filled with Gestapo men, German soldiers and Ukrainian policemen. Some of them went directly to the neighboring villages where they rounded up all the Jews. The others surrounded the town on all sides to prevent Jews from escaping. In accordance with a plan previously worked out by the Germans and Dr. Rares, the head of the *Judenrat*, units were created of two Germans, one Ukrainian and one Jewish policeman who was forced to accompany them and point out the dwellings of the Jews who were on the lists they had. These units went from house to house and forced the Jews out. Those who tried to escape - as well as the aged and infirm who could not stay up with the marching pace - were shot to death on the spot. There are a lot of dead in the town. About two thousand Jews

were gathered in the courtyard of the courthouse and it was not allowed to give them water the whole day. Afterwards they were marched - in rows of fives, in groups of one hundred - to the railway station where they were put into the twenty waiting freight cars and taken to an unknown destination.

We heard the noise of the passing trucks and the German soldiers singings as they left the town. The Ukrainians roamed all over looting Jewish homes at will.

We lay in our hiding place all night and in the morning Topolnicki brought us hot tea and told us that Jews were already out on the streets and nobody was harming them. The Germans had left the town after the transport departed. He suggested that any one who wanted could go out for a while. I looked through the cracks in the wall of the barn attic and saw one of my best acquaintances who used to sell me fur skins. I had always been accustomed to paying him up front and so he had been able to build himself a house. Now he was walking around my house calling out, "Wilf!". However, he did not enter the house. I went down to him and asked him, "What do you want, Mykhailo Svystun?", to which he answered, "I don't want anything. Thank God you're alive." He went on, "Wilf, don't trust anybody who promises to help you and your family. If you really want to be saved come to me together with your household. I will save you. I have a place to hide you.." I answered him, "I am frightened of you. You have a violent temper. I remember how you fought with your cousin Aleksei and chopped off his hand with an axe. How can you save me?" "Well, if you don't believe me, what can I do? I want you to know that I want you to stay alive," he said and left.

Jews came to me and told me that the bodies of one hundred and three Jews who had been shot by the Germans were lying in the streets and that we had to bury them. I went with them and helped to dig the graves. Among the bodies were more than thirty from the village of Smoże, already in the cemetery. They had been brought to Skole in a truck but arrived too late to be put on the train. So the Germans took them to the cemetery and shot them there.

We buried the bodies in three layers, one on top of the other with a layer of soil in between. Among them were the bodies of two infants

who had been suffocated by their mothers so that their cries would not give away their hiding place to the Germans.

There were also the bodies of young men and women who had been shot while trying to escape. We also found Jews lying dead near Christian houses. The Christians had taken the Jews into their houses ostensibly to save them, but had robbed them and then handed them over to the Germans.

5.9.1942 Saturday. A group of Jews arrived in town, beaten and wounded. They were in the transport of Thursday, 3.9.42, and told us their story. On Wednesday, about midnight, they and their families had been taken by the Germans from their hiding places and brought to the courtyard of the courthouse, where they were kept all day without being allowed to approach the well to get water. On Thursday evening they were marched in groups of one hundred under heavy guard to the railway station and loaded, being beaten all the time, into freight cars with a capacity of ten tons. A hundred Jews were crammed into each car and all openings in the walls of the car were sealed. Anyone who tried to open the vents had his fingers chopped off.

In two of the cars were men who had strong knives and when the train started off and they saw that people were being suffocated to death from lack of air, they cut through the wooden doors of the car near the locks. When they succeeded in opening the doors they jumped out of the cars. This was about 15km from Skole. More than half were killed when they jumped - they landed on the rocks and the railway tracks or hit telegraph poles. The badly injured were left where they lay and the lucky survivors began to make their way back to Skole, some along the railway tracks and others, about forty persons, through the forest. At the next railway station the Germans saw the broken-open freight cars and immediately informed the police by telephone. Policemen were sent out along the railway tracks and shot every Jew they caught, including the badly injured. The forty who came through the forest were enraged at Dr. Rares, the chairman of the *Judenrat* for agreeing to send Jewish policemen with the Germans

to help them find the Jews on the lists they had. The rich Jews of the city who made contributions to the *Judenrat* were not on these lists.

Work Permits

That was the situation at the "First Wedding", as the Poles called it. After the *Aktion* a decree was issued that all Jews between the ages of fourteen and sixty had to take out work permits from the Jewish Labor Department. The work permits were numbered and the number also had to appear on the armband with the Magen David. The work permit, which specified the place of work of the holder, had to be authorized by the district police of the SS in Drohobycz.

Every month the permit had to be stamped to the effect that the holder was still needed at his place of work and any Jew who did not have such a permit was required to leave Skole and go to the ghetto in Stryi. Processing the work permits was the responsibility of the Jewish Council in Skole. The Council imposed new taxes on the Jews on the grounds that the money was needed to bribe the Germans. They said that from now everything would be alright, because the Germans needed the Jews to work for them.

Children under fourteen years of age and the elderly over sixty could not get permits and had to go to the Stryi ghetto from which transports of Jews were sent periodically. I registered my thirteen-year old daughter as being fourteen years of age and for her and my wife I arranged work in the forestry department, planting trees. I did not know for how long I would be able to conceal my ten-year old son.

Getting a work permit cost a lot of money. I even had to pay the supervisor of forestry work, my acquaintance Bernduck, because my wife never went to work in the forest and my daughter only went to work a few times but did not actually do any work.

Confrontation with the *Judenrat*

When the next taxes were declared I was required to pay the *Judenrat* fifty dollars and two gold coins. I paid as required and then they demanded more - another hundred dollars. I realized there was no point

in paying the tax, so I refused. Jewish policemen came every day and confiscated various items.

One day I was called to Dr. Rares at the *Judenrat* office and he warned me that if I did not pay the hundred dollars he would imprison me in the cellar of the Council. I answered that I did not have the wherewithal and that he should not make me an example to others. I also castigated him for handing over two thousand Jews to the Germans, whereas, as far as I had heard, they had demanded only one thousand five hundred. I also asked him by what authority and according to what criteria had he chosen who was to be put on the list. His answer was that anybody who could pay the tax, could also afford to pay a dollar for a kilo of oats and so had a chance of surviving, whereas those who could not afford to pay the tax, could not afford to buy food and would not be able to hold out for long. Therefore, he had first sent the poor. My reaction to this was that the Germans are after all the Jews without exception, including him. For the moment they were leaving their helpers alone, but later his turn would also come.

We continued to quarrel until he called two Jewish policemen and ordered them to arrest me. I grabbed a stick and shouted to them, "I'll break open the skull of anybody who dares lay a hand on me!" At exactly that moment the Rabbi, Berish Landman and Berl Kruger came into the room and they persuaded him to leave me alone - by being nice to me he'd get more. He let me go, but the following day Jewish policemen came and took everything they wanted from my house. People told me that Dr. Rares had said that if I angered him again he'd see to it that I and my family would be the first on the next list he would give the Germans. When I heard this I became very careful and at night went to sleep at Topolnicki's, but during the day I had to go to work.

Mykhailo Svystun, who I mentioned before, came to see me again to try to persuade me to go into hiding with my family at his place. He said that since he lived in the forest outside the village, his place would be safer than any Christian house in town.

He told me that he remembered how, thirty years ago when he was a child, he had come to me in town with his grandfather Vasil to sell me furs and that we had received them graciously and even given him presents. Also when he grew up, he used to bring me his goods and he

felt more at home in my house than he did in his own. When he got married, he could not live with his wife's parents, so he had come to me for an advance payment on his goods so that he could build a house for himself. Besides me, nobody would lend him even ten dollars, because he was penniless, but I had loaned him three hundred dollars. Within a few years he finished building his house and also repaid the loan in instalments. Therefore, he said, he wanted me to stay alive because he would also need my help in the future. That's why he suggested that we come to him to hide.

I remained unconvinced. I did not trust this man, even though he was the only one among all my acquaintances who offered to help. I decided to rely on Topolnicki. I told Mykhailo that I would think about it, but he warned me and said, "Make sure it's not too late."

The Second *Aktion*

18.10.1942 On Sunday at noon three Gestapo men arrived in town from Stryi. They went first to the German police and then to the *Judenrat* where they demanded that Dr. Rares send out the Jewish police to round up five hundred Jews who were needed to fill the quota of five thousand Jews for the *Aktion* in Stryi, which had been going on for three days.

When Dr. Rares answered that all the Jews were at work and could not be rounded up immediately, they grabbed him and banged his head against the wall until he lost consciousness and then they shot him. They called the warehouseman, Shmuel Mehler, and demanded two liters of liquor. He brought them only one liter because he was afraid that if they drank too much they would become drunk and then the situation of the town's Jews would become even worse. The Germans also shot him dead.

After this they called in five Jewish policemen and ordered them to bring in Jews at once. If they did not, they would suffer the same fate as the chairman of the *Judenrat* and the warehouseman. In order to show them that they meant it seriously, they shot one of the policemen on the spot and the other four went off immediately to execute the order. The Germans took the keys from the dead warehouseman, went into the store-room and took everything they wanted.

At that time the Germans from Skole together with the Ukrainian policemen succeeded in rounding up some Jews. They ordered them to get to their knees in the center of the market. My wife and I wanted to get to Topolnicki's house but the house and the garden were surrounded, so we hurried back to our house and hid in the hiding place I had prepared on the top floor. From there I saw Topolnicki locking all the entrances to his house to prevent escapees from getting in. Before long some passers-by, neighbors, and my brother-in-law and his family arrived and altogether we were eighteen souls in the hidden room I had prepared. While we were cowering there the four Jewish policemen came to my house - the druggist Hirschdorfer, Nussbaum, Yehiel Rappaport and my best friend, Meyer Shalom Goldfischer. They broke open the locked doors and when they found us began to shout, "Get out here. Gestapo are at the main entrance and if you don't go out, they'll shoot us at once!" The women begged the policemen and hid the children in the bedclothes. I realized that there was no point in begging, so I took my son by the hand and moved him to a nearby room where I hid him under the bed so that the policemen would not notice him. I sent my wife and daughter to the attic, despite Goldfischer's cry not to go up, but to come down because they had work permits and would not be harmed. My daughter was frightened and came down and from my hiding place I saw the Germans taking away all of them, including my daughter. About ten minutes later she returned and told us that my son, whom I had hidden under the bed, had gone downstairs and ran after those who were being taken away, but that she had pushed him away and told him to run away, which he did together with his cousin, the son of my brother-in-law. Immediately, my daughter also ran away and here she was. The two children did not return and we were sure that they had been caught. My wife, my daughter and I were lying behind a double wall listening to the shooting and the voices of the Ukrainians looting Jewish property and I recognized Norechko's voice, the manager of my tannery, calling out my name. I was certain that if he discovered our hiding place he would hand us over at once, so I did not answer. He roamed through the rooms taking various things and transferring them to the skins' warehouse, whose keys he had taken from me previously. When it got dark, they started to remove furniture

from the house, while we lay, as still as the dead, so that we should not be revealed.

At midnight we heard light footsteps and our son's cries of despair, "Father's not here! Mother's not here! Where can I go!" I ran downstairs and I found my son Munyo and his cousin Benek. I took them to the hiding place - they told us that when they had run away from the Germans that afternoon, they had found a cupboard in a neighbor's house and hidden in it till now. Why did he get out from under the bed where I had hidden him? He thought that we were among the ones being taken away and wanted to join us! I told my family that we were like deer. If they shoot one, the others should not stand and weep, but must run away and escape. So we lay all night behind a double wall and next morning early we heard that one hundred and seventy-five Jews had been taken by truck to Stryi and from there by train together with the Jews of Stryi. Nine others were shot dead. Only the wife of Tirsh, a tailor who worked for the Germans, was freed. He intervened for her and one of the Germans freed her. She related that the thirteen-year old son of my brother-in-law had been cruelly beaten by the Germans on the truck until he lost his power of speech. Other children were beaten to death in the truck on the way to Stryi.

Since the Germans had not managed to round up the five hundred Jews they needed, we were afraid that they would return any minute. I turned to Topolnicki, to allow us to come in and he agreed.

The houses of the Jews who were taken in the first and second *Actions* were closed by order of the authorities and their furniture and belongings were put up for public sale. However, not all the really valuable belongings reached the sale, because Christians and German civilians broke into the locked houses and looted everything of value, which the Germans sent home.

Benek told me that they had hidden valuables in suitcases under a pile of firewood in the cellar of their house. I went there with him and we took the suitcases away and deposited them, together with my belongings from the barn, at Topolnicki's without even opening them.

On the Tuesday after the *Aktion,* from our hiding place in the attic of Topolnicki's barn, I saw Mykhailo again, walking around our house looking for me. I went down to him and he was very happy to see me.

He repeated that I should go to hide at his place. I asked him to come back in an hour and I would give him a definite answer. I went back to Topolnicki and from our conversation I understood that he was interested in our property, and not in saving us. So I went back to my house and when Mykhailo returned I explained to him that I had a bundle of hides worth between five and six thousand dollars and 375 dollars in cash as well as 6,000 zlotys (worth about 200 dollars) or 200kg of oats. I also had 150kg of oats, rye and flour. I told him that if he saved us I would give him, in addition to all this, one half of my house as well as other things and that he would certainly be satisfied.

Mykhailo answered that he did not covet my belongings and that all he wanted to do was to save us. He suggested that I deposit the skins with Topolnicki and bring with us to his place all the foodstuffs we could. He was going home to talk about the matter with his wife and brother-in-law and we must be ready on Saturday, 24.10.1942, when he would send his wife and sister-in-law to fetch my family. I should stay in town a few days longer to buy supplies. He would come with his horse and cart and slowly begin to transfer everything to his place.

Mykhailo told me not to tell anybody about this and from that I understood that he really did intend to save me. I promised to follow his instructions.

24.10.1942 And that is the way it was. On Saturday afternoon Mykhailo's wife and sister-in-law came and told us to prepare a little luggage for my wife and three children and in the evening they would go to the village Korostów, 5km from town, and about 6km from the dense forests of the Carpathians. Mykhailo's house is about 8km from town and he also has a summer house in the forest, 13km from town. In the evening my wife and children left the town and I accompanied them some of the way. When I got home, two Jews came and asked me what was going to happen that night, that I had sent my wife and children out of town for the night. I replied that I had not sent them away for the night but for an indefinite period and that I too was leaving soon, and that I did not know whether I would ever see Skole again.

On Sunday I was called to the *Judenrat* to see Dr. Rare's replacement, Eisenstein. I approached him as he was sitting by the table discussing

things with a few men. I leaned over him and asked, "Did you invite me? Here I am." He began to shout at me, "Look, gentlemen, how he talks to me! As though I was his buddy!" I immediately begged his pardon, went back to the door, from which I took 6 or 7 military steps towards him. I stood about two paces from him and saluted him as a soldier salutes his superior officer: "I humbly announce, Sir - Wilf has presented himself at your command!" They all started laughing and made fun of him for playing the great man. He asked me, "By whose permission did you take your brother-in-law's belongings? As you know, the belongings of transportees belong to the Germans or the *Judenrat*." I answered him, "I know the law as it was in peace time. If a child survives, it all belongs to him." What did he say to that? "The *Judenrat* will take care of the child." I then said to him, "Shut your dirty mouth!" At this they all burst out laughing again hearing me talk this way to a man everybody feared because of his connections with the Germans. He himself was stupefied by my effrontery and said, "Go home. I still have to decide what to do with you." I knew that I had nothing to fear from him as in a few days I would be leaving town.

Indeed, on Tuesday Mykhailo came and took the kitchen utensils, the bedclothes and other things and told me that my family were perfectly alright and that nobody had noticed their arrival.

On Thursday he came again and took flour, pasta, beans and other food. On Friday he came for the third time and took sugar, conserves, paraffin, candles, matches, clothes, shoes, textiles and blankets for his family and ours.

The Diary

Chapter Two

"The High Roof"

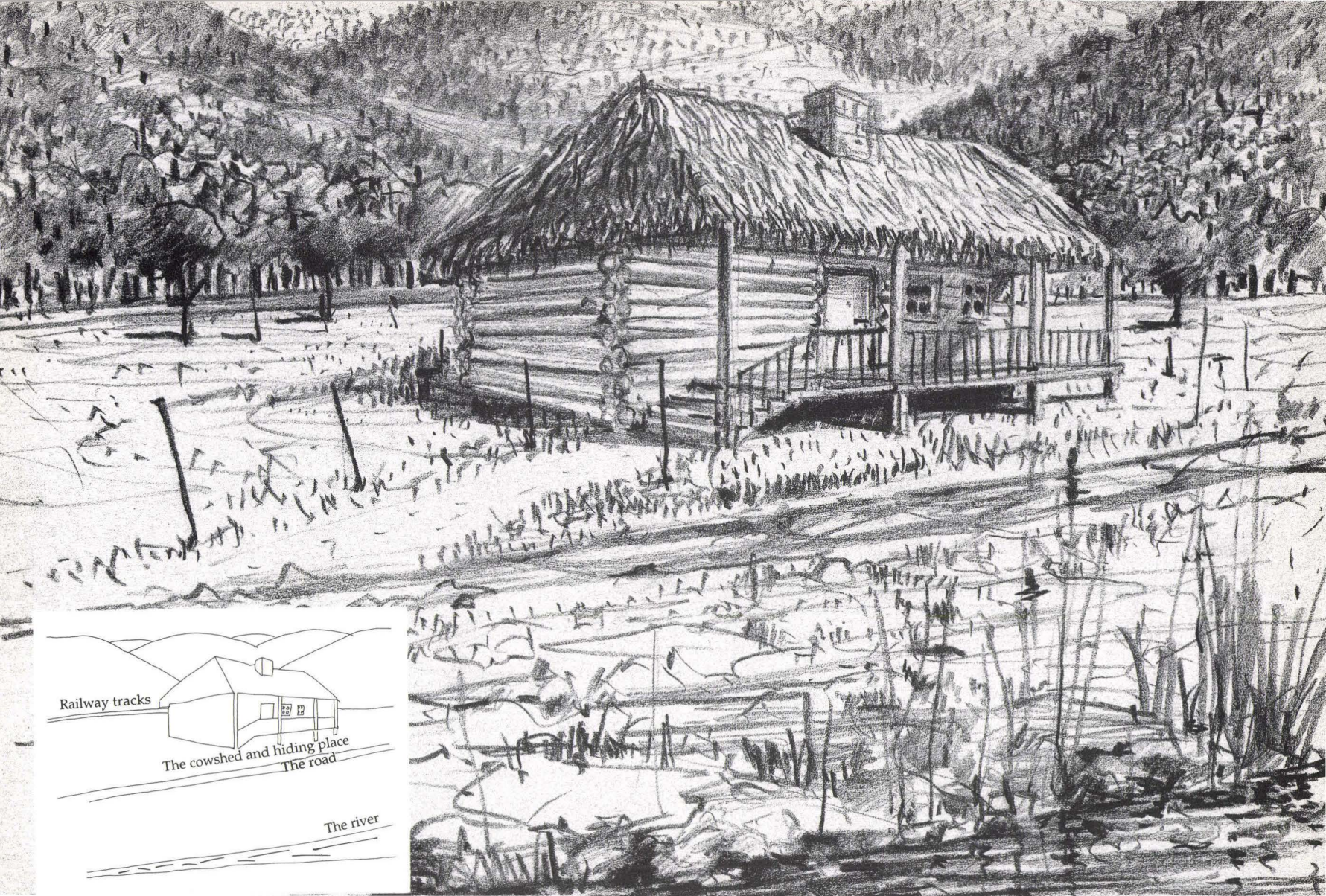
(In Hiding in the Attic of the Cowshed)

1.11.1942 On Saturday night I went to him. I found my family lying on a clay floor covered with straw, in a decrepit outhouse. The ramshackle building gave no indication that there were people in it; it seemed to contain only straw and chaff for the cows. The straw roof was broken but the cowshed itself had a whole roof and the two windows were stuffed with straw. The building was located 10m from the house and 8m from the road which was deserted for nearly all the time. About 30m to the west of the house passed a narrow-gauge railway track. People used to walk along the dry track rather than along the road which was muddy and strewn with stones.

They brought food for the cows three times a day and in the same pail brought food for my family - sometimes just dry food and sometimes cooked food. The railway line I mentioned came from Skole and went about 18km into the forest. The cars used to come empty, load up with logs and take them back to the sawmill in Skole.

On Monday morning I went back to Skole to prepare some things for Mykhailo. I told my brother where I was going to hide, while he was standing with Norechko loading skins from the warehouse onto two trucks to take to Stryi. I went to the truck and gave the keys of my house to Norechko saying, "Take the key so that you won't have to go at night to loot!" He answered, "I don't have time now because I have to go to Stryi, but when I come back I'll react to what you just said." He threw the keys back to me.

In the meantime the German authorities have issued a new decree. All Jews remaining in town must live at their place of work and those


Railway tracks
The cowshed and hiding place
The road
The river

who do not work must immediately move to the ghetto in Stryi. This new order caused a great deal of confusion among the Jews. I said goodbye to my acquaintances and told them that I was going to hide outside town. They were all jealous. Two families asked me to take them with me saying that they had sacks full of gold and dollars. I told them that if I could I would have taken my brother with me. "Wilf, if you stay alive, try to take vengeance on the Ukrainians who have done us more harm than the Germans!" At nightfall I went back to Mykhailo's. In the night he came and told me that in future I was not to go out of the door of the cowshed in case somebody noticed me.

A couple of days later Mykhailo went to Skole and my brother gave him the supplies I had prepared. When he returned he told me that at the orders of the Germans the Jewish police had rounded up a hundred and fifty Jews and taken them to Stryi.

27.11.1942 On Friday my brother together with his youngest son Meyer, aged twelve-and-one half years, came to Mykhailo's house in Korostów. Only Mykhailo's sister-in-law was home; he, his wife and twelve-year old son were working in the fields chopping hay. My brother asked Anna, the sister-in-law, whether he could see me because he wanted to leave his son with me. She would not allow it and so, having no choice, he wrote me a note and asked her to give it to me. She took the note to our hiding place and my brother watched where she went. The note said, "Dear brother, Take Meyer from me. Perhaps you'll be able to save at least him. Your brother, Alter." I was angry that my brother was endangering both us and Mykhailo's family so I wrote him back, "My dear brother Alter, Do not kill five people in the hope of saving another one. Go home with the child and, if you can, send the child here at night and not in daytime when no one will notice it."

My brother and his son returned to Skole on the road and I signalled him from the window of our hiding place. That night Mykhailo came very angry that I had broken my promise not to tell anybody where we were hiding - I had told my brother. He was frightened lest my brother's whole family would want to join us, because everybody wanted to save his own life. I calmed him down and told him that if my brother's family dared to come here, I, together with my family, would leave at

once, because I realized there was not enough space for us all and not enough food.

My Nephew Meyer Joins Us

On Sunday, at 6.30 a.m., Meyer knocked on the door of our hiding place. I opened for him and asked whether anyone had seen him. He told me that he had not been seen and that even if he had been, he was dressed like a poor village lad and nobody would have recognized him as a Jewish boy. I let him in and Mykhailo's wife, Polaha, immediately brought food when she came to milk the cows. She said that they were going to church and when they returned they would decide what to do with Meyer. They would listen to the local gossip at church and find out whether anyone had noticed my brother and his son when they came on Friday.

Meyer told us that the Germans had issued a new decree. Any Jew who did not have a badge stamped "R" or "RF", i.e., was not working for the German supply organization, must leave Skole by November 30 and move to the Stryi ghetto. That is why he had come. His mother and three sisters had gone into hiding with one of the foresters they knew. Only his fifteen-year old brother, Moshe, who worked in the sawmill, and his father who worked with the skins, had gotten the required tin badge with the letter "R" stamped on it and so were able to stay in Skole.

At night Mykhailo came and told us what he had heard from people at church. On Friday my brother had come and had gone from house to house asking if they had any skins for sale. One of the men had asked to see his permit to buy skins and he had shown him such a permit. My brother had asked about other villagers who were known to sell skins, including Mykhailo. From all this Mykhailo concluded that nobody suspected him of harboring Jews. Also, nobody had seen Meyer early that morning. Mykhailo had calmed down and was no longer angry at me.

12.12.1942 Mykhailo tells that he has heard of Jews who were found hiding in the forest and shot on the spot: eighteen in Skole, eighteen in Krasna, and others.

He also told me that somebody had told the Germans that many Jews are hiding in the forests of Korostów and he was scared that one day soon the Germans would come looking for Jews. Therefore, he advised us to lay still and not move around. From the things I had brought with me I gave him a lot of clothes and bedclothes as well as five dollars, which I gave him weekly for his services to us. He refused to accept it but I convinced him. I also gave him a document stating that if he succeeded in saving us I would give him one half of my holding in my oil-well at Borislaw, "Debrah No.1," and one half of my new house and warehouse which I had built in 1933. He also refused to take this, but in the end took it with a smile.

Rumor has it that in Skole there are about four hundred Jews left; working at the sawmill, in forestry work, road-laying, tailor shops, in the Jewish police, in textiles, at collecting skins and suchlike jobs. All of them are still allowed to live in their homes in Skole. Everybody else has moved to Stryi or is in hiding. Transports are being sent periodically from Stryi. The remaining Jews envy the dead.

14.12.1942 Mykhailo visited Skole and saw my brother. He told him that the political situation is very good and that they are hoping for a change any day now. His wife and children are in hiding with a huntsman not far from here. My brother himself is very careful and does not sleep at home. From this I assume that the huntsman is Kafka, with whom my brother was very friendly before the war.

16.12.1942 At night Mykhailo's wife came and told us to get into the attic because Germans had come in three cars and she did not know whether they were looking for Jews or had come to take Ukrainians for work in Germany. She also told us that they had caught seventy-five Jews in the forest at Korostów. Fifty of them were taken to Stryi, eight were shot and the rest had succeeded in escaping and had not yet been found. They also found a pit containing 1,700kg of corn, 100 kg of butter and other valuable things. The Germans confiscated the lot.

18.12.1942 Polaha, Mykhailo's wife, relates that some of the Jews who escaped were caught on Mt. Sokol and shot there. The Germans are planning to

mount a search in the Botivla forests soon where, as far as I know, my sister-in-law and her four children are hiding. I am at a loss and cannot warn them. This is how we live all the time, in fear in the face of death.

19.12.1942 Polaha informs us that the Jews who were in the forest were caught and shot. These were the richest Jews of Stryi and Skole. Apparently, the forester, Kisera, who is in charge of the forest in this area, handed them over to the Germans.

20.12.1942 A German policeman came to Botivla and asked the forester Kafka whether there were any Jews in the area. He conducted a superficial search and left.

21.12.1942 Mykhailo says that English and American troops have landed in Greece. I have not read any newspapers for a week now and the Germans are continuing their searches in the village while we crouch in the place, so frozen that we cannot move our legs. We are lying in the double roof of the cowshed in an area 3m by 2m, 70cm high. Naturally, it is impossible to stand up. On very cold nights we get some firewood for heating, but since there is no chimney, the smoke fills the space and penetrates our eyes. The smoke slowly seeps through a hole in the building. In the dead of night they take away the chamber pot and bring us a jug of clean water - the daily ration for six people.

Conditions are very hard. When it rains water drips in to the place we are crouching. The clay floor becomes a sticky swamp with mold covering everything, including us. We have got more lice on our heads than hairs.

I asked Mykhailo to go to town to buy a liter of liquor and bring us back news and verify the story of the American and English landing in Greece. He came back with 35kg of flour (he left another 25kg in Skole, meanwhile). He was entirely calm about the searches for Jews and allowed us to come down from the attic to our little room. He also brought German newspapers from which we learned that the Germans have retreated from the Don area according to plan.

24.12.1942 The lady of the house came and told us that a few Germans and

Ukrainians had come to Botivla on their way to the forests, apparently to hunt partizans. She ordered us to go up into the attic immediately. We did so.

25.12.1942 Through cracks in the thatched roof we can see Jewish men and women being led by the Ukrainian police from the forests to Skole. The son of our landlord tells us that in addition to those led, many were shot. My nephew, Meyer, bursts into tears, because as far as he knows, his mother and four sisters are hiding in that forest. I calm him down and tell him that those people were not hidden by the forester Kafka, as far as I know. Also, from the news Mykhailo brings me from my brother in Skole that with him everything is in order, I understand that his mother and her four daughters, Binstock's wife and her two children, Eliezer Hauptman's wife with her two children and Yekel's wife and her child are all hiding in one safe place, whereas those we had seen being led away were caught in another forest at the forester Suslenic's.

That night Mykhailo came in and told us that in the Botivla forests they had found a bunker with thirty-one Jews. Fourteen of them were shot to death and the other seventeen were sent to Skole. The Ukrainians took their most valuable possessions and gave the forestry workers the less valuable stuff as a reward for their help in discovering the fugitives. He also said that in the village people say that there are still a lot of Jews hiding in the Botivla forests and also that two Ukrainians fought each other over a pair of boots they removed from a dead Jew. Ninety-five percent of Ukrainians have their eye on Jewish possessions, which is why they collaborate with the Germans and help them in their searches. On Sunday in church, the priest preached that they should not behave that way and that they should not think that they would get rich from the possessions of the Jews, because black clouds were drawing near and they would have to abandon their own property. He was referring to the return of the Russians. This is the way he is preaching now, but in the first period when the Germans were advancing, he kept quiet and did not forbid looting and killing Jews. The discovery of the Jews in the forests has put Mykhailo in a bad mood.

30.12.1942 Mykhailo claims that the Ukrainian population is not happy with the Germans because they confiscate everything and impose heavy punishment for every little infringement. I told him that at the beginning of the occupation all the Ukrainians had been very satisfied and the priest had even offered prayers in the church for Hitler's welfare, because they all thought that he would give them an independent state. Now that they see that the Germans will not win the war and are taking their possessions because there are no Jews left to plunder, they are starting to complain.

31.12.1942 The lady of the house saw a Jewish girl at the home of the neighbor, Vasil Sauchin; she says that it was the daughter of Mrs. Trau from Skole. I asked her not to tell anyone, because it could also endanger us if they came to take her. I know this Vasil well and am sure that he took a very high price for taking the girl in and that he does not intend to save her at all.

In the evening our landlord brought German newspapers and we read that the Germans were accusing England of murdering Darlan.* In Italy they say that if it were not for Roosevelt the war would have been over already. The newspapers also say that the Russians are attacking on all fronts, but that the Germans are repelling them and inflicting great damage and heavy losses.

I made a reckoning with Mykhailo and paid him for the expenses he had incurred on our behalf for the last ten weeks; all in all 2,200 zlotys. I now have 3,800 zlotys left. What will happen now? The end of the war is not in sight and my possessions are dwindling. On the other hand, I am comforted by the fact that we are at the end of 1942 and I am still alive, with God's help, and that He will also help me in the future. When Mykhailo told me that my brother had given him 600 zlotys and that this sum would also be for our expenses, I told him to give that money to Anna. I gave him my mother's gold watch as a present.

* Admiral Darlan, the representative of the Vichy government in North Africa in World War II. He went over to the Americans before they landed in North Africa. He was murdered in September, 1942.

I gave him the 2,200 zlotys for the following items:

400kg potatoes	620 zlotys
60kg flour	795 zlotys
2.3kg butter	205 zlotys
1.3kg cheese	13 zlotys
5kg apples	40 zlotys
60ltr milk	200 zlotys
54.5ltr sour cream	163 zlotys
27ltr chicory	27 zlotys
2 batteries	14 zlotys
Tobacco	39 zlotys
Cigarette papers	6 zlotys
Garlic	59 zlotys
Sundries	17.40 zlotys
Total	2,198.90 zlotys

1.1.1943 Mykhailo told us that the Russians had conquered Kharkov and were rapidly advancing toward Kiev. In his opinion the Russians will be here very soon. He also told me that Ukrainian policemen in civilian clothes are making not very intensive searches in the village. They are now moving towards the Botivla forests to look for Jews there. He advised us to go into the attic. That night it snowed heavily and the snow came in through the broken roof and covered us. This did not make us unhappy in view of our joy at the defeats suffered by the Germans who had wanted to conquer the whole world in a lightning-war. I hope that soon I will be able to leave here with my family.

2.1.1943 At night Mykhailo told us that Ukrainian detectives are lodging at the house of the forester Suslenic of Rozhanka, who is known to be a murderer. He murdered all the Jews of Rozhanka as soon as the Germans arrived. He raped three girls and then hung them by their heels and burned them alive. Now, he has taken a few Jews in to hide them. Jews who were taken in by other Ukrainians were robbed of all they had, but their hosts could not bring themselves to kill them. So they handed them over to Suslenic who did it for them. It was he who invited the Germans and the Ukrainian police to his part of the forest to catch the

thirty-one Jews. The Germans hurried off to the Christmas celebrations and handed the Jews over to the Ukrainian police for transfer to Skole. The Ukrainians, led by Suslenic, killed fourteen of them on the road near Suslenic's house. They told the Germans that they shot those who tried to escape, but in fact they shot those they suspected of having money, gold and diamonds, which they did not want the Germans to take when the Jews were brought to Skole.

3.1.1943 Mykhailo came to us today angry and agitated saying that his wife was nagging him a lot because he had taken us in and that we had promised that the war would soon be over. Now we have been here for ten weeks and the end of the war is still not in sight. He is powerless, a state of affairs which gives me great concern and indescribable apprehension.

4.1.1943 Anna relates that the Ukrainian plain-clothes policeman returned today at noon to Skole. We came down from the attic and calmed down a bit. We gave the flour to bake bread. From the newspapers our landlord brought in the evening we learned that the Russians are attacking on all fronts, particularly the Caucasus front, but that the Germans are resisting. On the other hand, Mykhailo heard from his friend who heard Russian radio broadcasts, that the Russian army has broken through the lines at the Black Sea, 150km from Odessa. He also told us that a forester had telephoned the police in Skole two hours ago and reported seeing Jews in the forest between Botivla and Tisovitz. Now I am sure that that is the hiding place of my sister-in-law and her children and the other families under the protection of Kafka. I know - but what can I do?

5.1.1943 The lady of the house relates that thirty-five Jews came out of the forests of Hrebenov to the main road, 6km from Skole. They could no longer bear the hunger and waited for the police to come and take them away and kill them. They were indeed taken and shot on that very day. She also told us that her neighbor had told her yesterday that she had heard gossip in the village that she, the neighbor, had hidden Jews a few weeks earlier. In reaction she had invited the gossipers to

come and examine her open house, and had laughed in their faces. This story depressed me greatly. At night Mykhailo came and told us that in the morning we would have to return to the attic because he had heard that tomorrow at noon the police would come to arrest the neighbor. He did not know why. As a present for the festival I gave him some cloth to make kerchiefs.

6.1.1943 There is more snow in the attic than outside and so I did not go there. At 11 a.m. Mykhailo returned from work and sent us a message by his wife that 15 German policemen, some Ukrainian policeman and some Jewish policemen had come in the early morning to the forests of Botivla by train and he told us to hide. At 3 p.m. he informed us that we could already leave our hiding place, because the policemen had not discovered anything and left the village. In the evening Mykhailo brought us twenty-four dumplings, a roll and wine. He also brought a newspaper which contained Hitler's new-year's greetings to the German army and a promise that although 1943 would be a hard year, he was with them under all conditions.

7.1.1943 The son, Vasil, brought us six apples.

8.1.1943 Mykhailo said that tomorrow he is going to Skole and I gave him a letter for my brother.

9.1.1943 Mykhailo brought me a reply from my brother who writes that his wife and four children as well as the other three families - Binstock, Yekel and Hauptman - have returned to Skole. He also writes that in Stryi, Lemberg and Stanislavov the most horrendous *Actions* are under way. Jews who leave the ghetto are shot or transported to an unknown destination. My brother advises me to stay where I am at all costs because salvation will soon come. He also gives the names of the fourteen Jews who were shot in the Botivla forest on December 24; Leib Reinhartz, Copperberg and his bride, Haber, Zahler, Manis Wasserbach. Mykhailo says that my brother gave him his pocket watch.

10.1.1943 My wife tells me that last night she saw her dead brother in a dream

and he told her that on February 3 the war would end. I have to believe even this. Mykhailo says that the Russians have retaken Vieliki-Luki.

11.1.1943 Our landlady tells us that she has quarreled with Anna and that she left the house two days ago. Now it will be hard for her to look after us by herself because Anna had helped a lot. I am frightened lest she tells anybody about us.

It is very cold. The moon is full and we dare not light a fire to heat the room in case the neighbors see smoke coming from a building all believe to be derelict and uninhabited. Only after midnight do we allow ourselves to kindle the oven, because at that time there is no danger that the smoke will be seen. The water near the building has all frozen over and they have to bring water for us from afar.

12.1.1943 Our landlord tells us that the German manager of the sawmill in Skole telephoned the German manager of the forests, Breitfogel from Korostów, and informed him of the great victory of the Japanese who sank forty enemy ships. From this I understand that the Germans rejoice at Japanese victories because they themselves have already given up on winning. He also brought 1.25kg of butter. On the one hand I am happy because we finished our butter a long time ago. On the other hand, however, I think that butter is too great a luxury for us, because our money has run out and we cannot see an end to the war.

13.1.1943 Once again we read in the German paper which Mykhailo brought that the Germans admit that the Russians are attacking on all fronts and that they enjoy superiority in both men and materiel. But, so they write, the Germans are resisting. Mykhailo also told us that a lot of Jews have been shot in Stryi and that in Lvov they burned three thousand Jews in a hut.

14.1.1943 The Germans are in general retreat, according to Mykhailo.

15.1.1943 Anna has made up and returned to work. She brought us coffee and told us that the Germans are near their end and that is why they are in a hurry to kill the Jews. Tonight, Mykhailo brought me a letter from my

brother who writes that the war will end any minute. He also writes that Norechko is causing him a great deal of trouble and that he has taken away all the furniture and other things. About his wife and children he writes nothing. Mykhailo says that my brother gave him a liter of liquor.

16.1.1943 From the newspaper we learn that the Russians are advancing. It is very cold. Mykhailo told us to go up under the roof because Germans are coming to the village to conscript Ukrainians for work in Germany.

17.1.1943 The Germans did not come and we came down, frozen and hungry.

18.1.1943 We were allowed to kindle the stove with the wood Mykhailo brought us. He also brought 70kg of flour and 10kg of buck-wheat. I gave him 100 zlotys on account. My supplies have grown - 115kg of flour and 80kg of rye, which should last us until the end of May, God forbid that the war goes on that long.

19.1.1943 The Russians have surrounded a large German force and the Germans are trying to get the officers out by air.

20.1.1943 From German reports it seems that the Russians have broken through the Rostov line and that in spite of the bitter cold they are continuing to advance. The newspaper also writes of Berlin being bombed. Both news items mention severe losses in lives and property, including hospitals.

21.1.1943 No news.

22.1.1943 Once again - orders to hide. German and Ukrainian policemen have been seen in the village. The Russians continue to advance.

23.1.1943 Once again - we come down from the attic. The policemen have left. The Russians are close to Kharkov; the Russian government has been changed.

24.1.1943 Mykhailo relates that the manager of the forests says that the Russians are returning. The priest says that anybody who harmed the Jews will pay dearly for it and suffer severely.

Mykhailo's brother-in-law from Hrebenov, a follower of Stefan Bandera, the leader of Ukrainian gangs, who volunteered to serve in the German army, deserted and returned home. He says that the Russians are fighting courageously and they are attacking the Germans in forays from the forests. Fifty Germans are afraid to go into a forest, even if there are only two Russians in it. The civilian population is also inflicting very severe losses on the Germans, sometimes even more than the Russian army.

25.1.1943 Mykhailo told us to sleep in our clothes, in case we have to move from here, since Germans are expected to come to conscript Ukrainians for labor in Germany.

He says that the Germans are retreating in Africa. I do not think they are telling me the whole truth. They are careful in front of me.

26.1.1943 I gave Anna two new blouses as a wedding present. She is getting married the day after tomorrow. In the afternoon they gathered all the villagers by bugle call and ordered them to come to the local council house at five o'clock. Anna says that they most probably want to warn the villagers not to hide Jews, but when Mykhailo returned from the meeting he told us that the Germans are demanding a quota of animals and if they are not given willingly, a punishment unit will come and take more. From the newspaper we learn that the Russians are advancing and that the Germans are surrounded. The Germans have also retreated from Tripoli.

27.1.1943 From the newspapers: Germany has admitted its downfall by announcing that it is shortening its front lines.

28.1.1943 Anna's wedding. We are laying in absolute silence, out of fear that one of the guests might hear something. The German police today arrested two foresters - Suslenic and Zaliocho.

29.1.1943 Mykhailo: The Russians have reached the Polish-Lithuanian border and are continuing their advance. Yesterday two Jews and two Ukrainians who hid Jews were shot.

30.1.1943 From the German press: A large German army is surrounded. The Germans are continuing to retreat and shorten their lines. A state of emergency has been declared in places of work and nobody is allowed to leave. The Ukrainian newspaper of Lvov praises Hitler's achievements on the tenth anniversary of his rise to power: He freed Germany from the Jews; he gave work to six million unemployed Germans; he dismantled the political parties and left only the National-Socialist party; he exterminated Communists, Jews and other enemies and ruled over all Europe. The Ukrainians are required to maintain close links with Hitler's ideology. Then they, together with the Germans, will be happy and enjoy a wonderful future.

31.1.1943 Mykhailo: Sixty Jews were discovered in Skole in a hiding place near my house.

1.2.1943 Elko, Mykhailo's brother-in-law, relates: In Slavsk, near Skole, they caught Jews in hiding. According to the news, the Germans are still in retreat because of the heavy battles on the fronts. I have 2,400 zlotys left after I paid Mykhailo 1,397.50 zlotys. For 75kg of potatoes he refused to take money. To my question as to whether all the trouble we had taken was not in vain, he answered, "If I live, so will you."

Details of the sum of money I paid:

Flour: 70kg @ 14 zlotys	980 zlotys
Buck-wheat: 12kg	72 zlotys
Butter: 1.5kg	200 zlotys
Milk: 3.5ltr	100 zlotys
Tobacco: 2 packages	9 zlotys
Potash (Soda)	1.5 zlotys
Fruit	15 zlotys
Total	1,397.5 zlotys

2.2.1943 No news.

3.2.1943 From Hitler's speech and from news items in the German press one can expect a revolution in Germany any minute.

4.2.1943 Many Gestapo men have arrived in Skole. A large German force has come to Lvov.

9.2.1943 I did not write until today because we were laying terrified in the attic and I did not feel well. Yesterday, the lady of the house was in Skole and brought me a letter from my brother. He writes that he is sitting in Skole as though on burning coals. The situation could not be worse. He did not receive an "R" or "F" permit. Last week eleven Jews were shot in Skole. In my opinion he has nothing to write about his wife and children. I doubt whether they are alive. As far as the two foresters I wrote about on 28.1 who were arrested, are concerned, Mykhailo tells me that they were arrested because they shot fourteen of the thirty-one Jews who were caught in the Botivla forests instead of bringing them to Skole, and themselves took their possessions instead of handing them over to the Germans. When the Ukrainian policemen, friends of Suslenic who had also taken part in the murder, realized what was in store for them from the Germans, they let the two foresters go at night and told the Germans that they had broken down a wall and escaped. Very many things like this are happening at this time and all because of Jewish possessions.

10.2.1943 From the German press: The Russians are trying to encircle the German army on the Crimean front.

11.2.1943 The lady of the house relates: Tonight they arrested four Ukrainians in Korostów on suspicion that they helped the seventy-five Jews to hide on Mt. Sokol. I wrote about them earlier.

12.2.1943 I paid 500 zlotys for 275kg of potatoes. I now have only 1,900 zlotys left.

Mykhailo tells that Jews were discovered in the Christian cemetery and four were shot on the spot.

13.2.1943 Six Ukrainians went to the forest to collect hay and met a family of four souls there - the family of Abraham Rothbaum. They took the Jews to Breitfogel, the forestry manager, and he telephoned Skole and they came to take them at once. This family was among those who escaped from the seventy-five Jews who were caught on Mt. Sokol.

14.2.1943 Mykhailo tells: In Skole a Jewish woman went into the shop of a Ukrainian acquaintance to buy butter. She paid with a 500-zotly bank-note and asked for change. The shop-keeper took the note and said he was going out to change it. He ran to tell the police that there was a Jewish woman in the vicinity. They came and took her at once. Under torture she revealed that there was another Jewish family in Korostów. The shop-keeper kept the money and the woman was shot dead.

Two days ago a well-dressed man went around Korostów from house to house to buy chickens. Everybody thinks he was a detective. He also knocked on the door of our cowshed, but we did not answer and he went away.

15.2.1943 It is raining and muddy water is falling on us.

16.2.1943 All week long beggars have been going around in the village, and they also knocked on our door. Some of them looked in through the windows. Our windows are stuffed with straw. Our nerves are stretched to the point of breaking.

17.2.1943 At 3 a.m. I heard the sound of an engine. I told my wife that it sounded like an airplane. Mykhailo came at once and told us to get up into the attic and hide in the double ceiling under the straw because Germans had come in a train. We immediately went up into our hiding place. By 6 p.m. they had left.

18.2.1943 In a German newspaper: The Germans admit to retreating from Rostov, Voroshilovgrad and Kharkov. Mykhailo says that battles are already being fought near Kiev.

19.2.1943 Mykhailo: The police search for partizans and for the two foresters who escaped from prison, Suslenic and Zaliocho.

20.2.1943 In the newspaper: Goebbel's speech dealt mainly with the extermination of the remaining Jews.

21.2.1943 Mykhailo: The Ukrainians are preparing to emigrate to Germany from fear of the approaching Russians. He says that everybody will get what is coming to him and that he does not have to flee because he never did anyone harm.

22.2.1943 More Jews were caught hiding in Skole.

23.2.1943 The newspapers write that the Russians have reached the Dnieper. When Mykhailo returned from Skole he told that twenty-seven Jews were shot there yesterday and that two motorcars were caught carrying Jews from Warsaw to Hungary. All the Jews as well as a Christian driver were shot.

In Smoże near Skole they caught Dreilich's wife with one child. Dreilich was a Jew but she was a Christian. Dreilich was killed some time ago and she with the child were staying with her parents. The Germans wanted to shoot the child but she would not agree, so they shot them both.

Mykhailo also saw them digging under the foundations of Endzel's house, because they noticed smoke coming out of the foundations and suspected that Jews were hiding there. Two Germans and one Ukrainian policeman were supervising the digging.

He also heard that in Lvov, Drohobycz, Sambor and Stanislavov there are no more Jews. In Stryi more than half of the workers with "R" and "F" permits were shot to death.

In Skole he saw two Jewish policemen in the street, but he was afraid to go to my brother.

28.2.1943 I have not written until today because I have been too nervous. As to Endzel's house, they found four families under it and one Jew had four million zlotys with him. The man burned the money.

1.3.1943 The head of the council of Korostów together with the secretary went from house to house in the village and registered the number of residents and the number of homes. They were close to Mykhailo's house. We saw them. The head of the council is Mykhailo's cousin so they did not go into his house.

2.3.1943 Elko says that he will save us and that we will save him when the Russians come.

3.3.1943 In Skole they caught Golda Schwarzbard with eight children in hiding.

4.3.1943 Eighty Jews were caught in Skole in a forest near the hospital. Twenty-five of them ran away after they severely wounded two Germans and wounded a third lightly. They had a radio transmitter. Also today we were told to go into the attic because Mykhailo is very frightened.

Yesterday, there were policemen in the village sniffing around to see if anyone was hiding Jews.

5.3.1943 From the attic we heard neighbors who had returned from Skole telling our landlady that twenty-five hiding places with Jews had been discovered in Skole and that all the Jews had been machine-gunned to death in the Jewish cemetery. There is a huge pile of bodies there.

6.3.1943 Mykhailo tells that a *Volksdeutsche* from Korostów said that he had been charged to see whether any Jews were hiding in the village. He also said that soon all the *Volksdeutscher* would be moved to Germany.

7.3.1943 The Eimerl and Lifshitz (the tinsmith) families have been caught in Skole.

8.3.1943 Elko was in Skole and saw my brother in a truck laden with skins travelling to Stryi.

9.3.1943 I gave Mykhailo a bar of soap and asked him to trade it in the village for some butter. He brought me 650gm of butter.

10.3.1943 From the newspapers: Bitter battles are being waged, but the Germans are holding out. Germany is being heavily bombed. Our strength is waning because of under-nourishment and lying down in the cold attic. Also, our money is nearly gone and our nerves are in danger of breaking any minute.

11.3.1943 The Germans have warned all the foresters that if any Jews are caught in their areas of responsibility they, the foresters, will be shot.

Yesterday, they searched for Jews in the summer-houses in the Korostów forests.

12.3.1943 At noon I heard the well-known voice of the Ukrainian murderer Szcherba asking our landlady for the whereabouts of Sauchin, another murderer who took Jews in to hide them and then murdered them. Our landlady took away from us all our utensils so that nobody would know we were there.

13.3.1943 More Jewish families have been caught in Skole: Rubinstein and Aaron Joseph Rothfeld.

14.3.1943 A large Jewish hiding place has been discovered under an ice-cellar. The Germans could not get them out so they threw in incendiary bombs and they were all burned.

15.3.1943 Towards morning a train carrying about thirty Germans and twenty Ukrainian policemen passed going in the direction of the Botivla forests and they returned to Skole at 3 p.m.

Mykhailo told us that night that the chief supervisor of the Botivla forests had discovered two hiding places and decided that there must be Jews in them. Since he was frightened to go there himself, this supervisor, a *Volkdeutsche* named Reichart, called the police. The police came to the conclusion that the hiding places had harbored many Jews under the protection of Suslenic whom he had later killed. There was nothing more for the Germans to do there.

16.3.1943 Ukrainian policemen are wandering around the village.

17.3.1943 Mykhailo visited Skole and saw my brother in the street, but my brother did not notice him. He could not find anybody selling flour. The policemen caught Poli Hartzman in a hiding place.

18.3.1943 Thirty Jews were caught being hidden by the Christian Dobush. The Jews, Dobush and his wife were executed.

19.3.1943 The Germans have retaken Kharkov and are advancing inside Russia.

20.3.1943 Eight Jews who had been hiding in the Gurka district in Skole and a Christian were caught travelling in a waggon to Stryi. They arrested the Christian.

21.3.1943 Zigi Horowitz's wife and one child were shot in their home. Her husband and another child managed to escape.

22.3.1943 They caught Jews being hidden by Christians. They arrested the Christians. The Germans are advancing inside Russia and there is no sign of a second front.

23.3.1943 Mykhailo says that the train ride to Stryi is free for all the local residents who go to see the Christians who hid Jews being hanged.

28.3.1943 I did not write anything for five days because of my strained nerves. Mykhailo also goes about very nervous and confused and at a loss. I do not know what to be afraid of more - Germans, hunger or Mykhailo.

29.3.1943 Mykhailo and another few workers in the forest today saw two men and a woman, all elegantly dressed, who asked about a forester. They showed them the house of Hoshko, the forester. The workers say they must be Jews lost in the forest.

30.3.1943 In the early hours of the morning one of the workers saw Hoshko the forester leaving the forest and the worker says that people say he hides

Jews. Hoshko was accompanying the two men and the woman the workers had seen and he was showing them the way to the forester, Kafka. They showed Hoshko Christian identification papers.

When Hoshko heard what the worker had to say he became panic stricken, ran to his house, took his rifle and his dog and chased after those people to bring them to the workers so that they would prove they were Christians.

When he came near to them and ordered them to halt, one of the men fired a pistol at him and wounded him lightly in his back. The people escaped and the workers took Hoshko to the hospital in Stryi. The Germans did not want to hunt the people in the forest and instead sent twenty-five foresters.

31.3.1943 From a conversation with Mykhailo I got the impression that he suspects that I will not compensate him for his trouble and his fear in hiding us in his house and saving us from certain death. I told him that today I could promise him nothing, but that if we stayed alive he would be rewarded more than he could imagine.

1.4.1943 Revolution in Yugoslavia.

2.4.1943 Yakin Mihavitch, a forester from Koziowa, shot three people escaping in the forest. They were headed for Hungary.

3.4.1943 Our neighbor, Vasil Sauchin, a forester, by whom our landlady saw a Jewish girl (I think he shot her himself) got drunk and went on a rampage.

5.4.1943 Mykhailo was in Skole. He knocked on my brother's door, but there was no answer.

6.4.1943 I paid Mykhailo for the month of March 418 zlotys and I now have 1,100 zlotys left:

20kg of flour	340 zlotys
Tobacco	46 zlotys
Milk, 3.5ltr	14 zlotys
3kg of buck-wheat	18 zlotys
Total	418 zlotys

8.4.1943 Mykhailo was in Skole and found my brother's apartment closed up. He met a Jew and asked where Wilf was because he wanted to sell him a skin. The Jew told him that the older Wilf and his family were in Stryi, where he worked in a tannery. According to Mykhailo's description the Jew must have been Aaron Teichberg. Severe uprisings have taken place in Warsaw and Yugoslavia.

Mykhailo bought 50kg of flour for me and I paid him 900 zlotys on the spot. Now I have only 200 zlotys left.

9.4.1943 Three German came to the village and confiscated a side of pork from one of the villagers. Our landlady is in panic.

14.4.1993 Regarding the three people shot by Yakin, they say that they found on them Hungarian, Bulgarian and English identification documents. Apparently they were Jewish spies. They were aged between thirty-five and forty-five. The woman had dyed blond hair and one of the men was fat.

19.4.1943 Mykhailo tells that in the village Wolosianka near Skole close to the Hungarian border they caught fifteen Jews trying to cross the border. One poisoned himself at once and the others were shot dead. They found a lot of gold and dollars on the bodies. Five Jews, two men and three women, were spotted here in the forests making their way to Hungary.

20.4.1943 According to the moon, I imagine that this week is Passover, but I do not know the exact date and so cannot do anything. We are happy to satisfy our hunger with anything they give us.

This week it is becoming warmer and we left the double ceiling and began to sleep on the hay in the attic. In the evening there was an uproar in the village. The narrow-gauge railway brought men in civilian clothes to Botivla. The foresters ran from house to house. Vasil, our landlord's son, came and told us that the Botivla forests as far as Drohobycz were in flames. Mykhailo came and helped us conceal everything in the cow house under the straw and told us to go and hide in the double ceiling, because the Germans were grabbing men in the vil-

lage to go and fight the conflagration. The village men were hiding and the Germans were searching the houses.

21.4.1943 The fire was near Drohobycz and the men have returned with the foresters.

22.4.1943 Mykhailo changed ten dollars for me at the rate of 105 zlotys for a dollar. He told me not to despair. We had passed the cold winter and now summer had come. It's easier to get supplies and we would hold out even if the war continued the whole summer.

My nephew, a thirteen-year old boy stubbornly wants to go and look for his parents and sisters because he is fed up here. He does not want to listen to me.

23.4.1943 Mykhailo says that if my nephew Meyer leaves, he will be forced to drive us away from here, because if the boy is caught he will reveal where he came from. I feel sick from being so angry with the boy and I cannot influence him.

24.4.1943 I gave my wife's ring to Mykhailo as a present.

25.4.1943 Mykhailo brought me a festival present - six eggs and a loaf of white bread. Three foresters who were guests of Mykhailo got drunk and left the house singing, "Come, let us kill the Jews and build up the Ukraine."

26.4.1943 Mykhailo changed 100 dollars for 100 packets of Hungarian cigarettes and tobacco for which he can get 800 zlotys.

27.4.1943 I gave Mykhailo a greeting card on which I wrote that he must take care of us and not, God forbid, stray from the straight path. He will be recompensed for everything. All six of us signed the card.

America has issued an ultimatum to Italy to lay down its arms, otherwise Italy will be burned into a heap of rubble by bombardments from the air. America has also developed more sophisticated weapons

against German submarines. Everyone says that Germany cannot hold out more than two months.

2.5.1943 I paid Mykhailo 194 zlotys in addition to the 10 dollars which he applied to my bill - together 994 zlotys. He did not charge me for the milk because the man who gives it to him does not yet want to be paid. He also bartered various items for food:

1 children's coat	11kg of flour
1 pocket watch	40kg of potatoes
2 pairs of children's stockings	butter
1 reel of thread	15kg of potatoes.

I gave him other things to barter because my money has nearly run out.

4.5.1943 Mykhailo says that he heard today in Skole of fierce battles between the Germans and the Jewish and Polish rebels in Warsaw. They are using tanks and airplanes against the rebels and are suffering heavy losses.

In Tucholka they caught three Jews who were hiding and in Skole four Jews left their hiding place because they had no more food.

5.5.1943 The *Volksdeutscher* entered Skole and were told there to be ready to move out any minute, because East Galicia belongs to the Ukrainians.

8.5.1943 A German report: Retreat from the Bizerta-Tunis line.

14.5.1943 I have begun to teach the two boys who are with us to put on *Tefillin* - my nephew, who was born 28.4.1930 and my brother-in-law's son who was born 18.1.1930.

I do not have a Jewish calendar and so do not know what the Hebrew date is.

18.5.1943 I saw Simon Hirsch from Koziowa transporting trees accompanied by two Hungarian soldiers. He works at a saw mill with my middle nephew, Moshe, in Skole. I asked Mykhailo to speak to him and ask when he would again come to work in the village.

20.5.1943 Mykhailo went to Hirsch and offered him two marten skins for sale, and he replied that he did not deal in skins. Mykhailo then asked him if he knew where the Goldfischers and the Wilfs, who used to buy from him, were. Hirsch explained that one of the Goldfischers was dead and another served in the Jewish auxiliary police force in Skole. As to the Wilf family, one of them was in Stryi with his family, one son worked with him in Skole and just this week had received a letter from his parents in Stryi. The younger Wilf brother was in hiding somewhere with his family. To which Mykhailo replied, "May those who are still alive be healthy."

21.5.1943 Out of the Skole Jews who were confined to their place of work they took thirty-eight today who worked in a sewing workshop for the Germans.

22.5.1943 They have removed all the Jews from the Stryi ghetto including those who worked.

24.5.1943 A German report: Fifteen gangs who were active behind the central Western front have been destroyed. In Skole the city council has sold Jewish houses to Ukrainians for the price of 10 packets of tobacco. They are dismantling the houses, taking all the valuables the Jewish owners had hidden and then they rebuild the houses in their villages. The Ukrainians who collaborated with the Germans in the war against the Russians, as well as those who participated in the murder of Jews, have decided to emigrate with the Germans to Germany. In Hrebenov they caught a Jewish woman with Aryan identification papers.

27.5.1943 From the press: The Russians are terminating Communism at the demand of Roosevelt and Churchill but they are really putting on an act. The Germans will not fall for this deceit, but will fight on until the ultimate victory.

28.5.1943 The rebels in Poland are inflicting heavy losses on the Germans.

The three men, Breitfogel, Yorchak and Yaksh, who were partners of the foresters in looting the possessions of Jews from Skole who hid with

them and afterwards murdered them, say that if they cannot emigrate to Germany they will commit suicided by shooting.

Alter Hirsch and his son Olchy Hirsch, who were among the 31 caught in Botivla of whom 14 were murdered on the spot and the rest taken to Skole by way of Korostów, screamed that Breitfogel had told him to go to Suslenic to hide and he would be responsible for all those, who were later murdered. Hirsch was a wealthy dealer in lumber before the war and had been friendly with Breitfogel. When he and his son were taken from Skole to Stryi with the rest of the Jews the sixteen-year old Olchy managed to jump from the train and disappeared into the forest.

31.5.1943 Eleven more Jews were caught in Skole

1.6.1943 I saw a group of young Jews from Skole between the ages of fourteen and twenty working on the narrow-gauge railway track opposite our hiding place. They were under guard.

2.6.1943 At his request I gave Mykhailo my wife and daughter's shoes in payment for the supplies he gave us in the month of May in the sum of 1,187 zlotys.

Mykhailo told me that the English have landed in Greece.

3.6.1943 For three days now I have been watching the boys from Skole from my hideout working on the railway track. It causes me great pain that I cannot talk to them.

4.6.1943 Mykhailo says that according to rumour the Jews who are confined to their places of work will all soon be exterminated. I wrote a letter in Yiddish and asked him to get it to the Jews working on the railway track.

In the letter I wrote: "Jewish brothers! Take care that no harm should come to you in these days. The war is going to end. I beg of you that no non-Jew should get to know of this letter. Your brother." Mykhailo brought me back the letter because he could not manage to deliver it without being seen.

5.6.1943 I sent the letter again but he brought it back again for the same reason. Tonight, the Germans and the Ukrainian police took two Jewish physicians from the hospital together with their families: Dr. Rappaport from Sinevudzko, an apostate Jew, and Dr. Ungar from Skole. His wife started screaming in the street that the Jewish blood spilt would not be forgiven and that all who killed innocent Jews would be punished.. The policemen beat them until they collapsed, stomped on their heads and shot them.

They also took all the people of the *Judenrat* and the 40 policemen. They imprisoned them all with the threat that in five days they would be executed. I continue to see the boys working on the tracks and when they get ready to return to Skole, they look as if they are going to a slaughterhouse. I get terrible headaches because I cannot go out and talk to them and encourage them to run away. Mykhailo cannot - or will not - help in this matter.

7.6.1943 I could not sleep last night. I had to press on my chest so that my heart should not burst from the strong blows it was receiving. I lay unconscious and when I came to I cried so much I soaked the pillow. I was not able to stand up. This was not the only night I have suffered so.

About noon I got up, but I was unable to eat.

Our landlady says that some of the Jewish policemen managed to escape, but all the rest were shot to death by the Ukrainian policeman, Shilow.

The German police in Skole telephoned the forest manager, Breitfogel and asked whether there were still any Jewish workers and whether any Jews were still hiding.

9.6.1943 Ukrainian policemen visited the cowshed and Mykhailo is angry and nervous. He changes his mind every day and my heart tells me it will end badly.

10.6.1943 A committee is going around the village examining the organization of the village.

11.6.1943 The committee came to our cowshed but did not come in. Two Ger-

mans in civilian dress went around the village to buy chickens. When they came near to our house we ran upstairs to hide. I was frightened. I fell asleep.

12.6.1943 I cannot calm down. Mykhailo was in Skole yesterday and he saw that my house, which housed the *Judenrat*, has been boarded up. Many other houses in the neighborhood have been dismantled after they were sold for a pittance by the local municipal council. He did not see a single Jew. More than seventy of the Jews confined to their places of work have been taken to make up the quota for a transport. Some of them managed to escape into the forests.

13.6.1943 The newspapers write that the Jews are responsible for this war. Rothschild and Speer have great influence over Roosevelt and Churchill. They began to want war already in 1933.

In Hrebenov they found three Jews hiding in their own homes. Two Germans are wandering around in the village. A large tourist party of German civilians came by train to Botivla. The forester Vasil Sauchin transported to his house the possessions of many Jews which the Ukrainian police concealed at his place.

15.6.1943 I still see a few Jews working on the tracks.

16.6.1943 I see Vasil Sauchin bring Jews to hide them in the forests. I am sure that he will rob them and afterwards murder them.

In Skole a Jewish woman was caught. The heavy rain disturbs us greatly.

17.6.1943 Two Jewish workers on the tracks escaped into the Botivla forests about 18km from Skole

18.6.1943 Two German officers travelled by car to Korostów to go fishing.

19.6.1943 Mykhailo caught an eagle and keeps it in the cowshed. His thirteen-year old son brings his friends to show them the eagle. If any of us coughs or sneezes, we are lost.

20.6.1943 Mykhailo says that the two German officers who went fishing the day before yesterday were disguised Jews. They have gone into hiding in the Botivla forests.

Today posters were stuck up calling on anybody who knew where Jews were hiding to inform the police. They will get a reward in addition to the possessions of the Jew they turned in. Mykhailo ordered us to lay still in the double ceiling and to be very careful. Soon things will change.

21.6.1943 From what Mykhailo says I understand that he no longer has a choice and that he must save us, because he would be ashamed in front of his fellow Ukrainians of his "crime" in saving Jews. He hopes that no one will ever know of it. Could he murder us himself? I doubt whether he has the courage to do that, despite the fact that the members of his family who know of us argue against what he did.

22.6.1943 For two days now large Hungarian and Italian forces have been travelling along the railway tracks from Lvov to Budapest. All the German women who came to visit their husbands serving here in the army, have been ordered to return to Germany and they are all busy packing the loot they took from the Jews.

23.6.1943 Today I did not see Jews working on the tracks. The car with the two German officers reappeared today and they went around in the village with the son of the Polish forester, Daniel, from Botivla, to go fishing. I heard that one of them asked Daniel's son whether people were living in our building and he answered negatively. I looked out through the straw.

Mykhailo says that all the bridges in the area will now be strengthened, because the army will have to pass over them.

From the press: Frank, the governor general of the Polish General Government, spent a day on 20.6 in Lvov, Stryi and Drohobycz. The Ukrainians welcomed him festively and promised him to fight side-by-side with the Germans until victory. When I heard this I had to laugh. In my opinion Frank came to examine the best routes for the army to retreat.

24.6.1943 The Hungarian military hospital must leave Skole soon and return to Hungary. All bridges are being strengthened. Military forces are returning to Hungary.

27.6.1943 Shepherds saw Jews in the forests.

28.6.1943 My wife says that both I and Mykhailo are fooling ourselves that the war will end today or tomorrow, and that Mykhailo does not provide supplies.

I keep quiet because I have nothing to pay him with and he knows that we have no supplies in stock.

29.6.1943 From the newspaper: Goebbels claims that the Jews are trying to destroy the six-thousand-year-old European civilization.

30.6.1943 Harvilo, the son-in-law of the Ukrainian priest in Skole is today in Korostów. Mykhailo thinks that he has come here to find a hiding place in case the Germans abandon Skole, as a result of his collaboration with the Germans in exterminating the Jews.

1.7.1943 Today some Jewish lads came to work on the railway tracks.

I have become terribly thin.

2.7.1943 Mykhailo was in Stryi yesterday and saw the bodies of three shot Jews lying in the center of the market near a water well. The Germans have cut off the water supply to the Jewish Quarter. Jews go out at night to fetch water and Ukrainian policemen shoot them.

3.7.1943 Torrential rain. The workers in the fields ran to take cover and a fourteen-year old Christian girl took shelter in the cowshed. Our landlady noticed it and took the girl into their house. I am sure she heard us talking, but I comfort myself with the thought that she is stupid and did not understand anything.

4.7.1943 I made the reckoning with Mykhailo for the month of June (pre-war prices):

I took:	I gave:
100kg potatoes - 6 zlotys	6m cotton cloth - 18 zlotys
2.9kg butter - 7.25 zlotys	2m linen - 3 zlotys
1kg conserves - 1.25 zlotys	1m cloth (woolen) - 10 zlotys
	1m cloth (woolen) - 4 zlotys
5kg buck-wheat - 1 zloty	1 tablecloth - 5 zlotys
1kg white flour - 0.25 zlotys	1 shirt - 8 zlotys
20kg white flour - 4 zlotys	1 kerchief - 1 zloty
5 packets of tobacco - 2.75 zlotys	1 belt - 2 zlotys
Travel expenses - 1 zloty	
Total 23.50 zlotys	Total 51 zlotys

The Ukrainian priest preached in church today for national unity and against political division, because hard times are coming and who knows if anybody will be left alive to bury the dead.

The Germans have set up a concentration camp between Skole and Korostów for Ukrainians who refused to go to Germany to work in factories. Here they are sent to work in stone quarries under the supervision of Polish *Volksdeutsche*. The camp contains two hundred hungry and beaten Ukrainians; some were shot dead trying to escape.

Today is a day of mourning throughout Galicia for the Ukrainians who were murdered by the Russians when they withdrew in 1941. Among those murdered were twenty Ukrainians from Korostów. I am absolutely sure that those twenty were killed by the Hungarians. This is the way it happened: When the Russians withdrew from the Hungarian border and the Hungarian troops began to occupy the Polish Carpathians, ten Russians were left stranded in Korostów armed with light machine-guns. These Russians attacked the Hungarians from the rear and inflicted heavy losses in dead and wounded. The Hungarian advance was halted and the Russians slipped away and escaped through the forests to Bolekhov, because Stryi was already in German hands. On the following day the Hungarians returned to Korostów and, under the impression that they had been fired upon by residents of Korostów from the windows of their houses, dragged the twenty Ukrainians out of their houses and shot them.

Our landlady informs us that she heard a German radio broadcast saying that General Sikorsky, the present President of Poland in Lon-

don, was murdered by the English. Mykhailo travelled to Stryi to see a physician because he has pains in his stomach.

6.7.1943 Two German soldiers have been prowling around the log-yard in Korostów. German civilians also came there. In Skole, Mykhailo saw many Germans travelling with heavy suitcases. The physician in the hospital in Stryi has made an appointment for Mykhailo in the hospital next week.

7.7.1943 Today the foresters from Skole, Korostów and Botivla discovered the forester, Baabi, a Polish *Volksdeutsche,* killed in the forest. Yesterday morning he had gone out to the forest and was due to return home in the afternoon. In the evening his wife informed the head forester, Breitfogel, that he was missing and today he sent out many foresters to look for him and they found him shot.

I am sure that it was one of the foresters who went looking for Baabi who shot him yesterday, because Baabi was Polish, and had apparently shot one of the Ukrainians who escaped from the quarry last week.

8.7.1943 Our landlord relates: Last night the guards at the quarry of the work camp were shot and all two hundred Ukrainians held there were freed, except for three who were wounded and sick who were left there. The freed workers were smuggled into the forest. Towards morning German and Hungarian policemen came to the camp to investigate; they took the three injured workers and returned to Skole.

Mykhailo said that sixty men in German uniforms armed with machine guns and hand-grenades had attacked the Ukrainian camp at night. The commander of the sixty was no other than the well-known Ukrainian murderer, the former forester Suslenic.

The priest of Korostów said that the Ukrainians had acted correctly in freeing the two hundred Ukrainian workers, to prove to the Germans that Ukrainians are not like Jews. What the priest forgot to say is that when a Jew wanted to save himself the Ukrainians were crueller than the Germans in plundering him and killing him so that no witnesses to their crimes should remain alive in case Germany lost the war and they be brought to trial. He, the priest of Korostów, like the other

Ukrainian priests had incited the populace against the Jews at the beginning and had been a most loyal follower of Hitler who had promised them an independent state after the war. Today the priest is preaching to his faithful to live in peace. The Ukrainian intelligentsia of Greater Ukraine, who emigrated to Germany, are warning the Ukrainians in our area, which is close to the Hungarian border, to destroy all traces of their behavior during the German occupation, otherwise they will be reviled for ever.

Transports of Jews are being sent to the extermination camps from Hungary. More than half of them die on the trains. They are not allowed to receive any water.

12.7.1943 Mykhailo's son, Vasil, has visited us in the attic a few times and is learning writing and arithmetic. He also came today and saw me writing in my diary in Yiddish. My nephew, Benek Lieblein, who is thirteen years of age, also keeps a diary in Polish. Vasil began to read Benek's Polish diary and saw that he had written that the Ukrainians had done more harm to the Jews than the Germans. They hid the Jews, robbed them and then murdered them cruelly.

Later, Mykhailo came to the attic and his son burst out crying and said to his father, "Pears do not grow on a willow tree and a snake, even when it's chopped in pieces still twitches," and complained that his father should not have taken the trouble to save us. Mykhailo reprimanded his only son and sent him home. I wept and entreated Mykhailo that he should not make us all responsible for what Benek had written, because I had not known what he had written and, anyway, he was still a child and did not understand that you cannot hold an entire people responsible for the actions of a few murderers in it. Mykhailo answered that everybody would get what was coming to him. I gave him my pocket watch and begged him to take care of us because I was afraid of his brother-in-law, Elko Sauchin, who belonged to the Bandera gang, the worst murderers. Mylkhailo calmed me down and said that Elko was a clever man and that I had nothing to fear from him. He left and in the evening his brother-in-law Elko came and promised me that everything would be alright and that we would be saved. When the day came we would realize the truth of his words; for the

moment, however, it was a waste of time to talk about it, since anyway I did not believe him.

Elko related that the American and British armies had landed in Sicily. The Russians had advanced 120km and taken sixty thousand Germans prisoner. Mykhailo went to hospital in Stryi.

13.7.1943 Two Germans in civilian clothes came to the village and called on the inhabitants to gather in the council house. Not all answered the call. After they were called more than ten foresters were sent home, but four men - Elko Svystun; the son of Elko Mykhailo Svystun, forester; Yakim Mihavitz, forester; and a *Volkdeutscher*, also a forester - were taken to Skole.

Elko Sauchin, Mikhailo's brother-in-law, became very frightened, and fled from the house. Our landlady also sent their son Vasil out of the house and she told us to hide in the double ceiling. I imagine that Elko Sauchin was one of the men who shot Baabi and freed the two hundred Ukrainians. In Skole many Jews have run away into the forest. The rest were executed. Many and various gangs have formed; they break open German warehouses and loot them.

14.7.1943 Three out of the four from Korostów were freed, but the forester Mykhailo Svystun was taken to Stryi. The Germans are demanding that the residents of Korostów hand over those responsible for the murder of Baabi and the guards at the camp. If not, they will reduce the village and its residents to dust and ashes.

15.7.1943 Towards morning all the people of the village ran off with their animals to the forest. Mykhailo was still in the hospital in Stryi. I think that I and my family are the only people in a village emptied of its inhabitants. If the Germans set the village on fire we will not be able to run away, because if anybody except Mykhailo's family sees us we will surely die.

16.7.1943 Last night we could not sleep out of fear of the village being set on fire. But the night passed quietly. Our landlady returned home in the morning to bake us some bread. Representatives from Korostów travelled to

Stryi to intercede with the Germans not to punish the whole village. The German supervisor of the forests told the men of Korostów to go to the forests and examine them since the army would soon come to Korostów to patrol the forests. Our landlady immediately returned to the forest, telling us that if they did set fire to the houses we should run to the forest and when things calmed down in a day or two we should come back in the still of night so that nobody would notice us. Now I understand what they say that a man is stronger than iron. I calmed her down that she should not cry and that everything would work out well.

Elko went to the hospital to see Mykhailo. He heard that they are taking people from the hospital and sending them to Germany.

17.7.1943 The people are returning from the forest and the village is quiet. The representatives of the Ukrainians appealed to the military command in Lvov and were promised that the village would not be punished, but that they would continue to investigate the attack on the camp. They ordered the people to leave the city and return home.

18.7.1943 Elko returned from Stryi. Mykhailo will have to stay another two days in hospital. Throughout the whole of Galicia there are clashes between the army and various gangs of Russians, Ukrainians and Poles. Occasionally we hear of Jews in the forests. The gangs are blowing up bridges and looting both military and civilian warehouses.

Our landlady cooked some potatoes for us.

19.7.1943 Mykhailo has returned from the hospital, where he lay together with wounded soldiers from the Russian front. Twelve Russian civilians attack an army of three thousand and annihilate them. They fight better than soldiers.

20.7.1943 The German manager, Breitfogel, and the Polish manager, Yorchak, have sent their things to Stryi, because the situation here is not safe due to the various gangs.

21.7.1943 Mykhailo was in Skole and near the sawmill met the Jewish physician Klein, who suggested that Mykhailo take and hide him. Mykhailo said that he is too burdened to do so. In the camp in Skole at the sawmill

there are still one hundred and twenty Jews. In Kalush, near Stanislavov, two thousand partizans passed through the streets openly. We have almost no food and are living from day to day, from hand to mouth.

22.7.1943 Of the hundred and twenty Jews confined to their places of work, several shoe makers were shot.

23.7.1943 Many soldiers are returning from the Russian front to Hungary.

24.7.1943 In the village they say that Italy is about to capitulate.

25.7.1943 An English announcement: The Russians have taken a million Germans captive.

26.7.1943 In Lvov they broke into the prison and freed all the prisoners. The trains are not operating according to schedule because of the gangs. Everybody says that the war will end today or tomorrow.

27.7.1943 The hay season has come. Mykhailo and all his family are occupied in chopping hay. They go to the mountains for a few days at a time to work, but do not forget to prepare food for us.

28.7.1943 Jews have been expelled from Hungary to Poland and many of them were shot in the village of Klimetz, near Skole. In Stryi they caught seven Jews hidden by a lawyer.

30.7.1943 Mykhailo brought me some vegetables from Stryi, beans and tobacco wrapped in paper taken from new Jewish books.

31.7.1943 In Skole more Jewish houses are being dismantled.

1.8.1943 Mykhailo tells us that the Russians are invading Rumania. In Stanislavov gangs blew up a bridge.

2.8.1943 The American-English army has conquered several Italian islands. They have also delivered an ultimatum to Italy to lay down arms and capitulate. Mykhailo and his family went today to work with the hay for three days and we are left alone without supervision.

4.8.1943 I saw Simon Hirsch from Koziavo, near Skole, going by in a wagon accompanied by two Hungarian soldiers. He is confined to work in the Jewish labor camp. He took a package into my neighbor Vasil Vals.

7.8.1943 Mykhailo returned and brought a newspaper.

8.8.1943 In the cooked flour we were served at noon time we found human teeth. We threw them away and continued to eat and survive.

The priest told the people today not to talk about what had happened here during this period, because black clouds are drawing near.

9.8.1943 In Rosochoch near Turka, a forester called Ludwig Krachak, a *Volksdeutsche* was shot. He owed me 500 zlotys from before the war.

In punishment, the Germans executed nine inhabitants of the village.

10.8.1943 Until today we have been able to overcome the dirt. But now it is already impossible to bear the lice and the maggots which eat our flesh. Frogs and leeches swarm in the water. The straw we lay on grows fungi and is covered with worms and flies. We are weary from cleaning in this hot weather.

12.8.1943 I made a reckoning and paid with goods, at pre-war prices, for July:

I took:	I gave:
33kg flour - 6.60 zlotys	2 shirts and a pair of pants - 22 zlotys
2.4kg butter - 7.20 zlotys	3 small shirts - 6 zlotys
3kg cheeses - 3.60 zlotys	1 winter shirt - 3 zlotys
14kg beans - 4.90 zlotys	1 women's blouse - 5 zlotys
45ltr milk - 9 zlotys	1 towel - 1.30 zlotys
vegetables - 1 zloty	
tobacco and paper - 5 zlotys	
Total 37.30 zlotys	Total 37.30 zlotys

From the press: The Russians are advancing everywhere.

13.8.1943 Eight Ukrainian volunteers in German uniform last night patrolled the railway track near Skole and met two unarmed Ukrainian civilians.

The two begged the volunteers to leave the Germans and join them in the partizan group of Ukrainian nationalists. They refused to listen and took hold of the two to take them to the German command post. Immediately the eight were fired on from the forest - six were killed and two were wounded. The two civilians took their weapons from them and departed into the forest. German and Hungarian soldiers soon came and conducted searches along the edge of the forest, but were afraid to enter the forest.

14.8.1943 Two civilians with guns passed here in broad daylight. Supervisor Breitfogel telephoned the police in Skole, but no one came.

15.8.1943 The cow gave birth. Vasil brings his friends to the cowshed to see the calf and this could endanger our lives.

They are moving unarmed Hungarian Jews in military uniform to Poland. The deportees say that they are being taken to dig trenches for the Germans at the front. In the village of Sinevudzko near Skole, two Jews went into a Ukrainian's house to ask for food. He shot them.

16.8.1943 As of today there are no more Jews in the camps in Skole. Some escaped: the family of Dr. Klein and the family of Jacob Tirsh. The others were shot.

18.8.1943 In Stryi they arrested thirty Ukrainians. They were found to have weapons.

19.8.1943 Mykhailo came from Skole and I asked him for news. He answered me angrily, "You don't want to hear about the difficulties I had in buying 10kg of flour. All you want is to hear news!" His moods change.

20.8.1943 My wife repairs underwear for the lady of the house and for that she brought us some fruit, strawberries and milk.

21.8.1943 Mykhailo brought in the produce from the fields. Altogether he will have 300kg of rye and barley.

22.8.1943 The end of the Jews in Hungary is near.

23.8.1943 Transports of German soldiers returning from the Russian front are arriving in Hungary. The battles there are terrible.

24.8.1943 Stefan Zbanowitz of Korostów, Mykhailo's best friend who used to go hunting with him, was conscripted into the Russian army in 1940, at twenty-years of age. When he was due to present himself, he came to me to say goodbye and asked me to lend him a few rubles. I gave them to him and said, "Don't be afraid. You'll return and we'll continue to do business together."

In 1942 Stefan was captured by the Germans and worked in the prison camp at Bialystok until three weeks ago, when he ran away to go home.

He complained to Mykhailo that he had not taken me in to hide. Mykhailo did not want to tell him where I was. He also said that the front would soon move here and that we should prepare a hideout in the forest because we would definitely need it. He tells that the railway bridges have been destroyed all over and that Russian partizans are to be found along the tracks.

In the Bialystok ghetto there were about twenty thousand Jews at the time he ran away and the Germans will certainly execute them. That is why they fight the Germans from time to time and will not let them take them out of the ghetto.

28.8.1943 Our landlady says that today or tomorrow a change will come and she hopes we will indeed merit it. For herself, she feels no fear and is prepared that the situation should stay as it is, but she cannot bear to see the suffering of her Ukrainian people, knowing what they will get for the acts they have committed.

29.8.1943 The priest in church today repeated his words about the need for mutual love and that they should not talk any more about what happened. The Russians attacked Kiev. Roosevelt has just promised the Russians to come to their aid in all areas, because they have been the main victims of this war. Also, this year will see an end to the war.

31.8.1943 Mykhailo and about 20 other workers met two Russian partizans in the forest, who interrogated them and then went away. The supervisor telephoned the police in Skole but they said, "If they don't bother you, don't bother them."

1.9.1943 My nephew Meyer moved in his sleep because rain was falling on him through the broken roof. He fell and bruised his head and his whole body. He did not cry out, so as not to be heard, but I heard the fall and in the darkness I went down to him on the ladder and brought him back up. I put wet handkerchiefs on his mouth and nose to stem the bleeding. All day blood has been coming out of his nose. His whole face is swollen.

2.9.1943 Meyer's nose is still bleeding. His face has turned black from the blow it received.

Mykhailo has heard in Skole that tonight police will come to search in the woods. We must hide in the space above the ceiling.

3.9.1943 At night sixty Ukrainians and Tartar volunteers came by the narrow-gauge railway to a point 10km from Skole and from there entered the forests.

They also came from Skole to search in the forests up to Korostów. They did not find anybody.

4.9.1943 American and English forces have landed in Naples, Italy.

5.9.1943

I paid for the eighth month:

120kg potatoes	190 zlotys
55kg flour	715 zlotys
1kg sugar	50 zlotys
45gm butter	45 zlotys
46.5ltr milk	186 zlotys
7 packs of tobacco	98 zlotys
10kg potatoes	70 zlotys
Total	1,354 zlotys

I gave him 15 dollars (= 1,335 zlotys) and 12 zlotys and so remained owing him 7 zlotys.

The Russians are continuing to advance. The Allies moved 70km without a shot being fired. Our landlady says that had she known the war would last so long she would never have taken us in. Mykhailo and his wife gave us a photograph of themselves as a momento.

6.9.1943 Tonight, the Ukrainian gangs broke into the houses of four Polish foresters, looted their possessions, took fifteen cows and two horses and murdered five people who did not succeed in escaping. In the afternoon, thirty German and Ukrainian policemen came to investigate the incident and then two Ukrainians emerged from the forest with machine-guns. When the Germans saw them they got into the cars and fled to Skole.

7.9.1943 Throughout the area Russian partizans are attacking Germans and Ukrainian gangs are attacking Poles and Jews. The Germans are hiding.

8.9.1943 Towards morning six Germans appeared in the village and conducted searches. In the afternoon, four German policemen came to take evidence from the four foresters' families who escaped. It appears that the six Germans who conducted searches in the morning, were not Germans at all, according to the German policemen.

9.9.1943 Italy has capitulated. Today, Mykhailo brought various vegetables back from the field and allowed us to eat as much as we wanted uncooked. For the first time since we are here, we ate our fill.

10.9.1943 I saw in the newspaper that the Germans are fighting in Italy. There is a bloodbath there. The Italian King and Badolio* betrayed the Germans.

12.9.1943 The Germans are sending everything they can to Germany. The Russians are advancing a great deal. In Kosiova the Germans arrested sixteen Ukrainians.

* Italian chief-of-staff at the beginning of the war and, from July 1943, prime minister. He signed Italy's capitulation.

13.9.1943 In Rozhanka the Germans arrested Ukrainian bandits who looted and murdered.

14.9.1943 Unrest in Rumania.

20.9.1943 I have not written since 14.9 because Gestapo men were snooping around the village. On 15.9 they came and asked a woman of Korostów, who was standing near the main road, where two foresters lived: Elko Sauchin, Mykhailo's brother-in-law, and Vasil Sauchin. The woman told them that they could not get there by car but would have to walk on the narrow path for a distance of 8km. The Germans returned to Skole. The woman quickly told the Sauchins what had happened. The German police demanded of the general manager of the forests by phone that the two Sauchins report at once to the police in Skole. Both of them fled to the forest together with their families. They also advised me to flee to the forest, because the Germans would come looking for Elko. I was afraid to go to the forest and decided to stay in hiding in the double ceiling.

26.9.1943 They telephoned the supervisor twice that Elko must report to the police in Skole and if he did not Yaksh must come in his place.

27.9.1943 Yaksh presented himself, was interrogated and ordered to bring Elko and three other workers. As he left, a Ukrainian volunteer policeman told him that if Elko did report, he would never see his home again.

In Skole a hiding place was discovered with Jews in it. Since the Germans could not get to it. the Jews managed to escape by way of the sewers at night. Later, the Germans concluded that twenty-seven Jews had hidden there with a large store of supplies. Mykhailo appears from time to time to look at his house. At night they do not sleep in the house.

28.9.1983 Elko did not report.

29.9.1943 Elko was fired from his job as a forester and required to return his rifle. He sent it to them. I know that both he and Mykhailo have other weapons in their possession.

5.10.1943 Until today there is nothing new in the Elko affair. We are frequently forced to leave our hiding place in the attic, because there you can suffocate. The space is so small - 70cm high, and 2m x 3m. If one of us wants to turn over, all six must turn over with him, we lay pressed so close together.

The German paper writes ironically that Roosevelt has sent greetings to world Jewry on the occasion of their new year.

I gather that 30.9-1.10 was Rosh Hashana and that 9.10 will be Yom Kippur and we all agree that we should fast on that day. Yesterday, Mykhailo brought 100kg of buck-wheat from Skole. The Russians have crossed the Dnieper. Yesterday, some Germans came on a hunting trip. In the course of it they caught sight of Russian partizans and ran away.

6.10.1943 Mykhailo went fishing and I asked him to bring me some fish; it is important for the last meal before the festival starts and for the meal when it ends. He gave me 600gm of fish. My wife prepared them and gave them over to be cooked.

7.10.1943 The Elko affair has calmed down and now all is quiet. They are no longer searching for him.

8.10.1943 I asked our landlady to bring me potatoes in fish brine towards evening and to bring the food tomorrow only after the fast.

She said, "Good! Fast! God doesn't listen to you anyway. If you had a God, He wouldn't let them murder you!" I left her, repeating to myself, "Why should the nations say 'Where is your God.'"

Toward evening we began the Yom Kippur fast.

9.10.1943 We all fasted and prayed. In the evening we broke the fast on potatoes and cold water.

10.10.1943 In Skole they caught a Jew who came out of hiding because he had no food. In the Kamionka forests they caught more Jews. Cold days and snow have begun.

[Here there is a large gap in the diary for reasons explained by the author in the entry of 14.4.1944]

Chapter Three

"The Deep Pit"

(Hiding in a Dugout in the Forest)

14.4.1944 We are now in a thick, dark forest where nobody ever passes by; on a high and very steep mountain. The twelve-year old trees rise to a height of four meters and are so entangled that when we go to get water we have to break branches which reach from one tree to the next. We get our water 100m away from the dugout we lie in. Between the two mountains a stream of water runs very slowly so it takes a long time until the vessel is filled. What did I do? I dug a hole where I leave the bucket and when I come back it is already full. Mostly, we find worms and snakes in the water. The mountain is home to various wild animals: bears, wolves, foxes, wild boars and deer. Our dugout is located 13km from Skole, 5km from Mykhailo's house and 500m from his grandfather's which is closed up in winter and in summer is used by Mykhailo's cousin who grazes his animals there. Not far from this house passes the narrow-gauge railway empty, up to the house of Hoshko the forester - 15km and up to Kafka the forester - 18km. At a junction near the summer-house the train returns without an engine laden with trees several times a day. On many occasions the engine pushes the train from behind to stop it running down the steep incline in the direction of Skole.

All these forests belong to the Jewish Baron Gredel who lived in Budapest, Hungary before the war. The train transports every time more than 50 wagons loaded with blocks of wood which are meant to be transported further on trains and ships owned by the baron. The forest consists of 90% oak trees and 10% beech trees. Not far from the railway

tracks is a dirt road which hardly sees two wagons a day - usually one on which the peasants bring hay from the mountains and a little oats. Our food is brought by Mykhailo to the summer house where it is thrown into a deep gorge. From there we transfer it bit by bit to our dugout which is on the mountain on the other side of the gorge, and 500m above it. The mountain is Mt. Krasna and it continues for 1km until Mt. Parashka, which is one of the three highest mountains in Poland.

I stopped writing on 10.10 because I was fed up with having to be on the alert all the time in our attic to watch the movements of the German police and the Gestapo to make sure they were not coming close to search for Elko Sauchin, the brother-in-law of our landlord, who lived with him and who was suspected of participating in the murder of the German guards when the Ukrainians in the labor camp were freed.

When you come from Skole to Mykhailo's place you have to pass by the wall of the cowshed where we were hiding.

Searches and arrests in the village by the Germans are continuing. Four Germans came and when they passed by the cowshed they asked if Elko was there. Our landlady answered that he was not there and they drove off in their car. I had the impression that on several nights the Germans staked-out the house, waiting for Elko. We held our breath, frightened that the Germans might hear us from the other side of the wall. This state of affairs continued until Sunday, 24.10, when Mykhailo came up to the attic. He shaved me; I have paid him five dollars a week up to now for this service. I asked him to think of a way to get us out of here, because it was impossible to go on in this way any longer. He promised to think about it and, indeed, a couple of hours later he reappeared and told us to pack our most essential items in one bundle for each person, because that night we were moving to the forest. We packed as he had told us to and at midnight he came and asked if we were ready. I begged him that before we went he should prepare a dugout for us in the forest where we could hide and not be out in the open, exposed.

Mykhailo answered that people had just informed Elko that today or tomorrow they would come to take him and that he should be careful.


The hideout
in the double ceiling

He thinks that within a few days the Elko business will calm down and then we can return. But for the moment, we must leave his house at once.

When I repeated my plea that he should first dig a dugout for us in the forest and only then would we move, he left us very angrily and said that we had only one way out - suicide. After him, Elko came and told us not to be afraid, because only the next two days were critical. We decided to go. We took our packages and at 4 a.m. we went out accompanied by Mykhailo and Elko.

Our landlady Polaha and my wife wept at parting. After we had walked for 100m my daughter felt sick and became dizzy. Mykhailo took her package from her and held her hand. The other children also became tired very quickly and we took their packages from them. So we went along until 9am.

Mykhailo left us to go to work and Elko stayed with us until the afternoon. He showed us how to dig a dugout which would give us some protection against the snow. We dug and dug for three days, during which time we slept under the open sky. When we woke up in the morning we were covered in snow which had fallen during the night. After three days we finished the pit. It was 70cm deep, 2.80m long and 1.80m wide. It was covered with branches and twigs and the entrance was through a tree's roots. Every three days either Mykhailo or Elko would bring us bread. Every two nights we made tea or coffee, because we were afraid that the smoke of a fire would be seen. Somebody once passed close to our pit and heard us talking. We did not notice him but he panicked and ran away shouting. On another occasion a group of tobacco smugglers saw the fire we had made in the gorge to make coffee. They saw us and greeted us because they did not realize we were Jews. We quickly doused the fire and got away from there as we were afraid they would come closer. When Mykhailo brought us food the next time, I asked him to go to my acquaintance Hoshko the forester - we were hiding in his section of the forest - and tell him that I ask him to come to my aid and save me from the certain death that lays in wait for me. Mykhailo explained to me that Hoshko is an extreme nationalist and his son is a member of the Nazi party and that is why he is frightened to talk to him. I told Mykhailo that I had done Hoshko a lot

of favors; I had helped him to buy a building plot in Hrebenov and we had been close friends and business associates until war broke out. I expressed my hope to Mykhailo that Hoshko would indeed help me. Mykhailo promised to meet him and to think about how to present my request to him. Hoshko was Mykhailo's superior, and when Mykhailo came to work he said to him, "I was in Skole and saw Wilf. He asks you to help him and send him something to eat." Hoshko answered, "What? Wilf is still alive? If he has stayed alive so long, we must help him to survive. If you go to Skole, I'll send him butter, honey, mushrooms and other foods." When Mykhailo heard this he said, "I see that Wilf was right when he said you were a true friend. If you want to see Wilf, as he asks, go to the gorge in the forest and there you'll see the place where he draws water and not far from there the dugout he is hiding in with his family."

Hoshko promised to do it and, indeed, a couple of days later he came to the pit and said, "You are really lying in a fox hole." When we all burst out crying and asked him to hide us at his place, he said that that was impossible, because all sorts of people come to visit him and he has a strange housemaid and a shepherd who cannot be trusted. He promised that he, Mykhailo and Elko would work out a way to dig a suitable dugout for us to spend the winter in. Afterwards, they'd plan what to do further. Mykhailo and Elko had a much better attitude towards me when they saw that Hoshko was helping me. They chose a suitable place and dug a pit about 90cm deep and covered it with branches with earth on top. In the side they made a window and brought a stove. They also made a bed out of planks, slightly off the floor, and put straw on it. The new dugout measures 2.5m by 3m. From the outside it was impossible to see anything. Hoshko brought us nearly 300kg of potatoes and left them at the foot of the mountain. from where we took them to our hiding place. He also brought us some butter, honey, mushrooms and other small items. On 10.11.1943 at 11am Mykhailo came and said, "Eat something before noon, pack up your belongings because we are moving to your new place. It's enough that you have spent 16 days here!" Outside it was very cold and the ground was slippery, covered with snow. We ate, packed our things and went. After walking for a half an hour, we had to go across another path on which they used to



The entrance to the underground hideout

bring hay, and just then my nephew fell and broke his leg in its lower part. He could not get up and began to shout and beg us to shoot him, otherwise we would all be in danger of being caught. Mykhailo began to tear his hair out and weep.

"Let God shoot you! I can't" shouted Mykhailo. "Why are you punishing me so?" he continued. He wrapped the injured boy in a blanket and dragged him into the forest. I calmed Mykhailo down and begged him not to give up hope or lose his self-confidence and to plan what we should do next. Mykhailo calmed down, made a fire and said that we should put hot compresses on him so that he should not freeze. He left the three heaviest packages there and went off with my wife and the three children. He instructed me to stoke the fire all night long. In the morning he would return with Elko and they would decide what to do.

Mykhailo had worked for the Russians from 1939 to 1941 as a supervisor in the stone quarry and there had been given a course in first-aid. By 5 p.m. they were already in the new pit. He left my wife and the children and ran to the village where he found Elko and brought him to me and the injured boy. They bound up his leg in bandages smeared in pig's fat and made a kind of stretcher. They wrapped him up in blankets, tied him to the stretcher and I together with Mykhailo started out carrying the stretcher at 10 p.m. Elko carried the bundles.

Every few minutes I had to stop, because I did not have the strength to carry him. I fell and just could not get up the steep mountain without a walking path. Mykhailo carried one bundle and Elko carried another and both of them carried Meyer. I carried the third bundle and the weapons. So we made our way up the mountain carrying Meyer. In the down-hill stretches they dragged the stretcher. In the thick parts of the forest, our clothes were torn, and I developed blood clots on my back. Towards morning we arrived half-dead at our new dugout. We laid Meyer down on the straw, changed his dressings, made a fire and cooked some food. We were happy. After eating, Mykhailo and Elko went home.

Two days later it poured with rain for 48 hours. Torrents of water came down the mountainside and even came into our hideout on one side and out on the other. The earth became soft and began to disintegrate on all sides. We went out into the open leaving the dugout com-

Board
Oven

pletely flooded. Some of our things were covered in earth; others we managed to take outside. We were wet to our very bones and we decided to go to Hoshko's that night. Towards evening the rain let up a little and then Mykhailo and Hoshko came running. When they saw the effects of the rain, they cut wood and started a large fire. Hoshko went home but Mykhailo stayed with us all night. He dried the bedclothes and the clothing by the fire and the children stood around the fire, warming themselves and drying their clothes. While doing so they scorched their shoes and their clothes. On the following day Mykhailo, Elko and Hoshko came and repaired the dugout and covered it again.

In the course of time Elko began to visit us more frequently, and brought milk, kerosene and other vital supplies. After each visit, we rubbed out his footprints in the snow.

Every day we examined an area of 100m around the dugout for footprints in the snow. And that is how the winter passed. On one occasion the kerosene in the stove caught fire and we had a small conflagration. My son grabbed my clothes and his to put out the fire. The fire was indeed put out, but half our clothes were burned and we were going about half-naked. From 25.1 Elko hid with us, because he had heard that some of the imprisoned Ukrainians had been shot. Only Mykhailo, his wife Polaha and son, Vasil, knew where Elko was hiding. From then until 14.4 he visited his home just twice, each time for two hours.

Meyer's foot swelled up a great deal during the first days, but today, 14.4, he is already walking on his leg because of the devoted treatment of Mykhailo who changed the dressings every two weeks and renewed the pig's fat.

Elko went home yesterday for the third time for the festival and will stay there for two days. As of yesterday, the roar of cannon can be heard not far from here. Apparently the front is already not far away. Since last week a Hungarian division has been stationed in the surrounding villages. A captain is billeted at Mykhailo's and there are four horses in the cowshed. A lot of Russian aircraft are seen in the sky. I received a Lvov newspaper of 29.3 and from it I learned that Lvov and Stanislavov are free of Germans.

In the course of time, seven Jews were caught in Sinevudzko and 30 in the Skole quarry. Shiki Hausman of Skole who was hiding with his

family somewhere in a village or in the forests went one night to Skole. On the way, a Christian acquaintance, Chechura, met him and invited him to his house to warm up. When they got there, he called the police who came immediately and took Hausman.

They tortured him cruelly until he took them to where his family was hiding. He was fortunate that it was raining heavily and he managed to slip away from the policeman who did not succeed in recapturing him.

Three weeks ago they met Tapf in Skole. I gave Hoshko ten dollars for his help in digging the dugout, and another ten for the potatoes and other items.

To Mykhailo I paid until 1.1.1944: Fifty dollars, a pair of shoes, 2m silk cloth, for what I received from him in the months September - December 1943.

316kg flour	3,956.5 zlotys
21kg apples	173 zlotys
650kg potatoes	850 zlotys
6kg groats	112.5 zlotys
170ltr milk	600 zlotys
2kg beans	24 zlotys
1.5kg onions	37 zlotys
0.65kg mushrooms	97.5 zlotys
Garlic (46)	52 zlotys
0.25ltr liquor	30 zlotys
6.5kg butter	900 zlotys
47 packets tobacco	396.5 zlotys
3kg cheese	21 zlotys
6kg salt	24 zlotys
7kg sugar	42.5 zlotys
4.5ltr kerosene	52.50 zlotys
3 packets saccharin	78 zlotys
2kg soda	6 zlotys
1kg conserves	18 zlotys
Coffee	23 zlotys
Total	7,872.5 zlotys
I paid $50 =	z5,157.5 zlotys

Balance	2,715 zlotys
Shoes and textiles	2,715 zlotys

I gave Hoshko four women's blouses, nine items of table-wear, alpaca, a pair of gloves, a pair of socks, five handkerchiefs, a scarf, a bead necklace and a pin.

I wanted to give Mykhailo my mother's diamond ring because I have no money left to pay for his services, but he refused to take it. He still believes that I will regain everything I had before.

15.4.1944 Elko came this morning and brought 20kg of flour, some milk and other items.

Mykhailo helped him carry the food to the foot of the mountain and they left it there. The children are bringing the supplies up to our dugout bit by bit. Elko says that the Hungarian soldiers are looting everything. They wanted to take an ox away from Mashliovicki, an inhabitant of Korostów, but he resisted. The soldiers shot him. From German announcements: They have retaken Kolomyja. Elko went home tonight.

16.4.1944 I brought some wood. The snow is half melted, but it is still a half a meter deep.

17.4.1944 My wife complains that she has pains in the region of her heart.

18.4.1944 My wife cannot move the right side of her body.

19.4.1944 I have taken her out into the sun, because she has difficulty breathing in the dugout. She is not able to walk. Towards evening she felt better.

20.4.1944 My wife feels much better. Elko came towards morning and brought 25kg of flour, 100kg of potatoes and a bread-roll from the festival.

The Russians have conquered Chortkov and are also advancing in Rumania. The Americans and English have entered Rome and are advancing in Italy.

The murderer, Suslenic, is commanding a force of 3,000 Ukrainians. They have brought 300 Jews from Hungary to dig defense trenches for them.

In the evening Elko went home.

21.4.1944 In the places exposed to the sun, the snow has already melted. I went up the mountain with the children and there we saw tracks of deer, wolves and wild pigs. The officials in several departments have been sent away and the documents burned. The Germans have left. The wagon-load of supplies which was meant for the workers was redirected to Dembitza and the workers have to go on working without food. Money cannot buy anything.

Today, I cleaned the gun that Elko had brought.

26.4.1944 Towards morning Elko brought butter, milk, sugar and four newspapers from 19-22.4 which appear in Lvov in the Ukrainian language. According to these papers, the front has stabilized not far from here. In Hungary the extermination of the Jews is coming to an end. In Skole a Jew came out of hiding and went to the police to be shot because of hunger. Elko went home in the evening.

27.4.1944 In the mountains it is snowing again and the snow which came down six months ago is still on the ground in many places. Towards evening I heard dogs barking and I immediately prepared the gun to defend us if anybody comes near. But they went away and I don't know who was with the dogs.

28.4.1944 Torrential rain.

29.4.1944 In the night Mykhailo came after returning from Stanislavov where he stayed for three days with the forester Moshinski to help with the transfer of Moshinski's daughter and her family to Skole, because the front is now at Stanislavov. Mykhailo tells: The Russians were in Stanislavov for two weeks and then withdrew a few kilometers. They concealed tanks in the forest and when the Germans returned the tanks charged out of the forests and destroyed about a thousand Germans without

themselves suffering any losses. They then joined up with the rest of the Russian army.

Mykhailo brought me 10kg of groats, 5kg of flour, 500gm of butter, some milk and 200kg of potatoes and went home.

30.4.1944 I and the children brought up the supplies.

1.5.1944 It is snowing.

2.5.1944 I collected firewood.

3.5.1944 Elko brought some kerosene and took away the empty sacks. The Russians are advancing slowly. Various strong gangs are roaming around in the area.

4.5.1944 I destroyed the frozen path on which we brought up the supplies, because the footprints in the snow lead directly to our hideout.

All over we are finding bones of deer killed by wolves and bears.

5.5.1944 I collected firewood.

6.5.1944 Elko brought 12kg of flour, 800gm of butter and 4 liters of milk.

The front has stabilized again. The railway is not functioning because the Russians have bombed the tracks and the bridges.

At noon we went up with Elko to the peak of the mountain and he showed us there a huge oak tree, 2.25m in diameter, with a hollow trunk. At the base there was an opening like a door 30cm high and wide. Through this opening it is possible to get inside the trunk. There is space inside for three people and if all the rotten material was cleared out, all six of us could fit in.

Elko says that if we prepare the tree properly, it will be a good hideout for the whole summer. Mykhailo's grandfather, and later, Mykhailo himself, used to hunt deer and hide them in this tree, so that furred predators would be enticed and caught in the traps prepared for them. They used to sell the skins to me. Now its my turn to enter this tree trunk.

7.5.1944 We heard two rifle shots not far from us and immediately ran back to the dugout.

8.5.1944 Rain, cold. At the foot of the mountain there is a conflagration and they are shooting there. Elko went down to see what is happening. Mykhailo came up to see us and told us that yesterday a few Germans had come to Hoshko in order to go on a hunting expedition. They had shot birds. Today, he started the conflagration at the foot of the mountain and also fired off shots so that nobody should come here. He, together with ten other workers, undertook to clean the forests, but he told them to stay at home because anyway they would not be paid for the work. The Germans want everybody to work. Chaos reigns supreme and everybody does as he pleases. Elko got a job under Hoshko, to make it easier for him to come to us without arousing suspicion. He asked me what I needed and I told him that I have everything except potatoes. Mykhailo told me not to worry, because soon there would be new potatoes. Both went home towards evening.

9.5.1944 It is snowing again.

10.5.1944 Today it is warm. We washed and cleaned ourselves outside.

13.5.1944 Warm rain.

14.5.1944 Elko came towards morning and brought 7 liters of milk, 1kg of sugar, 2kg of salt, 250gm of butter. He relates: Yesterday, thirty men in German uniforms - he notes that they were really Ukrainians under Suslenic's command - fell upon the Czech forester, Kafka, and murdered him, his 23-year old son, the servant and the Ukrainian housemaid from Tisovitz. They also murdered several Jewish families who were hiding in the forest under Kafka's protection. His second wife, a Ukrainian woman he married a short time ago, betrayed him and informed on him that he was hiding Jews and even revealed the hiding places. They did not harm her and left her alive. Eighteen Jews working at digging fortifications for the German army, took Hungarian army horses and escaped into the forest. Hungarian soldiers pursued them

and found traces which indicated that the Jews had slaughtered one horse and had fled deep into the forest with the others. The soldiers, in their search, came close to our dugout. Mykhailo's cousin has already brought her animals to graze at the summer cowshed. The shepherds go out looking for mushrooms and while doing so come close to our hiding place. In view of this, Elko has ordered us to start getting ready to move to a new hideout, higher on the mountain in a dry place. Today we saw a battle in the sky between a German airplane and a Russian one. It was our luck that they flew over us.

15.5.1944 Mykhailo tells that yesterday the Russians dropped two bombs on the municipal gardens in Skole. There are several casualties.

16.5.1944 We finished digging the hiding place.

17.5.1944 In Kafka's forest they murdered seven Jews. One girl got away. Suslenic, the murderer, was slightly wounded in the arm by a Jew. The murdered were: the Lerer family from Tisovitz, Weizner from Sukha, Koenig from Rosochoch. Kafka and his son were buried in Skole, the two servants in Tisovitz, but the Jews were not buried at all.

We have peeled the bark off eight trees and used it to cover the roof of our new dugout. Each bark is 1.40m by 2.20m.

19.5.1944 The dugout is nearly ready. Above it some earth and bushes. The chimney extends far into the mountain and the smoke emerges there from between the bushes so that it will not be seen.

20.5.1944 We hear the noise of exploding bombs not far off. Mykhailo and Vasilchio brought 7 liters of milk, 3kg of preserves, 1kg of sugar, coffee and 3 loaves of bread. They gave us haircuts. The Americans and the English are continuing to advance in Italy. I told Elko to go home that night and bring us potatoes and flour. I gave Vasilchio two silver spoons as a gift. I killed a snake near our dugout.

22.5.1944 On the top of the mountain the snow has not yet melted. I and my son slept outside last night.

In the New Hideout

24.5.1944 Elko brought 200kg of potatoes and 7 liters of milk. Today we moved to the new hideout.

25.5.1944 Elko went home after he brought the potatoes up to the new hideout - a month's supply.

26.5.1944 Elko brought 25kg of flour, butter and milk.

27.5.1944 Today is Saturday. Elko brought us firewood. Mykhailo came and said that in Skole they are building many defensive trenches, stretching for kilometers to the foot of the Carpathians, from Stanislavov up to Turka. In Korostów the Germans have chosen sites and set up artillery posts in them. People say that civilians will be evacuated from Korostów and Skole, because they are getting ready to fight battles there. If that actually happens, Mykhailo does not know what will happen to us, because he will not be able to look after us. Therefore, he asks me to write a letter to my acquaintance - who he thinks is my good friend - the director of the Ukrainian school, Topolnicki, telling him that I am still alive and that he should take good care of the possessions I deposited with him.

28.5.1944 I wrote a letter to Topolnicki telling him that I am still alive and asking him to take good care of everything I deposited with him, in particular the skins packed in the four containers. I did not reveal our whereabouts to him. To tell the truth, I know he does not want to see me alive and all he wants is to take my property. I gave the letter to Elko. It seems to me that both Mykhailo and Elko have doubts as to their ability to save me if the civilians are evacuated. The partizans are shooting frequently and signalling to each other not far from us.

30.5.1944 We brought planks of wood from a forester's house.

31.5.1944 We paneled the walls of the dugout with planks and made a door. Russian and German airplanes are flying over us all the time. Mykhailo brought 5kg of groats and some onions, coffee and milk. The partizans

shot at a German motor-car in the forest near Kosiova. They burned the car and the driver and the one officer who came out alive they took with them. The Russians are only advancing in Rumania; on all the other fronts they have called a halt.

1.6.1944 Elko came but brought nothing with him as the roads are swarming with partizans. Yesterday the Germans and Hungarians surrounded Kosiova and took away all the men between 14 and 60 years of age. They caught a Jewish family there - Shaya Hausman and his wife and child and her sister with her child - and murdered them. Earlier, I wrote how Shaya Hausman had been handed over to the police by Chechura but had succeeded in escaping. To my sorrow, he did not succeed this time. They found German and Hungarian uniforms in the houses of peasants and confiscated them. The body of the German officer who the partizans took from the car they burned was found in the forest.

5.6.1944 There is still snow on the mountain peaks, but at the foot of the mountains trees are blossoming. It is warm outside.

6.6.1944 Elko has visited us several times with empty hands, because a large military force has come to the village and in the forests Russian partizans are fighting - sometimes among themselves. This week some Ukrainians from Kroshilenic trapped a few Russian partizans and murdered them. Afterwards many Russian partizans appeared and murdered several Ukrainians from that village. Elko came today a little drunk and started to say that Jews should not be saved, because, when the Russians come they will tell what happened here and the Russians will hold all inhabitants responsible. He said that among the Russian partizans was a Jew named Olchio Hirsch, aged 19, the son of Alter Hirsch, who was caught by the Germans on 25.12.1942 among the 31 Jews who were hiding in Botivla when 14 of them were shot on the spot and the remaining 17 were taken to Stryi.

Olchio Hirsch, it will be remembered, succeeded in escaping from the transport to Stryi by jumping off the train and now he is with the Russian partizans. He came with them to the village and demanded that the Ukrainians return the possessions they had taken from the thir-

ty-one Jews and the gold teeth they had extracted from the mouths of the murdered Jews. Some of the Korostów Ukrainians fled to Skole out of fear of Hirsch. Elko says that they will still pull his teeth out. The 253 men of Koziowa who were taken away on 1.6.1944 are at present digging trenches in Skole. The Hungarian Jews who dug trenches there have been taken from Skole. The Americans and the English have landed in France.

7.6.1944 I went to meet Mykhailo who was supposed to bring me potatoes to the foot of the mountain, but could not because of the partizans.

The new hideout is far better than the old one and it is dry. I am very frightened to chop wood in case I will be heard and I am afraid to cook in case the smoke is seen, because various gangs are roaming around in the forest. The Hungarian army yesterday burned down a house in which Russian partizans had stayed.

My wife walked a few steps from the hideout and could not find her way back. So she went down to the summer house where she met Elko who brought her back to us. Elko went home and did all he could to bring us potatoes, because we only have enough for two days.

Tonight it rained strongly, with thunder and lightning. I took advantage of the weather and chopped enough firewood to last for a long time.

8.6.1944 Elko brought 200kg of potatoes and some milk and we took it up to the hideout before dawn in two trips.

9.6.1944 We heard three loud explosions. Elko went home.

11.6.1944 Elko came early in the morning and brought milk, butter, coffee, three loaves of bread and two newspapers from Lvov from a couple of days ago.

The Germans have announced that they have withdrawn from Rome. On 8.6 Russian partizans blew up bridges on the main road in Kosiova, at the ninth kilometer of the railway from Korostów.

Yesterday about 800 Germans ascended to Botivla and today the Hungarians joined them to hunt Russian partizans. We are helpless

and our lives are in danger all the time. The whole area is swarming with soldiers. Mykhailo has been working for two days in Skole, digging.

12.6.1944 Elko says that Mykhailo must work for 14 days in the diggings. His wife will go with Vasilchio to Hrebenov if they evacuate the population from Korostów. They themselves do not know what to do with us should this happen. They cannot get food or bring it to us. They suffer very great difficulties because of us.

14.6.1944 Elko says that the partizans are looting everything in the houses: food, underwear, animals and other things. Many foresters have been forced to join the soldiers in hunting the partizans. Our landlady took two cows and went to the summer house at the foot of the mountain near us. Elko came to the temporary cowshed at the foot of the mountain and Vasilchio brought us milk and said that if we were to go to the Russian partizans they would do us no harm and would take us with them.

15.6.1944 A unit of German troops which went with Hoshko's son to hunt partizans, met a group of partizans - seventeen men and two women - and shot one of them - the Jewish commander of our area, Chalmer of Rosochoch. The 18 others escaped into the woods.

17.6.1944 The German army has appealed to the Ukrainian inhabitants of Korostów to help them exterminate the partizans in the area.

18.6.1944 Our landlady came and told us that Mykhailo has already finished digging in Skole and from tomorrow will return to work in the forest near us. The villagers are very frightened and sleep at night in the forest together with their animals. They bury all their household utensils in the fields. At night, the partizans visit the village and in daytime - the Germans. They all loot everything they can lay their hands on. A few days ago the partizans took flour and underwear from Mykhailo.

19.6.1944 Mykhailo relates: The Germans are being pushed out of Italy energet-

The last hiding place

ically. My letter to Topolnicki, which I wrote some time ago at Mykhailo's request, was indeed delivered by him to Topolnicki's wife, when he Topolnicki himself was at school teaching. Mykhailo watched as the woman read the letter and saw that if she could have, she would have shot him or handed him over to the Germans.

But she was alone in the house and could not do either. She told Mykhailo that she did not know anybody called Wilf. Mykhailo asked if she would agree to hand over some of the things Wilf had deposited with them and she answered that he should come back later when her husband was at home. Mykhailo told her that at the moment he did not want anything but she should take care of my possessions, particularly the skins which were hidden outside because I would be needing them soon.

Mykhailo left the house and ran away. I do not feel well and breathe with difficulty. Mykhailo's cousin, Aleksei Svystun, who with his wife and child, is presently staying in the summer house at the foot of the mountain, went into the forest yesterday and saw the temporary cowshed Elko built for Mykhailo's two cows. He was frightened to go close to it and told Mykhailo's brother-in-law, Dmitri, about it, on the assumption that it was occupied by Ukrainian partizans. Vasilchio was standing nearby and heard what Aleksei said and ran to Mykhailo his father to tell him.

Mykhailo immediately ran to Aleksei but he was not at home. He told Aleksei's wife that the structure was a temporary cowshed for his cows and asked her to tell her husband not to mention it to anybody, because it is not peace-time and Aleksei interferes in everything and wants to know everything. Nowadays, it is better to act as if you are deaf and dumb. Who knows how many people Aleksei has already told?

Elko found Aleksei and told him that he is hiding in the structure. Aleksei told Elko that twenty months ago he had seen Mykhailo transporting things from Skole and he had suspected then that Mykhailo had made some deal with Wilf, to hide him. Later, when my brother and his son came to him to buy skins, his suspicion that Mykhailo was hiding us had grown stronger. In time he had heard from the forester Rodnicki and from the Jewish cobbler "San" that I and my family were

hiding in Korostów and he was sure that I was at Mykhailo's, but since he was a decent man, he had not told anybody. He believes that Mykhailo did indeed hide me, but that I am no longer alive. I told Mykhailo to make a reckoning of what I owed him for the six months I had not paid him, but he said that he would do so after the war. I kissed him.

20.6.1944 Snakes and wild pigs are swarming not far from our hideout.

21.6.1944 Mykhailo and his son came, very frightened. Yesterday when Vasilchio was bringing us milk he arrived at another hideout, got scared and fled with the milk. Today, Mykhailo came with him to see what had happened and realized that Vasilchio had simply gone up the mountain from a different direction and had come to our hideout but did not recognize it.

Partizans continue to shoot in the mountains around us and that is how they maintain communication between themselves. Yesterday they conducted an investigation in the village to discover who had informed the Germans about the Jewish Ratbaum family in the forest whom the Germans had shot. According to the newspapers there are fierce battles in France.

22.6.1944 From yesterday I am staying at nights with Elko in the temporary cowshed in the forest with the two cows. During the day Vasilchio grazes the cows here.

At 1 a..m.. a Russian plane flew over the Botivla forests and communicated with the partizans by flares. I am struggling with myself whether to go to the partizans.

Our landlady brought my *Tallit* from her house to the summer house and from there Elko brought it to me together with my *Tefilin* which Mykhailo had buried in the ground when he left the house and moved to the forest. The *Tefilin* had been ripped open; apparently they wanted to see what was inside. They also brought me flour, milk, butter and tobacco.

23.6.1944 Vasilchio brought milk.

24.6.1944 Elko says that there are four Jews from Skole among the partizans, including Olchio Hirsch, who, as I wrote earlier, demanded that the Ukrainians in Korostów return what they had taken from the Jews. One of the Korostów farmers did return things, including gold teeth.

Bazan and Ravenski fled to Skole out of fear of Olchio Hirsch. Elko is very angry at the young Hirsch and says that they should not give in to the partizans and that he would still witness how they will take Hirsch's clothes off him and pull out his teeth after his death, when the German unit arrives, the day after tomorrow.

25.6.1944 Today, together with the children, we cleaned out the rotten tree. We threw out all the rotten debris and cleaned up the space, so that we now have a hideout for six persons. This will be the best hideout. Yesterday I sent a letter to the Russian partizans by way of Mykhailo asking them if I can come to them with the children. The Germans have begun to evacuate civilians from several villages, because the front is coming near. In the evening Elko brought butter, sugar and milk. When I was with him last night in the cowshed we saw Russian planes flying over and signalling to the partizans.

26.6.1944 At 3 a.m. I returned with Elko to our hideout. In the afternoon, together with the children I collected firewood, enough for two weeks.

I saw 70 American planes flying over the mountains from Hungary to Poland. At night I decided to go with the three boys to the partizans on Saturday night, 1.7. My wife and daughter would meanwhile stay in Mykhailo's and Elko's care for two reasons: 1. If the Germans find them they can say that they are not Jewish, and 2. They would not be capable of running from place to place with the partizans. If I see that conditions are better with the partizans and they agree, I will bring them too.

27.6.1944 Last night Elko came and said that Mykhailo wanted to meet me in the forest at kilometer 10, because he cannot go far from his work with the other workers. At noon I met him and he wanted to know what I thought about joining the partizans. He had not yet delivered my letter to the partizans. I told him that I did not know myself, but that I would

do whatever he and Elko suggested. Mykhailo said that he could not advise me, because he did not know how long it would be before the Russians came and he did not know which place was safer. He also said that he would only be able to supply us with food for another month. He had heard that the Bandera men, together with the Ukrainian volunteers to the SS, were going to mount an attack against the partizans today or tomorrow. Mykhailo also told me that one of the officers of the Russian partizans had yesterday given him money to buy a liter of liquor for him and he had undertaken to deliver it today at kilometer 10. If he met a Jewish partizan from Skole he would establish contact between us. Today, one of the peasants was looking for his horses in the forest and saw us chopping wood close to our hideout. He turned away as though he had not seen us. His name is Rafe. Yesterday the partizans shot two Hungarian soldiers who were guarding twenty-two Hungarian Jews digging trenches in Hrebenov. They took the Jews with them into the forest. Mykhailo told Elko to go home and bring us food and me to go and sleep with the cows.

Yesterday many partizans passed through Skole and saw a few Germans guarding Hungarian Jews who were working at digging. The partizans shot a few shots in the air, laughed and left.

28.6.1944 Elko came but without food. He says that there are a lot of Poles and Jews among the partizans. He also says that the Ukrainians killed all the Jews and many Poles and that they would pay for it. The Ukrainians are aware of this and so they are doing everything in their power to destroy the witnesses to their crimes, and they are exterminating the Poles and the Jews and they also want to exterminate the partizans.

29.6.1944 Mykhailo brought 50kg of potatoes. A German force and Ukrainian volunteers to the SS ascended the mountain and attacked the Bandera men.

30.6.1944 Our landlady tells us that the partizans are turning the village upside down. They beat people up demanding various things. She ran away in the middle of the night. One of the partizans told her that Ukrainians and Germans attacked them yesterday, which is why they are angry.

The 70 American planes which flew over us on 26.6 bombed the "Galician" oil refinery in Drohobycz and for two nights we could see the flames rising into the sky there. I am very scared about going down to the foot of the mountain to get the 50kg of potatoes which Mykhailo brought yesterday, because of the various gangs in the area. Towards evening Elko came and said that he had decided to stay here and not return to his house in the village, because the army and the partizans are there like flies. Yesterday they attacked the partizans from all directions - from Skole, from Turka and from Drohobycz. In the battles there were dead on both sides. "You mustn't leave the hideout now," said Elko. We hear the echos of heavy machine-gun fire from the forest. My plan to go to the partizans tomorrow is cancelled.

1.7.1944 Rain.

2.7.1944 I brought up the 50kg of potatoes. The children brought a little milk, sugar, tobacco, saccharin and newspapers from 28.6, in which there are reports of a very slow general retreat of the Germans. Yesterday two hundred policemen came to the village and the inhabitants fled to the forest, lest they be taken away.

3.7.1944 We have heard shooting in the Botivla forest for the past three nights running.

6.7.1944 Mykhailo saw Olchio Hirsch of the partizans and invited him to his house. He is not sure whether he will accept the invitation. Hirsch told him that yesterday a Polish woman from Skole came to him and asked if the partizans would take a Jewish family she was hiding. They refused, because the family included a child. I do not believe everything he says. Yesterday there were many Germans in Skole to take civilians away. Mykhailo thinks they are taking them to Germany but I think they are evacuating civilians to prepare the place as a battle front.

Mykhailo brought five liters of milk and 10kg of flour. The partizans are going to move to the Turka-Sanok area.

When I went out to gather mushrooms I came across a peasant grazing his two horses. I ran away and he did too together with his horses.

18.7.1944 In the course of time, I have received 90kg of flour, 50kg of potatoes, 2kg of butter, and milk. The partizans have left the area. I collected enough firewood for two months. Yesterday Mykhailo travelled to the hospital in Stryi.

Today Elko came and said that he is going away for two weeks to harvest fodder. He brought a propaganda leaflet the Russians dropped on the German and Hungarian armies telling them that the Russians have taken Kowal, Vilna, Minsk and Baranowich and will soon conquer Stanislavov, Lvov and Drohobycz. They appeal to the German and Hungarian armies not to cause unnecessary bloodshed.

23.7.1944 Mykhailo has returned from Stryi. He says that he saw the Germans fleeing from Lvov in the direction of Przemyśl in panic, because the Russians have conquered Lvov. He heard that a revolution has broken out in Germany and that they have shot Hitler. Yesterday the trenches in Skole were completed and are filled with German soldiers.

Mykhailo told us to remain quietly in our places. He is sure that the Russians will arrive in two or three days' time. He took away the gun from me, because in the place of the fodder harvest there are bears. He says that he is more concerned for our lives than he is for his own. He also told us to obliterate the footprints we have left when we return to the hideout to bring supplies and firewood.

24.7.1944 We camouflaged and blurred all the footprints leading to our hiding place.

25.7.1944 Munyo and Benek went out to collect mushrooms and saw a large group of men with dogs not far away. They hid under the trees until the group, which numbered several hundred civilians who spoke Ukrainian, passed. I forbade them to go out.

27.7.1944 Our landlady came to see whether we were still alive, because Bandera gangs had come this way and burned down houses on their inhabitants.

28.7.1944 Mykhailo brought butter, milk and coffee. He tells that the Bandera

gang killed Polish families and the Ukrainian family, Bendrovich, at kilometer 10. Bendrovich himself managed to escape to Skole. They burned more than twenty people to death. He asked me whether he should bring me some venison he had hunted, but I answered him that I had not eaten non-kosher food up till now and I was not going to now.

The Front Draws Near to Skole

2.8.1944 Elko came and told me that Mykhailo is at home, ill. A German captain is staying at his place and there are five hundred Germans in the village and a large number of Hungarians. And more keep coming all the time.

A large number of artillery pieces and tanks have been stationed at kilometer 9. Mykhailo heard German announcements on the radio of the German captain saying that the Russians took Lvov yesterday and Khodorov today. People say that the Russians are already in Bolekhov and that their patrols have reached Rozhanka on the Hungarian border. Skole is surrounded on all sides. The priest and his entourage have equipped themselves with the necessary documents to emigrate to Hungary with the Germans.

5.8.1944 Elko and our landlady have taken away the two cows at the foot of the mountain because troops are in that area. They have hidden the cows in another place in the forest. From the early hours of the morning we have heard the echoes of artillery fire from Korostów to Sinevudzko, with the shells passing over our heards. We are on the front line.

6.8.1944 Russian planes are attacking Korostów and the Germans are firing at them from there.

7.8.1944 At 10 a.m. Elko brought us milk. He says that to the place where he, our landlady and Vasilchio, and the two cows are located, many people from Korostów have crowded in together with twenty cows. Elko says that Mykhailo is a real adventurer staying in his house and guarding it against destruction. Mykhailo believes he still has time to go into hiding. On their way here, he heard from some people that all the men

of Korostów - those who did not go behind the front and those who did not hide - have been taken away to dig trenches. More soldiers have come and mounted a search in the forest for people hiding with their cattle. When they find them, they confiscate the cattle and move the people behind the front, a distance of 25km. Elko says - and I see it myself - that the Russians are only a few hundred meters away and the Germans are sitting in the trenches which were dug recently. At 12 noon three Germans on horses passed the foot of the mountain riding towards Mt. Parashka which is about 500m away. This is one of the three highest mountains in Poland. A few minutes later they returned near our summer house. Elko asked me about our food supplies and I told him that we had enough flour for three days only. I begged him to try to get us some food, because who knows if they will be able to reach us. He promised to think about it and ran away. I heard orders in German from the foot of the mountain: "Right! Left! Straight ahead!" In accordance with these orders the soldiers split up in different directions with heavy cannons and tanks through the mountains and the forests. We did not eat the food we cooked last night, so it will be for tomorrow.

8.8.1944 In the morning I took the bucket to fetch water from the streams which flow out of the mountain, not far from our hideout. The forest there is not thick and I was afraid that the Germans might see me. What did I do? I placed the bucket in the stream and went back a distance of about ten paces and stood among the trees. Five minutes later when the bucket was full I returned, grabbed it and returned to the hideout. I want to hope that the Germans did not notice me. The six of us quickly ran to our hiding place inside the tree and sat there till the evening. From there we heard conversations in Ukrainian between Ukrainian civilians hiding among the trees and, from the other side, I heard the conversations of the German soldiers. In the evening, on our way back to our hideout, we suddenly heard a dog barking and shouts in German. We panicked and ran straight back to the tree. While running the sole of one of my boots fell off. And so I ran over sharp rocks, half barefooted, to the tree, where we lay until it became dark and only then returned to our hideout. We kindled a fire and cooked flour into wafers

until morning. We prepared food for a few days because in these days it is impossible to make a fire every night in case the smoke gives us away. Who knows whether it was noticed this night? My wife went to sleep.

9.8.1944 At 4 a.m. I heard the cannons and the tanks going back down the mountain. We were delighted - we hope that the Russians will arrive within a couple of hours. But at 5 a.m when Hungarian forces began to ascend the mountain, we realized that we were surrounded on three sides by trenches with soldiers in them. On the fourth side were the Russians on Mt. Parashka. The army was shelling them from Korostów in the direction of the Stryi river. From this I understood that the Russians were advancing from the mountain towards Stanislavov, Kalush, Bolekhov, Skole, Turka and Syanka. At 4 p.m. our landlady arrived, half-dead. She brought 5kg of flour, 3kg of beans, salt and onions. She asked us to ration ourselves because she had no more food and by coming here she was endangering her life. She told us that Mykhailo had been taken from Korostów to Hrebenov where they made him work at carrying ammunition into the mountains as well as wounded Germans. I told her that our food supply had run out. If the Russians arrived within a few days, we could maybe hold out, if not - we would not survive and we were in danger of being caught because of the fires we lit and because of the water we had to fetch. The forest is full of soldiers. The cannons are shooting continually and shrapnel is falling near our hideout.

I put on Mykhailo's boots because I cannot walk barefoot. These were the new boots I once gave him in payment for food.

10.8.1944 Tonight we managed to sleep despite the artillery shells flying over our heads. At noon we ate a meal consisting of two spoons of flour and a spoonful of milk, which we had prepared two days ago. This was our meal for the day.

11.8.1944 When we woke up in the morning we could not get dressed, we were so weak from hunger and thirst. My wife suggested that we eat twice a day because the army camped near us would surely leave in the next

five days, but my opinion was that we eat only once a day because there was no guarantee that the army would leave within five days and we could not expect to get food from Mykhailo. Although we can already see the Russians, we do not dare to take even one step. The children said they would wait to eat until noon and we all lay down and rested. We heard a rustling in the branches. My son crawled out carefully but everything was quiet. He said that it must have been a wild pig which passed close by and suggested that I take the axe and perhaps we would succeed in killing one of the young pigs. I told him, "Don't be an idiot! Only Mykhailo, Aleksei and Stefan can do such things. We certainly cannot. And furthermore, if we strike a wild pig it will scream so much that all the army will come here!" We heard the rustling again and my son went also on this occasion to investigate. He came back frightened. "Father, a Gentile is standing under the tree!" "Who is it? Mykhailo?" "No! It's Aleksei!" I ran out in my underwear and Aleksei shouted, "Wilf, don't shoot!" In one hand he held a pistol and in the other - a hand-grenade, and he had a knife stuck in his belt. I ran to him and kissed him and told him to lay down his pistol and the hand-grenade. He listened to me and laid his weapons down. He asked me if there were any strangers inside and when I replied negatively he crawled into the hideout. He immediately asked who the strange children were and I told him that they were the children of my brother and my brother-in-law. My brother is certainly still alive. He told me that he was going to bring his wife and child who were hiding in the trees a short distance away. He told us not to be afraid and that yesterday he had escaped from the Germans. "After they took my cow and calf from the summer house, they wanted to take me to the front, but I and my family ran away here by crossing the stream," he said. "I am left without any food at all except a small amount of flour I hid under a house." I calmed him down by telling him we would all stay alive and we would also have belongings. He said that tonight he would sleep in the dugout where I had spent the winter and he immediately understood that we had been there a long time, and he also concluded that I had been with Mykhailo, since only he and Mykhailo used to come to this spot. He had been unsure as to whether we had remained alive until now. Aleksei continued, "From now on we will stay together, my fam-

ily and your family and I hope that we will not lack food. Don't be afraid. The Russians will soon be here. All you must do is sit quietly."

Aleksei also said that the army is afraid to enter the forest and will not come here. He promised to bring water that night and to take care of everything.

The Germans burned 70% of Skole. They are stabilizing a front on Mt Parashka. I said to Aleskei, "Look! I'm not a religious man but your coming here is the work of the finger of God, because otherwise we'd have starved to death." We were both very happy at having met. However, shortly his five-year old son burst out crying and could not be stopped. They closed his mouth in case the soldiers nearby heard which would bring a catastrophe down on us. His mother and father asked him why we was crying and with difficulty he blurted out that he was afraid of us, because we are Jews and Jews would murder him. His parents told him that we were not Jews, but aristocrats and that he had nothing to fear from us. They gave him something to keep him quiet. Aleksei says that if it happens again he will be forced to leave the place because of us, because if the soldiers find him they will punish him and send him behind the front but us they will kill. He gave each of us a piece of bread. We carried on talking until we fell asleep.

12.8.1944 All night and even now we hear machine-gun fire. In the afternoon Aleksei leaves us and soon returns with 6kg of flour which he found hidden with some cloths in a tree. He did not take the clothes, only the flour. He says that on the other side of the hill a family is hiding with four cows, three calves and some sheep. That family has enough food and so he has decided to relieve it of one cow. Now we ate our fill. Aleksei wants to go out and see where the soldiers are keeping the animals so that in the evening he will know where to go to take a cow and bring it here. I do not agree and stop him from going.

13.8.1944 Tonight we kindled a fire, cooked, baked wafers and ate our fill. Aleksei wrapped the bucket and his boots in rags so that he will not be heard when he goes to fetch water.

20.8.1944 Every day Aleksei brings milk and mushrooms. He also brought 12kg

of flour. We are eating our fill. He meets people hiding in the forest who have plenty of food. Some of them respond to his begging and give him food; as far as the others are concerned he finds the place where they hide their food supplies, takes some and brings it to us. The Germans caught his mother and brother-in-law hiding in the forest with their cows. They took the cows, but the people got away. In the morning I saw a man near our hideout. When he saw me, he became frightened and started to run away. I called out to him and when he came near I asked him who he was. He could hardly get a word out, but he told me he lived at the foot of the mountain. I then said to him, "You are Dmitri the miller, you have a brother called Andrei and a brother-in-law, Mykhailo Svystum."

He was astounded, "How do you know all this? How do you know me, but I don't know you?" I said, "I know that you are an intelligent and decent man who realizes what will happen to you and your family if you tell anybody about us." I immediately called Aleksei, his cousin, and he spoke to him. Afterwards he told us that we need not fear that he would inform on us. What had happened was that Dmitri had gone looking for Aleksei, but had found us. I have no alternative but to trust him. That night Aleksei brought us 4 liters of milk which Dmitri gave him.

21.8.1944 Towards morning a sixteen-year old boy, Petro Rawenski, who is hiding with his family in the forest not far from us, came close to our hideout. He saw us. His mother is Dmitri's sister. I ran to Aleksei straight away and told him about the boy. When he heard my story, Aleksei told me and his wife that he saw he had no choice and would have to kill the boy on the spot. "We dare not trust him," said Aleksei, "he will tell about us that he met Jews with Aleksei, and how will it look to my Ukrainian people that I saved Jews?" Only after great effort did we persuade him and his wife took away from him the knife he was going to use to murder the boy.

Rawenski's wife hurried and brought Dmitri, the boy's uncle. Aleksei and Dmitri explained to the lad that if he told anybody, he would bring great suffering on the whole family. They were not guilty because I was here, because I had only just arrived from another village

and could not get across to the Russians. They said that it was now too late to do me any harm and that I would certainly compensate them generously. Rawenski promised that nobody would hear anything from him and I said that I was leaving tomorrow. He asked for my torn boots but Aleksei did not allow me to give them to him. Rawenski understood that I was not really intending to leave tomorrow, and that I had only said what I said because I was afraid of him.

Rawenski went away. Aleksei, his wife and his child went hastily to Dmitri's family, because they were afraid that the boy would talk. Aleksei told us to scatter outside the hideout, each one of us in a different ravine, because if they come, they will spread out through the forest. We did as he said. We left our most valuable things in the hideout, the bedclothes, underwear, etc. We took some of the things with us and we hid under the trees. I gave Aleksei a blanket, some underwear and other small items.

22.8.1944 The side of the ravine is so steep that you cannot sit or lie down. You have to sit with your legs around a tree, otherwise you slide right down into the water and then the soldiers might spot you. That is how I passed the night and the day. Towards evening we went back to cook something, because it was hard to hold out.

23.8.1944 Last night Aleksei came and brought milk from Dmitri's wife, Mykhailo's sister. They had to tell her too the whole story, because they asked her for milk.

Aleksei says that they are gradually withdrawing the military forces from here, who are apparently surrounded on all sides. In the night my son and I climbed a tall tree and saw the soldiers lying in their defensive trenches and even heard them talking to the command post on the telephone. Today we watched them withdrawing to their first line on Mt. Parashka.

Aleksei says that Mykhailo has run away from Hrebnov and by way of the forest has reached the second mountain. He is together with his wife and son again. It is very hard for him to get to me, because there is an army encamped between the two mountains, but "Mykhailo will surely come, because nothing is too hard for him," says Aleksei. I took

some food with me and early in the morning I will go down to the ravine.

24.8.1944 Until evening we stayed in our ravines and then returned to the hideout.

Aleksei came with his wife and brought 4kg of potatoes and a liter of milk. He is angry with me for taking 12kg of flour which he hid in a tree. I told him that I did not know that it was his flour and gave him back 3kg. Somehow, they will manage with that much. Aleksei took the flour and kept quiet. He had also seen Rawenski who had promised not to tell anybody. Aleksei explained that I did not need to fear Rawenski, because the Bandera gangs have gone and the German forces are also withdrawing from our area. Only the Hungarians remain and with them he, Rawenski, has no common language, because they do not understand Ukrainian and would also punish him for being on the front line. The Hungarian soldiers allowed his wife to collect potatoes in her field near the summer house and had even given her some bread.

25.8.1944 Elko came and said that we should not be afraid of the bullets falling on our mountain and that we could move to the other side of the mountain where we would be protected against the Russian bullets. I told him that I was more afraid of starvation than of bullets. Elko gave me a note to Aleksei telling him to give us 20kg of barley, because he knows where it is hidden. More than this he is not able to give us, because they are hungry too and have given us all they have.

26.8.1944 Aleksei brought 10kg of barley and a little milk. He says that the Hungarian army have told five families to return to their summer houses and they would not harm them, but if they continued to roam around the forest, they will shoot them. They all returned to the summer houses.

27.8.1944 Rawenski visited our hideout while I was away and left a note saying we should not be afraid and hide from him. Today or tomorrow things will change.

28.8.1944 Aleksei and his wife brought 10kg of potatoes and 2 liters of milk. I gave them presents.

30.8.1944 All the people in the summer houses have been moved to behind the front. Aleksei, with his wife and child, have fled to the forest again. He visited us, but did not bring anything. He tells that in Mykhailo's location they also moved everybody, but that Mykhailo and his family had also run away. From five to seven families from the village are hiding in the forest.

2.9.1944 Aleksei brought 12kg of barley, which is all that was left in Mykhailo's hidden store of supplies except for 30-40kg of oats. He says that it is impossible to get across to the Russians because there are patrols all over the mountain.

In the afternoon I went with my son to look for Mykhailo's hiding place on the mountain and at its foot. I found it at the foot of the mountain, about 20m from a Hungarian trench. The bushes were very thick and low. I took everything there was - 60-70kg of oats - and transferred it bit by bit to the vicinity of our hideout.

5.9.1944 Aleksei came and I told him about the oats, but he did not react. Rawenski also looked in and then left. The forest railway train came several times during the day and brought food and planks for the army up to the summer house on our mountain. The train takes the wounded back with it. The army is building and digging in all the time, as though they were going to stay here for five years. Some days it is quiet; on others the shooting does not stop at all. From time to time the Russians mount surprise attacks against the Hungarians. Some Hungarian soldiers go over to the Russian side because they do not want to fight. We peel the oats and grind the barley in a coffee grinder and are happy with each day that passes. All the time we count the number of troops going up the mountain and the number going down.

7.9.1944 Mykhailo put his life in danger and came to visit us. Crawling on his stomach he passed through the soldiers at night and brought us some vegetables. He sat with us for half the day and we talked about this and that. We made a plan of action if our food runs out entirely and we

cannot hold out. The plan is to get to the peak of Mt. Parashka at night, although it is bare, without the cover of trees. Of the six of us, one might succeed and get across to the Russians. He went to look for Aleksei to tell him to help us, because for himself it is very difficult to reach us.

8.9.1944 In all my life I have never eaten such a delicacy as I have just eaten - a piece of marrow and some beans. I do not believe that any other man alive has been through what we are now going through.

9.9.1944 Aleksei was here and he brought 2kg of potatoes and 2 liters of milk. He took away with him a packet of coffee and the boots from which the soles had come off.

16.9.1944 Nobody has been here for a week. Shells fly over our heads and uproot trees and we watch as if at a football match.

17.9.1944 Aleksei's wife came and brought 3kg of meat and 1kg of flour. She says that if things do not change within the next three days, she, together with other families, will be forced to move to the third village, where all the evacuees from Korostów are located. Some of them have already slaughtered their cattle.

18.9.1944 Aleksei's wife brought some Russian leaflets written in Hungarian, calling on the Hungarian troops to go home to nearby Hungary and stop fighting, as has already happened in the Balkans, France, Holland and Belgium which have been liberated from the Germans. We can see that the end is near, but my problem is which will end first - the oats or the Hungarians who go home. If the Hungarians do not go home by then, we will have no choice but to go by way of the Russian front - which is virtually suicide.

19.9.1944 Aleksei brought 10kg of potatoes.

20.9.1944 I went into the forest with the children to pick berries and the soldiers noticed us and shot at us. One of the bullets passed close to the ear of my son. Running back, we trod on a peasant who was lying and

observing the troop movements. The peasant was Ivan Sauchin who is hiding with Aleksei in the forest and he became speechless from fright. When he calmed down, I asked him to give us food in exchange for my son's coat. He promised me everything and ran away.

21.9.1944 I told Aleksei about my meeting Ivan Sauchin and that he had promised to barter with me. Aleksei became very angry that we are wandering around in the forest and daily more people are becoming aware of our existence. He took the coat and brought 25kg of potatoes. I told Aleksei that I had seen the Hungarians driving a sick horse into the forest in our direction. I asked him to bring it here and I gave him everything I had - my mother's gold watch and five dollars. I gave it to him at once. He took it and promised to bring the horse. Bullets are still flying around us.

22.9.1944 I think the Russians have started a general offensive, because the shooting is more frequent. Aleksei gave me back the gold watch and the five dollars, because he did not find the horse. He thinks it most certainly died already in the trees. I gave him the watch and the dollars anyway. He promised to bring more food and said that we could expect the Hungarians to withdraw today or tomorrow.

25.9.1944 I went out with my son to pick nuts and berries. When we left the trees and went out into an open area they saw us immediately and opened fire. We had to run and hide among the trees. The army does not dare to enter the forest because they are afraid of the Russian partizans. While we were laying among the trees we saw the forest railway train arrive with three waggons of supplies: oats, flour and tobacco. As soon as the train stopped, a truck with officers arrived. One of them got out and spoke to the soldiers who were about to unload the waggons. The officer got back into the truck and it left. They threw down five sacks and the train departed. The soldiers hitched horses to waggons, hurriedly loaded them and led the horse-drawn waggons downhill so hastily that they collided with each other. When night fell I returned to the hideout and told my wife that she could allow herself to cook a large amount of potatoes because a change had taken place and the

Hungarian army was fleeing. She listened to my advice and we ate our fill.

After the meal I climbed a high tree and watched the army running away. It was very quiet and I went back in and slept.

26.9.1944 Aleksei came and told me about events I had seen with my own eyes - the withdrawal of the troops. The last units of the army are ready to leave and any minute we will be free. During the day we saw them retreating on the Turka-Sianki road and not on the Skole-Lavochna road, because the Russians had already cut off that road.

27.9.1944 We cannot see or hear any military forces at all - quietness reigns, to the extent that you can hear a leaf falling. Elko came and brought 25kg of potatoes, 5kg of venison and 2kg of beans. He said that Mykhailo would come soon. The two of them are searching the trenches for things the army left behind and they indeed found ammunition and supplies. I already go openly to fetch water. I chopped wood and cooked in broad daylight without fearing that anybody would see the smoke. Although the forest is quieter than I ever experienced, Elko advises us not to go home until Mykhailo tells us to, because the Hungarians in their retreat planted landmines all over the place.

We are waiting all the time to see a Russian patrol, but in vain. Mykhailo did not come today either, which is driving me mad and I do not know what to do. The bridges on the road to Skole have all been blown up and the paths in the forest are strewn with landmines. In the forests themselves gangs of Bandera people are moving around; most of them are fleeing to Germany with the German soldiers. During their flight they ask the Ukrainian population to make sure that no Jews remain alive to give evidence about how the Ukrainians behaved during the German occupation.

28.9.1944 Aleksei brought coffee and told us to sit quietly until Mykhailo comes. That's what Mykhailo, who could not come himself, told him to tell us. The forest is quiet and all we hear is the sound of Russian airplanes.

29.9.1944 I went out with my son intending to go to Korchin. I met Aleksei in the

forest and he would not let us go on until Mykhailo came. I went for another 3km and reached the house of the forester Hoshko, where I ate and got some tobacco. Hoshko also objected strongly to my travelling on roads strewn with landmines. His cow had stepped on a mine and been blown up. On our way back we met some peasants from Korostów. They became excited when they saw us and asked where we had come from. I told them that we came from the village Uriochick and were on our way to Skole, because I did not want them to know that we had been saved by people from Korostów. They said, "Jews again!" We left and at noon returned to our hideout.

30.9.1944 We spent the whole day quietly without seeing anybody and without knowing what to do. At night Mykhailo came and told us to pack up for the journey, to cook food, and exactly at 1 a.m. to start going down the mountain and to pass the village in darkness so that nobody should see us coming from Korostów. We should get to the highway by dawn, 4km from Skole. All this because he was afraid lest it become known that he had saved Jews.

On the Way Home

We followed Mykhailo's instructions to the letter. We packed up our things, cooked and ate, and at 1 a.m., carrying our bundles, we left the hideout together with Mykhailo. After walking for 30 minutes we were at the summer house, in the cowshed. Mykhailo called me aside and asked me to give him a written document to the effect that we were returning home to Skole at our own request and that he had treated us correctly throughout the whole period and had kept us alive. When I asked him why he needed it, he answered that gangs of Bandera's men are roaming all over the roads in the region and if we should meet any of them it will be a pity that we were cared for at all, because they will not leave a Jew alive. However, he hopes that under cover of darkness we will succeed in reaching a point 4km before Skole as he told us. We took our bundles and set out with Mykhailo accompanying us for about 1km before he went home.

Our Meeting With Soldiers of the Red Army

As planned, we reached the main highway leading to Hungary by dawn. From a distance we saw a truck and three waggons with Russian soldiers near them cooking something in the field. I told my family to stay where they were and I ran to the soldiers. I greeted them and told them I was a Jew and that I was on my way home after living in hiding for two years in the Hitler period. I asked them whether they had by chance seen other Jews. They answered that they had seen some Jews in Pinsk, but that according to rumor *there were no more Jews left and there was no need for any*. When I asked them where they came from and they told me from around Kiev I realized that once again I was talking to Ukrainians - this time in Russian uniforms.

I returned to my family and we continued on the highway for the remaining 4km to Skole. On the way we saw Christians from Skole who were also going home from the place they had been exiled to, about 40km from Skole. Each one of them was surprised to see a Jew. Some of them turned their eyes away from shame and others justified themselves, saying that they were not guilty because they had been afraid to help Jews lest they be accused of being Jew-lovers. I told them that I had no complaints and that I had been helped. I was stricken with great fear because in the forest they had not known of my existence, but here they all knew.

I had left Mykhailo a document saying that I was returning home at my own request and that I owed him 1,300 dollars - three hundred for supplies and one thousand for saving us or one-half of the new house I had built in 1934. Mykhailo had wanted to give me a few dollars for the road but I told him I still had twenty-five dollars sewn in my clothes and that I did not need his money.

As we approached Skole we met three Ukrainians who ran into the forest when they saw us. You could see they were Bandera's men. The two bridges on the road to Skole were destroyed and we had to cross the stream and together with the Christians we arrived in Skole in daylight.

On Saturday at Noon We Came to our House

1.10.1944 Sixty percent of the town was burned and destroyed. Many Jewish houses had been dismantled. The windows of my father's house were all shattered and the tin containers on the roof had been riddled with bullets like a strainer. One-third of my father's house had been destroyed by a shell. From the way the inside was arranged, I concluded that it had housed a Ukrainian orphanage.

I heard that the Rabbi's son, Joseph Rottenberg, and his wife had survived and were in Skole. I also heard that another thirty of Skole's Jews had been saved in the forest on Mt. Parashka on the Stryi side and had been liberated by the Russians two months earlier and were living in Stryi, because Skole had then been on the front line. I found the Rabbi's son. He looked swollen from hunger and his wife was too weak to stand on her feet. Topolnicki's warehouse, where I had hidden all the most valuable belongings of my brother-in-law and his wealthy family as well as the possessions of other rich Jews, had burned down. However, there were signs that Topolnicki had removed everything from it a day earlier and only then had it been burned down.

What was certain was that no trace remained of my sewing machine, of our household utensils and the clock. Only a few burnt metal parts could be seen. Topolnicki himself had not yet returned home.

2.10.1944 We began to go round the Jewish homes, where the Germans had lived, and managed to collect a few pots and pans and some plates. We put three mattresses on the floor. From the fields we brought some potatoes and beans - we cooked and we ate.

Our Christian acquaintances, including Topolnicki, returned to town. I asked him to give me back some of the things I had deposited with him, because both I and my family were barefoot and naked. He said that everything was burned in the warehouse. I pointed to the dress his wife was wearing and told him that it was my wife's and that I had heard that when his brother-in-law died in 1943, his son, the pharmacist, had gone to the funeral dressed in one of my suits. He admitted this and promised to give me something. Yonchi Dinavski gave me back my winter fur coat and Dorchi Dunavski gave me back two of the

many fox skins I had deposited with him. My wife and the children went to where the Russians were encamped to ask for food. A Russian officer approached them and asked them what they wanted, and my wife tearfully told them what she and her family had suffered and that now they had nothing to eat.

Meeting Jewish Soldiers

The officer said, "I am your brother! I am a Jew! Take as much bread as you want and if you want more send one of the children and he'll get as much bread as you ask for. But not for long, because soon we'll leave Skole to continue our advance."

A Jewish Russian military doctor named Moisevitch also met my daughter in the street, stopped and asked her name and age. My daughter answered, "My name is Roshka Wilf and I am fifteen." "Are you Jewish? Are there any more Jews here?" the doctor asked. My daughter told her about us and about the Rabbi's son. She kissed my daughter and told her to bring containers to the hospital and she would give her food. Immediately after the meeting, she visited us herself and brought a towel and some soap, and advised me about the tests I would have to take concerning conscription into the army, so that I could stay with my family. She brought a Jewish military bootmaker and told him to measure us and make shoes for the children. Following that, two other Jewish officers came to see me and asked how they could help us. But I already did not need anything from anybody; I had enough food and soon I would surely get clothes. That is what I told them.

3.10.1944 Topolnicki wanted to give me back a topcoat and a suit as well as a suit for my wife. I took my suit, but refused to accept the topcoat and the suit for my wife because they were not mine and I would not take somebody else's belongings. I repeated my request that he return some of my things. To this he answered, "Don't be so sure that you will stay alive," went into an adjoining room and came back with a knife in his hand. His wife quickly took the knife away from him and pushed him back into the other room. I went away. When he saw that he had no way out, because he had accepted valuables from twenty rich Jewish

families and had been sure that they were no longer alive, what had he done? He took the items to neighboring villages and hid them there. Now he claims he does not know which of them belong to me. He gave the topcoat and the woman's suit to the Rabbi's son.

The children go to the hospital for food and if the Jewish lady doctor is there, they got it, but if Ukrainian soldiers are there they are driven away. Among the Russians there were some decent men who allowed the children to take food. The Jewish officer who had given them bread told us that they had received an order to advance on Munkaz and that the children should come to get some flour for baking, because there was no bread. The officer also asked us to point out the civilians who had collaborated with the Germans in murdering the Jews. He knew - so he said - what had happened here, because his own brothers and sisters and their families had been murdered by the Germans and the Ukrainians. I told him that I had sworn an oath to the Gentile who had saved us that I would never do harm to any Christian even if I knew he had murdered my own brother, and I intended to keep my oath.

When the Germans conquered Kiev at the beginning of the war in 1942, Topolnicki and his wife had marched at the head of a demonstration against the Russians as enthusiastic supporters of the nationalist Bandera people - but even so I did not want to harm him. I broke open the lock of my warehouse and found about one hundred cows' skins the Germans had left. The manager of my business had been Norechko. The three Kotkowski brothers came to see me and told me that the slaughterhouse had been destroyed in a bombardment and that there were about 20 skins and another 5m of tripe under the ruins. They were sure that under the Russians I would be in charge of skins, so they suggested that I go to take these skins and we would continue our business relations as they had been in the Polish regime and everything would be in order.

I did not accept their offer and told them that I did not want to live in a town without Jews. They entreated me, saying, "You have suffered enough, and no harm will come to you from the population." They suggested that I live in my new house and offered to help in putting it in order, and I would be able to live in honor. I was influenced by them and went to the slaughterhouse. I took the tripe and the skins for tan-

ning and put them in my warehouse. I found one pig there. The brothers took half and told me to give the other half to the Christian who had saved me.

4.10.1944 About one thousand inhabitants have returned to Skole from exile. The rest of the Ukrainians fled with the Germans and the young men among them have fled to the forests as members of the Bandera gangs. The Poles fled to Poland and the Jews - were murdered. Mykhailo came and brought food - some of the little he had. I said to him, "You took care of me enough. Now it is my turn. Now that I am free, I will take care of you." I showed what I had already achieved in the three days I had been free. I gave him the half of the pig and the flour I had received. I introduced him to the Jewish doctor who happened to be in my house at the time, told her how he had saved me and my family, and asked her to help him evade being drafted into the army. She promised to help. Mykhailo went home happy and content.

5.10.1944 I travelled in a military truck to Stryi where I met the Jews from Skole who were living there; some of them had even been drafted into the army. All in all, one hundred and fifty Jews were living in Stryi and the vicinity. Among them you could not see a single child. These Jews had been saved in much the same way I had been. In Stryi and the vicinity there had been more than fifty thousand Jews before the war.

The surviving Jews were engaged in commerce with the army and because of that they competed with each other and did not live in peace. The Skole Jews said that they were returning to Skole and asked me to stay there too, in spite of my argument that the Jews would be better off moving to a large city like Lvov, where more Jews than here live. I was convinced by them and decided to stay in Skole. They would come tomorrow. I went to the government Office of Commerce to the Department of Skins and I received 1,000 rubles as an advance to buy tanning equipment. The man in charge of the office was named Brenner and the warehouseman was called Kerner, both of them Jews from Stryi who had known me for a long time, but neither was a craftsman. I went home to Skole. Every Christian looks at me as though I am a strange creature.

6.10.1944 We collected three beds from deserted houses and one sofa, two benches, a kitchen cabinet - all of them old.

7.10.1944 Seven Jews returned to Skole from Stryi; two girls came in from the forests where they had been hidden by the forester Kafka in the Botivla forest - one was Rappaport from Slansk and the other Kenig from Rosochoch. When the Bandera gangs murdered the Czech forester Kafka and his son and two servants, the Rappaport girl had been in the house. She managed to jump out of the window and escape into the forest. The Kenig girl had been hiding in a dugout with another six Jews, who were also murdered by a Bandera gang. The Ukrainians thought that she too was dead and left her. She was wounded, but still alive. She met up with Rappaport and together they managed to survive until the Russians came. I gave them a room in my house.

At night during supper a twenty-year old lieutenant came in and said he had been sent by the command post here. He is very tired; he has been on the journey from Moscow for four weeks and has come here to help the military refugees. He showed me his identification and I saw that he is a Russian from Woroshilovgrad. I said, "You're welcome" and sat him down to eat with us. I briefly told him what we had gone through in the Hitler period and we all lay down on the mattresses to sleep.

At midnight I heard machine-gun fire. I woke everybody up but the lieutenant shouted that if they sent him to us, we have nothing to fear from the Germans or from the Bandera gangs, because the area is safe. He went back to sleep.

Dawn broke and the shooting continued. I looked out the window and saw "our" Ukrainians running around between the houses and shooting with a machine-gun into every place, where there were Russian soldiers. I ran to the kitchen, grabbed the lieutenant's weapon and woke him up. He refused to get up. I held the gun in my left hand, grabbed him by the hair with my right hand and shouted at him, "Get up, lieutenant! Soon they will kill us all!" He panicked and got up. I said, "Hold your weapon and be still because the whole town is full of Bandera's people. If they don't touch us, we'll lay still and if they do, we'll defend ourselves. Perhaps they don't know anybody's here." He

listened to me and I showed him through the window how they were running around. I did not allow him to get close to the window, but he jumped to it and asked a civilian running with a gun what all the shooting was about. He was answered with a burst of gunfire and the man called his comrades to attack the house, because there was a Russian in it. The officer stood behind the wall and shot at them. The Bandera men broke into a neighboring house and were shooting at us from two directions.

I, my wife and the children were flat on the floor and we crawled into the kitchen on our stomachs and from there to the cellar, but the Russian officer remained shooting at the Bandera men for about fifteen minutes and then all became quiet. We were lying naked in the cellar and we heard the heavy footsteps of several men entering the house. One of them shouted in Ukrainian, "It's already day light. Let's get out of here!" They departed. We stayed in the cellar for another half an hour and then heard Russian being spoken next to the house. I went out and saw a few Russian officers looking in through a window. I shouted to them, "Don't shoot! I am a Jew and it's my house!" I left the house with my hands in the air, naked.

They asked, "What happened to the lieutenant who was here?" and I told them how I had begged him not to go to the window, but he had pushed his way into the shooting. One of them said, "He's the eleventh." When I asked what that meant, they told me that that night the Bandera people had killed the Russian doctors at the hospital and some other officers. They knew of ten as well as a Jewish boy called Goldfischer. Later, I buried the boy in one of the trenches in the municipal garden because it was impossible to get to the Jewish cemetery, because of the landmines the Germans had laid as they retreated.

Suddenly I saw the Russian officers waving their hands and saluting. I turned around and there was the naked lieutenant with his gun in his hand. I jumped at him, smacked him on his backside and told him off for not listening to me and going to the window. Everybody laughed and the officers said that they were going but would send us clothes to wear so that we could get out of here. The Bandera men had taken all our clothes as well as the thousand rubles I had received in Stryi to buy equipment and skins. Only my torn pants, in which I had sewn 25 dol-

lars, were left. I was once again happy. It did not take me long to find rags to dress the members of my family. At night we slept with the soldiers, because we were afraid to sleep at home.

The lieutenant told us that when his ammunition ran out, he went into the kitchen and from there in to the garden and hid among the potatoes. He was lucky they did not spot him. He saw five Bandera men go into the house. The officers brought civilian clothes for the lieutenant because they did not have uniforms.

Izio Goldfischer, the son of Meyer Shalom, aged 19, had been saved on Mt. Parashka together with thirty other Jews from Skole already two months ago. Then they were in Stryi. He had come to Skole to look for his sister who had had Aryan identification papers. He had hoped that she too would return to Skole. She had indeed survived, but had gone to Palestine.

Bohdan Norechko's sister came to see me. He had been appointed manager of my skin business by the Germans. She begged me to spare the life of her brother, who had stolen all my possessions - the house, the furniture and the skins, both mine and those belonging to my brother. I had escaped to the forest, but my brother and his family had been murdered at the instigation of Norechko. I asked her if he was prepared to give me back anything, and she answered that most things had been burned together with their house. As far as clothes were concerned, he would return those he had hidden in Koniochow and at his brother-in-law's place in Stryi. I saw that I should not pursue justice, but that I must get away as soon as possible to Stryi or Lvov with my family, because here death lies in wait for me any minute. I told the sister that I was prepared to see him and promised her that he would suffer no harm at my hand. She said that I could come to his house and talk the whole thing over. I went to him and he promised to restore to me underwear, old clothes and bedclothes from what he had hidden in the village of Hreny and with his brother-in-law in Stryi.

I agreed to everything and only asked him to take me to Stryi twice with my family. He agreed to one trip only. I am afraid lest something happens and then it's better that we should not all be together so that at least one half of the family is saved. He understood my intention and the following day came and took me, my son and my nephew to Stryi.

On the way we detoured to Hreny and there he gave me some rags of a peasant. His brother-in-law in Stryi refused to give us anything, saying that he was not afraid of a Jew, because it was not 1939-1940 and the Jews have no status at all. We returned home. On the way, near Sinevudzko a twenty-year old Ukrianian with a rifle stopped us and told me to get out of the waggon. He searched me thoroughly and took everything he found. He castigated Norechko for daring to help Jews and he wanted to take me into the forest. All the time buses carrying wounded were passing by. I shouted and begged them to take me, but not one stopped. Norechko approached the young bandit and said, "If you're taking him into the forest to shoot him, you may as well shoot me now, because I won't have a house to return to. I have a wife in Skole, two children with her and another two in Stryi." With great difficulty he persuaded the Ukrainian - Zarevich - to let me go and we continued on our way to Sinevudzko where we saw a platoon of Russian soldiers. He told me to get out of the wagon and make my way back to Skole because it was no longer safe to travel with him, since we might meet another Ukrainian and both be killed. "I will not take you again," he said, "Do what you want!" I went over to the soldiers, but the officer would not allow me to approach. After begging and weeping, he was good enough to send me to sleep at a peasant's house, accompanied by two soldiers. When we got to the house I heard that the peasants were the parents of the Ukrainian policeman, Shila, who had murdered more than two thousand Jews in Skole during the German occupation. Obviously, I did not close an eye that night, and wandered around outside. At day break I joined the soldiers on the way to Skole

In Skole I hid the skins and the tripe at Kotkowski's and even slept there for two or three nights.

Leaving Skole

I got hold of a wagon and, together with my wife and the two children, we went to Stryi. We lived in a partly-destroyed deserted house. I heard that today was the festival of Sukkot - I had not known of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur when they fell. I was delighted we were all

together again. Although the house was empty and I owed the 1,000 rubles I had received as an advance, I was happy that we were healthy. In Stryi neither the manager, the warehouseman nor the bookkeeper knew anything at all about skins - they could not tell the difference between a horse's skin and a cow's. On the one hand they were satisfied with me, but on the other, they knew they would have to come to me with everything they got from the warehouse, which was not to their liking. Nevertheless, they gave me the job - salting and sorting the skins in the abattoir. My wages were 300 rubles a month and a chit certifying that I was employed in the department as an expert which entitled me to a ration of 500gm of black bread and some salt per day; the children received only 200gm a day and my wife received nothing, because you had to go to work to get a ration of bread at the government-fixed price. Otherwise, you had to buy your bread at a price which was fifty - and sometimes, three hundred - times higher. In order to live I needed three thousand rubles a month. That is the case with every worker and we live from the sack we bring to work every day to take home something in it. I take home scraps of meat, such as feet, and salt, and barter them for a little milk. If I get caught or somebody informs on me I am liable to get from five to twenty years' hard labor in Siberia.

Our life was very difficult and the children decided to go to the children's home where they would get better and more food. Jewish children who were found were gathered and sent to Poland or Rumania and from there to Palestine or America. I travelled to Bolekhov and bought from a Christian half a skin for five dollars, the equivalent of one thousand rubles. With great effort I brought the skin to Stryi where I cut it into pieces for making boots. I took them to the market to barter for flour or sell them for money. I prepared 16 pairs and took five of them to the market to sell for 150 rubles each which was the going price. I only just got to the market when the city commandant got hold of me to bring me to trial or imprison me on the spot, because commerce in the market was forbidden. When he asked me why I did not go to work, I told him that at the moment there was no work for me to do, but in two hours' time I would go to the abattoir to my regular work - sorting and salting skins.

He demanded to see my identification and when he saw that I was

indeed the sorter at the skin warehouse of Stryi, he apologized and asked me to give him leather for boots when we got tanned hide. He tore up the half-written report and returned the five pieces I had brought. I promised him everything, happy that he let me go.

Since then I am very careful in my various commercial activities - tobacco, skins and flour which the Russians bring from Hungary. So, I earned good money and was even able to save some money which I used to buy things for Mykhailo who occasionally visited us in Stryi. My nephew travelled to Stanislavov, Chernowitz and Bucharest; my brother-in-law's son travelled to Lvov and Bilitz. A law was published according to which former Polish citizens - Jews and Christians - were permitted to leave Russia and travel to Poland, because Eastern Galicia belonged to Russia.

I realized, therefore, that we had to pack up our belongings again and travel to Poland in the hope that together with other Jews we would be able to travel on further. I went to the railway station and they told me that there was a two-hour delay that day and the train would leave at 2 p.m. instead of 12 noon. I went home to eat something and when I returned at 1.30 p.m. I discovered that the train had left at 1 p.m. I saw a soldier leading a railway waggon on the track to Skole and I asked him to take me with him and I would give him 1.5 liters of liquor. He agreed and I got into the waggon and stood all the way, because there was no place to sit. On the way I saw gangs of laborers repairing the tracks which the Germans had destroyed in their retreat. All the laborers greeted the soldier and some spoke to him in Ukrainian and called him by his name. I realized that I was stuck with a local Ukrainian. Half way to Skole he stopped to speak with the laborers. One of them asked him, "Where are you taking this Jew?", to which the reply was, "We need a *kosher* calf for the Sabbath." When I heard this, I saw death staring me in the eyes. I had no choice but to continue with him. When the train arrived at the Sinevudzko station, the station before Skole, I saw the train which had left Stryi at 1p.m. I could not go on in this railway waggon, so I jumped out and ran to the other train, which was carrying soldiers.

But, the officers would not allow me to get on. I pleaded with them, Please let me on. The Bandera men here will kill me at once! In one of

the cars stood an older man, an officer, and he let me on the train and saved me from certain death. When I got to Skole, I packed the tripe and the skins and took them to Stryi in a military vehicle. Brenner, the manager, and Kerner, the warehouseman, refused to accept the goods into the warehouse unless they were given an equal share in the proceeds, although they had not given me a share of skins they had gotten in the Stryi warehouse. They had received there ten times more goods than I had in Skole. They also refused to release me from my job in order to move to Poland.

At my job I earned no more than a tenth of what I needed to live on. My main income came from buying goods from the army - tobacco, skins, flour which they brought with them in laden trucks - and selling them.

But it was dangerous to sleep at night for two reasons: 1. Bendera gangs attacked on the roads and murdered Russians and Jews. It was estimated that 40,000 armed Bandera men were fighting the Russians in the Carpathians. 2. Commerce was absolutely forbidden and the smallest infringement meant many years at hard labor in Siberia. All this pushed the Jews to leave Russia.

When I came to the commissar in Stryi to apply for papers to travel to Poland, he shouted at me for wanting to leave Russia and said that in Poland too I would not be able to engage in free commerce and that also there I would not earn more at working. I told him that I had relatives in Poland and that I want to travel to Cracow. With great effort I succeeded in getting from him a travel permit to Cracow. During my nine-month stay in Stryi, both Mykhailo and Aleksei visited me frequently. I gave them various items of value.

Bandera men shot at Aleksei and it is impossible to find out why. Was it because he had helped me to survive or was it by chance? Mykhailo's wife told me that Bandera men were looking for Mykhailo because he helped me. I suggested that they join me on my journey and that I would do everything for them. But she answered that they would die in the place they were born and would not go with me to another place.

In Stryi, Torah Scrolls and *Tefillin* are lying around in the garbage dumps. They use them as leather for upholstery and they use books for

stoking fires. Together with some other Jews, I collected as many as I could.

16.7.1945 In an open waggon of a freight train carrying coal I travelled to Poland together with my family and the family of Mendel Fuerberg, who had been our tenant before the war. Two Jewish families among 2,000 Poles returning to Poland.

In Poland

In Poland at that time, nationalistic Poles killed many Jews for no reason. Instead of taking us to Cracow, the train went on to Breslau. There they forced us off the train and left us on the tracks under the open sky, 5km from Breslau. I walked to the city, of which 80% was covered in rubble from the bombings. You cannot see any sign of Jews here. Here and there German corpses are lying in the streets and the city is full of Russian troops. I quickly returned to my family. The Poles are harassing us. My son has left me; he wants to get to the American army from where he will be able to go to Palestine or America. After a four-day stay on the railway tracks, we managed - in return for a large sum of money - to get a freight train to Cracow.

However, near Katowice, before Gliwice, a Russian railway official got on the train and ordered us off. Once again we were on the tracks. I ran to Katowice to look for a place to live and did not achieve anything. I hurried to Gliwice where, after great efforts, I managed to find a kitchen on the third floor and a room on the second floor. Several hundred Jews returning from Russia were already gathered in Gliwice, among them some who had been sent to Siberia for hard labor. I went to the local authorities to take out a permit to deal in skins and I encountered the strong antisemitism which reigns in Poland which is expressed in the fact that they will not allow Jews to engage in any form of commerce and generally try to exclude the Jews from any activity.

Here too they began to enforce Russian laws and everything must operate by way of governmental institutions.

My son wandered about for 14 days of hardship and hunger and returned to us in Gliwice. My wife began to deal in second-hand cloth-

ing which she bought from German women and sold to Polish women who came from other towns. She earned enough for us to live on. After three months I began to deal in cigarettes and German currency and since I made a nice profit my wife ceased her commercial activities.

At the home of a Jewish acquaintance I saw a letter from New York and I wrote to that Jew asking him to help me locate members of my family - four cousins who lived there and I gave him the names, Nathan Skalke, Wolf Greenblum, Mendel Fink and Samuel Zeiman, all from Skole. Two months passed and I received a letter and a package from Skalke. I also received a telegram and a package from the organization of former residents of Skole. They wrote that they would send me anything I needed. I did not ask for anything - only documents to enable me to travel to America and I do not want packages.

Antisemitism in Poland

I cannot stay in Poland in the atmosphere of antisemitism and the fear of going to sleep at night. The murderers are mainly disguised policemen. Many Jews are arrested in order to extort money from them. Both my son and I have been arrested and were only released in payment of ransom. One night two armed Poles attacked our apartment and looted various items. Luckily, some friends of ours came just then, otherwise they might have killed us.

Several Jewish families have been murdered. I received another package from Wolf Greenblum. They write that I must stay in one place and not move around so that they can send more packages and also... the documents. I answered them that I do not need packages since I earn a good living. All I want - papers to emigrate to America and live in peace and security. My relatives arranged the papers for me through one of their friends, because they themselves are not able to do it. By mistake, we were described in the documents as having been born - all of us - in Gliwice. I travelled to Warsaw and with great effort and money, I managed to get from the Polish Ministry passports to travel to America.

However, the American consul in Warsaw refused to issue the visas and so we could not leave Poland legally. I decided to leave the country

illegally anyway. I travelled to the Polish-Czech border, examined the situation there and got in touch with a Jewish border smuggler to take us across the Polish border. I then went to Katowice where I sold some furs and bought various gold coins.

4.7.1946 I travelled with my family to the Czech border and there paid the smuggler 20,000 zlotys.

8.7.1946 At night we crossed the border together with 50 other Jews.

9.7.1946 In the morning, two Czech officers received us and transferred us to Nachot. They searched us and even took off our shoes. They confiscated currency, gold, furs and other items from a few of the people. They did not find anything on me although I had in my possession at the time 23,000 German marks, 600 dollars and about one-half a kilogram of gold coins. After the search they sent us by train with five hundred other Jews under military escort to Pressburg (Bratislava). There we lodged and ate a hearty and kosher lunch. From there they sent us by train to Vienna to the Rothschild Hospital, where we stayed for six days. In that period 1,000 Jews were arriving illegally every day from Poland, because the antisemitism was intensifying there and there were pogroms in all the towns.

In the town of Kielce many Jews were murdered. In the Rothschild Hospital we enjoyed good care in food and clothing. I do not know whether it was run by the Joint Distribution Committee, UJA or UNRRA. Vienna was occupied by the American army.

16.7.1946 In a group of about one thousand Jews we travelled to Salzburg and were given provisions for the journey. In Salzburg there was a slight shortage of food because of bad management and the price of a loaf of bread was one dollar.

In Germany on the Way to the United States

With one thousand and six hundred other Jews we arrived in Ulm in

the American sector of Germany on a freight train in the night of 25.7.1946.

25.7.1946 Since there was not enough room in Ulm for all of us, 500 persons were sent to Bad-Reichenhalle. I stayed in Ulm.

Together with a Jewish family from Wishkow, near Warsaw, we received three small rooms and a kitchen. We also received food supplies from UNRRA and the Joint. We lived together very frugally and relations between us were very good. I do not engage in commerce at all. The running of the Displaced Persons Camp Sedan - such as the distribution of food and clothing - is in the hands of a committee elected by its three thousand inhabitants. In my opinion it does not do a good job. Everything follows the Russian system - the persons close to the source take care of themselves first, and because of this their attitude to the others is not good.

A woman called Levine from the Joint in Stuttgart came and helps Jews in everything they need, also in becoming registered in the American consulate for emigration to America. She delivered a calming lecture to us in which she said that it is a pity to register for emigration to America now because the quota for Polish Jews is all filled for the next five years. But, there is still room for German Jews, who can emigrate to the U.S, as soon as they register. I showed her the papers I received from Wilkes-Barr, Pensylvania, which attest that I was born in Gliwice and I have no other papers. She immediately turned to the American consulate and asked whether Gliwice was included in the German quota and received a positive reply, since the quotas are based on the situation as it was before 1939.

30.9.1946 I registered for a journey to America at the Joint in Stuttgart and they quickly passed the papers on to the American consul.

26.11.1946 I and the members of my family were called to the American consul in Stuttgart and also to the C.I.C, as we had to undergo a number of examinations. In Ulm, too, we were interrogated twice very thoroughly regarding our lives from the day we were born till the present time and particularly about the period of the war and what we went through

then. They demanded various documents such as our marriage certificate and birth certificates. I took some witnesses and in the local court I took out a marriage certificate and made an affidavit that Roshka and Moshe were my children. As far as my birth certificate was concerned I proved to them that the records office of Gliwice had been destroyed in the bombings and I brought witnesses who testified that I had been born in Gliwice.

The consul promised that within two months I and my family could leave Germany for America, because at present there was a strike on and the ships were not sailing on this route. I informed my relatives in America and asked them to find us an apartment and a job in my trade as a leather tanner and furrier. My cousin Sophia Skalke answered immediately saying that I should not worry and she would be a sister to me. Her husband is a good-natured man and he will be my brother. Here in Ulm, I ate in the kosher restaurant for a month and I had to stand in line three times a day to get food products which my wife cooked better. We got food supplies once a week in the UNRRA store as follows: 2.33kg bread; 140gm butter; 50gm sugar; 70gm coffee; 35gm powdered egg; 280gm pasta; 100gm chocolate; 380gm meat; 200gm flour; 3kg potatoes - per person. This week we got a Christmas addition - 500gm chocolate and three packets of nuts per person. The people working for UNNRA in the distribution of the food, receive extra rations in addition to what they take themselves.

I do not engage in commerce at all. This week people received some clothing as needed. I got a pair of second-hand shoes, a sweater, a pair of socks, some underwear and a towel. My wife received a coat, a sweater, underwear, stockings and a towel. Our daughter received a dress, underwear, stockings, shoes and a cloth skirt, and our son - a coat, a sweater, underwear, socks and a jacket and pants.

Tonight two American soldiers attempted to rob an apartment in the camp. The Jewish police in the camp caught them and handed them over to the military authorities. Our daughter is studying Hebrew and English; our son went to the children's home against my will and stayed there for two months. Afterwards he returned home. He too is studying Hebrew.

Of the 23,000 German marks I brought from Gliwice I have nothing

left. For my travel papers I paid 2,800 marks, I bought a fox fur for 8,500 marks, a coat for 1,000 marks, shoes for 1,700 marks and food for five weeks for 9,000 marks.

As far as I know today, the following Jews of Skole have remained alive:

[The list of the survivors on the following pages was drawn up by the author of the diary immediately at the end of the war]

Namen	Selbst.	Frau	Sohn.	Tochter.	Enkel.	Wo Sich geretet:
Bukowski Tovie	.	.	.	/	/	Bei Tarnopol, gedient i.
" Salamon Eli						Skole
" Chaim			/			Russland
Bermann			/			Wald Skole
Eisenstein Moses (Drews Sohn Tsolotka)			/			"
" " (Davids			/			"
Ebner Eber	/	/	3	3		Russland
"				2		"
Feuerberg Natan	/					Stryj Keller
" Mendel	/	/	/	2		" "
Finke Schulim	/					Russland gestorben Polen
Fiszkaz	/					"
Feuerberg Hechel			/	2		"
Fuchsgelb			/	/		"
Fuchs Jide				3		"
Frenkel Israel	/	/		/		"
Friedler Wolf			+ sohne	/	/	" " Stryj
Feuerberg Salomon			/			"
Grinberg Sunke	/	/				Wald Skole
" Ferenz	/					"
Goldfischer Genie	/					Deutschland
Goldreich Zupanie	4	/				Ungarn
Gisinger פ.ב.ר.א. אונגרן	/	/		/		Russland
Glatstein Jakob				3		"
Hersch	/					"
Gross, Oron Leiser			/	/		"
Goldfischer Srome	/					"
Hirsch (Barnch Icyk Schäbes)	/					Wald Skole
" Ulere (Ojava)	/					"
Heuenfeld Munie	/	/		/		Arier
Hauptman Hudie			/	/		Ungarn
Hirsch Moses				/		" " Israel
Herman Drimne (Tawoune)	/					"
Horwitz Iygo	/			/		"
Herzman Libraham		/	/	/		Russland

	Selbst.	Frau	Sohn	Tochter	Enkel.	Wo in Gerettet
Heiber Israel			1			Russland
Horwitz Kuba			1			"
Heger Josel			2			"
Halpern Zudik			2			"
Haber Bercsy (Tuchla)			2			"
Halpern Benie (Oporrek)			3			Ungarn
Jaskel Moses (Adjum Reins)	1	1		1		Wald Borowiec
" Simon	1	1				" "
Josefsberg (Hrebeniow)	1	1	1	1		Russland
Klein Mendel		1		1		Arier
Kaufmann Weinberg		1		1		"
Krieger Chaim	1	1		1		Ungarn Czerniowcy
" Berl					1	Arier
Dr Klein Israel	1	1	1			Ungarn
Klein Israel (Stawczka)	1	1	2	1		Russland & Wald Stryj
Katz Baruch Heinrich				1		"
Lipschutz Mendel (Libachna)	1	1				Wald Skole
Löwenwirth Isyk Moses (Horozyn)			3			" "
Lieblein Markus (Dzbina)			1			" "
Lindenbaum Genie	1					" "
Landman Berisch			2		1	Russland & Arier
Last Arjasz (Kolumbus)			1			"
Lucks			2	1		"
Landesman Basse				1		"
Mansberg (Jeleniewate)			2			Wald Skole & Russland
Meier Dawid (Libachna)	1	1				" "
Ornstein Lisik	1		2	2		Ungarn & Russland & Arier
Pielkhobe Hersch (Tynawiecko)			2			Russland
Pappaport Israel (Stawczka)			1	1		Russland & Wald Skole
Rotter Josse (Rosianka)		1	1	1		Wald Skole & Arier & Russland
Rottenberg Josef Dr	1	1				"
" Meier Schulim (Horn)	1	1		1		Ungarn
Reich Nechemie	1					Oswiecim
Rechter Abrche	1					Ungarn
Rothman Josse (Lawocznc)	1	1	1	1		"
Reder Wolf "	1	1				"
Rosenbaum (Hirtle)	1					"
Rechter Schaje			1			Russland
Rothbard Wolf		1	2	2	1	"
Reinhartz Nusen	1					"
" Motzels			1			"
" Leib (Craer)				1		"
" Berl (Tenerla)	1	1	2			"
Rothman Mozne	1					" gest. Deutschland

	Selbst	Frau	Söhne	Töchter	Enkel		Wo nicht gerettet
Rothstein Josalis			2	1			Russland
Ratrenstein			1				"
Steinberg (S.E. Bukowina)	3					Wald Skole	"
Schiff Moses	1					Ungarn	
Schleifer Berl (Lawerne)	1	1	1	1		"	
Segal Hersch	"			1		"	
Sass Smil	1					Russland	
Schäffer (b. Deutsch)			1			"	gest. Halic
San Bunnek			1			"	
Steiger			1			"	
Steininger (Tambors ojdym)	1					"	
Schwirsch				1		"	
Schulmann Feldman					1	"	
Schreiner Feivel			1			"	
Singer Eisik	1					"	
Schimmerman Icyk				2		"	
Stolper	1	1	1	1		"	
Tambor Meier (Plawie)	1	1	6	1		Wald Skole	
" David "	1	1	2			"	
" Leies (Hirkey)				3		Lubience	
Tirsch Jacob	1	1	1			Ungarn	
Teichmann Lipey (Lawerne)	1	1	1	1		"	
Topf Leiser	1					Russland	
Teichman Lipey	1					"	
" Jakob	1					"	
" Leib	1					"	
Tinkenkel Moses			1	1		"	
Tambor Herrsch (Plawie)			2			"	
Turteltaub (Schneiers)	1					"	
Wirz Aron	1	1	1	1		Wald Skole	
" Aeter			1			"	"
Weissman Josel				1		Deutschland	
Fiksler (Lawerne)	1		1			Ungarn	
Wind Berery	1					"	
Weitruer Wigdor	1	1				Russland	
" Hrel Schneiin			2			"	
Weitruer Finkel (Karczyn)			1	1		"	
Semel Pinkas			1			"	
Glanz (Demnia)	1	1	1			Drier	
Zilf Josel (Lawerne)				1		Ungarn	
Rappaport Jacob Ber			2			Russland	
Moses Tennys			1			"	
Grünblum Hersch Hersch							

250 ... 6.000 ...

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ביורע פון וויסנשאַפֿטלעכן דירעקטאָר
OFFICE OF THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR

דעם 22סטן אפּריל 1949

פּ' א.חיליף
ברוקלין, נ.י.

זייער חשובער פרייַנד חיליף,

בייגעליגט שיק איך אייך צו די צוויי העפטן פון אייַערע מלחמה-זכרונות. האָט נישט קיין פּראָבלעם מאָל שיק עס אייך אויבער א ביסל שפּעטלעך; ווי אזוי האָב איך געשריבן, האָב איך עס געגעבן אויבערצולייגן אונדזער ווישנשאפטלעכן דירעקטאָר, ד"ר מ.ווינריבן; אין דער צווישנצייט איז ער גפּטן שטאַרק פּאַרנומען מיט אן אנדער ארבעט, אזוי איך האָב זיך גפּטראכט, אז מען וועט איך קיין שאָדן נישט ברענגען אויב מען וועט עס האלטן נאָך א פּאָר טעג, כדי ער זאל עס קענען אויבערליינען.

אויך ד"ר ווינריך האָט די זעלבע מינונג וואָס איך, אז דאָס איז זייער א ווישטיקער דאקומענט צו דער געשיכטע פון אונדזער חורבן.

אויב איר האָט בדעה דאָס אריינצוגעבן, אדער עס וועט זיך געפּינען א פּאַרלעגער וואָס וועט עס אריינגעבן, איז מיין עצה, אז מען זאל אין טעקסט גאָר נישט ענדערן. מען דארף נאָר אויסבעסערן די ארטאָגראפּיע און גרעמאטיק שע גרייזן, אבער דעם טעקסט אליין דארף מען נישט אנרירן; מען דארף עס דרוקן ווי עס שטייט און גיט, אפילו מיט די דאטעס אזוי ווי איר האָט זי געשריבן, מיט די חשבונות אויף שפּיז, אלץ אזוי ווי איר האָט עס אריגינעל אָנגעשריבן. נאָר אין דער פּאַרם האָבן איערע זכרונות א וועלט היסטאָריש־ווער דאקומענט. אויב מען וועט דאָס ליינערן באאמתע, וועט עס אפשר זיין דעמאָלט גוטער ליינשטאָף, אבער עס וועט פּאַרליירן דעם וועלט פון א היסטאָריש דאקומענט.

אויב איר אליין חילם עס אויבערשריבן, צוגעבן נאָך זאבן וואָס איר דערמאָנט זיך אאז"ו, סא שרייבט אויף באזונדער פאפּיר, אבער דעם דאקומענט זאלט איר נישט משמיטן: שרייבט גאָר נישט אויבער, שטרייכט גאָר נישט אויס אזוי וויא חילמ וחס - פּארנישט אים נישט. דאָס איז א חיכוש־קער אויסצוקומען מחמת דעם, וואָס איר וואָס אלץ געשריבן בשעת מעשה אויפן ארט.

אויב איר וועט נישט האָבן קיין מעגלעכקייט ארויסצוגעבן די דאזיקע זכרונות, וועל איך זיך צו אייך אין נאָמען פון "חצ, איר זאלט דעם דאקומענט אויבערגעבן אין דעפּאזיט אין "חצ-ארכיון. איר דארפט וויסן, אז חיכוף נאָך דער מלחמה האָט דער "חצ אנגעהויבן זאמלען גביית-עדות פון "דן וואָס איבערגעלעבט די היטלעריש אקספּאזיע. סיר האָבן שוין היינט א גרויסן ארכיון פון אזעלכע גביית-עדות. עס איז דער חבער זייער וויכטיק, אז אויך איערע זכרונות זאלן זיך געפּינען אין "חצ-ארכיון. דער דאזיקער ארכיון פון "חצ שפּילט א גרויסע ראלע בייַם שרייבן די געשיכטע פון "דישן חורבן. "די היסטאָריקער און פּאַרשער, וואָס וועלן אין אינסטיטוט-"דישן - וואָס וועלן זיך א סך מיט די דאקומענטן וואָס געפּינען זיך אין ארכיון פון "חצ. איר וויסט מסתמא אויך וועגן דעם, אז אין גרויסן ניירנבערגער פּראָצעס פּראָצעסן זענען געווארן דאקומענטן וואָס געפּינען זיך אין "חצ-ארכיון.

סײַ אײַז דער־יבער זײַער געזונטשן, אז די היסטאָריקערס, פֿאַרשערס און אַפּיצי־
לע אינסטיטוצי־עס־חאָס באנוצן זיך אָפֿט מיט די דאָקומענטן פון "חאָ־ארכ־יח",
זאָלן האָבן א מעגלעכקיים צו באקענען זיך אויך מיט אײַער דאָקומענטס. איך ל־ג
אײַך דער־יבער פֿאַר, אײַר זאָלט אײַבערגעבן אײַערע זכרונות אין "חאָ־ארכ־יח אלס
דעפּאַזיט, דאָס היסט: עס פֿארבליבט אײַער אײַגנס, אײַר קעסטט עס צונעמען ווען אײַר
דאַרפֿט עס, אָבער ווי לאנג אײַר דאַרפֿט עס נישט, זאָל עס זיך געפֿינען אין א
"ידישן ארכ־יח חאָס אײַז באקאנט און בארימט אײַבער דער וועלט און צוליב וועלכן
היסנשאַפֿטלעכע, פֿאַרשערס און אפּילו מלוכהשע אינסטיטוצי־עס וועלן זיך אָפֿט נאָך
מאַטער־אלן פֿאר זײַער ארבעט.

אומאָפּהענגיק פון דעם, לאָזט מיך חיסן חאָס אײַם מעמטאַן מיט די דאזיקע
זכרונות, חיל מיר זענען זײַער פֿראַינטערעסיירט אין דעם.

מיט די פֿרײַנדלעכסטע גרוסן

M. קלי־נסבערג

מ. קלי־נסבערג
סעקרעטאר פֿאר פֿערזענלעכע
דאָקומענטן

ב־לאגעס:

A Letter from Yivo (Yiddish Scientific Institute) of April 22 1949 to A. Wilf, Brooklyn, N.Y.

(Translated from the Yiddish)

Honored friend, Wilf,

Enclosed, please find, the two notebooks of your war memoirs. Please forgive the slight delay. As I wrote to you at the time, I gave the memoirs to our scientific editor, M. Weinreich, to read and at the time he was occupied with another project. I thought that it would do no harm to keep the memoirs a few more days so that he could see them.

Dr. Weinreich, like myself, believes that the memoirs constitute a very important document in the history of the Holocaust.

If you intend to publish the manuscript yourself, or if you find a publisher, it is my opinion that no changes at all should be introduced. All that needs to be done is to correct the spelling and a few grammatical errors, but the contents should not be touched. It should be printed exactly as it is with the dates as they are, including the reckonings for the supplies - everything as it was originally written.

The memoirs are valuable as an historical document only in the original form. If the material is reworked from a literary point of view, a good piece of literature may result, but it will lose its historical value.

If you want to make additions, do so separately, not in the body of the document itself. The memoirs are an important and authentic document because you wrote everything down at the time it happened and where it happened. Should you be unable to publish these memoirs, I appeal to you to deposit them in the Yivo Archives. For your information, Yivo began to collect testimony from survivors of the Hitlerist occupation immediately after the war ended. We have a very large collection of such testimonies and it is therefore important to us that your memoirs should be in our Archives.

Jewish and non-Jewish historians, as well as scholars researching the Holocaust, use the documents in our Archives a great deal. As you

most probably know, material from the Yivo Archives was used in the great Nuremberg trials of war criminals, as well as in other trials of Nazis.

It is therefore very desirable that the historians, the scholars and the official institutions who frequently use the Yivo archival material should have access to your document.

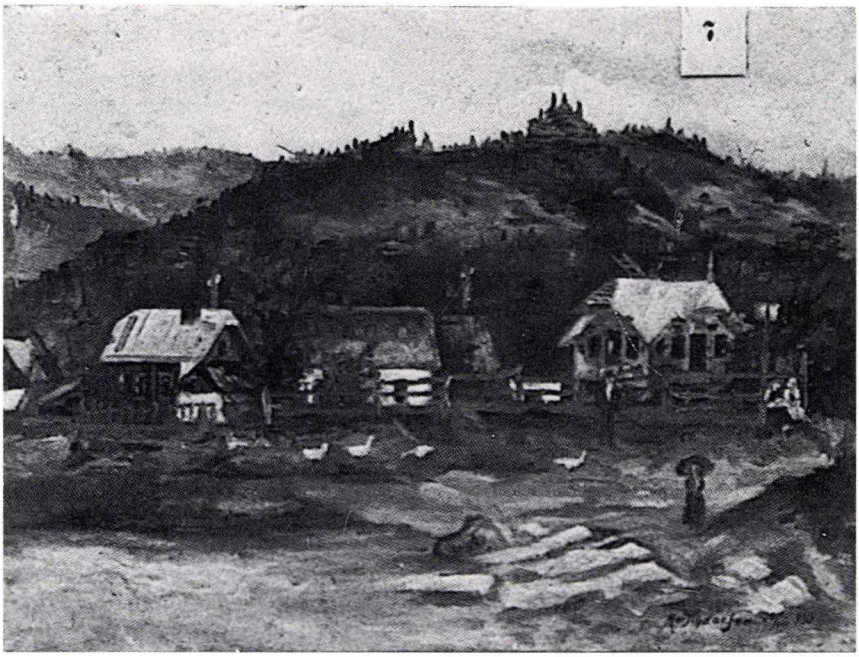
I want to suggest that you deposit the memoirs at the Yivo Archives. The document will remain your property and you will be able to take it whenever you desire. Until such a time, however, the document will remain in the world's most famous Jewish archives to which even governments frequently turn for information.

In friendship,

M. Kligsburg
Secretary in charge of personal documents


Lemberg
Mostiska
Gorodek
Przemyśl
Rudki
Shchirets
Bobrka
Peremyshlyany
Zborov
Zolochev
Pomoryany
Ternopol
Novaya Strelishoha
Nikolayev
Sambor
Khyrov
Staryy Sambor
Drogobych
Zhidachov
Khodorov
Berezhany
Kozova
Rogatin
Darakhov
Podgaytsy
Borislav
Trůskavets
Stryy
Dnestr
Bol'shovtsy
Turka
Stryy
Voynilov
Galich
Monastyriska
Bolekhov
Borinya
Skole
Kalush
Zhovten
Buchach
Volosyanka
Dolina
Ivano-Frankovsk
(Stanislau)
Koropets
Tolstoye
Slavskoye
Bogorodchany
Thumach
Volovets
841
Pereval Veretski
Pereginskoye
Solotvin
Otynya
Gorodenka
Korshev
Nadvornaya
Kolomyya
Svalyava
Mezhgor'ye
Sevola
1836
Delyatin
Pechenezhin
Zabolotov
Mukachevo
Kushnitsa
Dolgoye
Yaremcha
Per Yablonitse (Tatars P.)841
Yablonov
Vashkovtsy
Irshava
Ust-'Chorna
Kosov
Chernovtsy
(Czernowitz)
Beregovo
Borshava
Rika
Yasinya
Kosmach
Khust
Tereblya
Teresva
Verkhovina
Goverla
2058
Vinogradov
Tisa
Tyachev
Rakhov
Rutila
Halmeu
Bixad
Negreşti-Oaş
Sighetu Marmaţiei
Vicovu de Sus
Ulma
Livada
Oraşu Nou
Valea Vişeului
Selyatin
Putna
Satu Mare
Ocna Şugatag
Iza
Mtii Rodnei
1939
Toroiaga
Moldovita
Ardud
Baia Sprie
Cavnic
Baia Mare
Viseu de Sus
Borşa
2305
Pietrosu
Prislop P.
Cimpulung Moldovenesc
Supuru
Somcuta Mare
Tirgu Lăpuş
1842
Rodna
Iacobeni
1859
Giumalău
Cehu Silvaniei
Mtii Lăpusului
Teleciu
Singeorz-Băi
Ilva Mică
Jibou
Surduc
Prundu Birgăului
Năsăud
Vatra Dornei
Dornişoara
Şimleu Silvaniei
Zalău
Petru Rareş
BISTRIŢA—NĂSĂUD
Pietrosu
2102
Mtii Meseşului
Dej
Beclean
Bistriţa
Mtii Călimani
Gherla
Lechinţa
Şieu
Răstoliţa
Cincea
Borşa
Sic
Taga
Teaca
Huedin
Cluj-Napoca
Kolozsvar
1684
Mtii Gurghiului
Călăţele
Gilău
Mociu
Sărmaşu
Reghin
Cojocna
Gheorgheni

Scenes from Skole — Paintings



Houses next to the river



A snow-covered side street



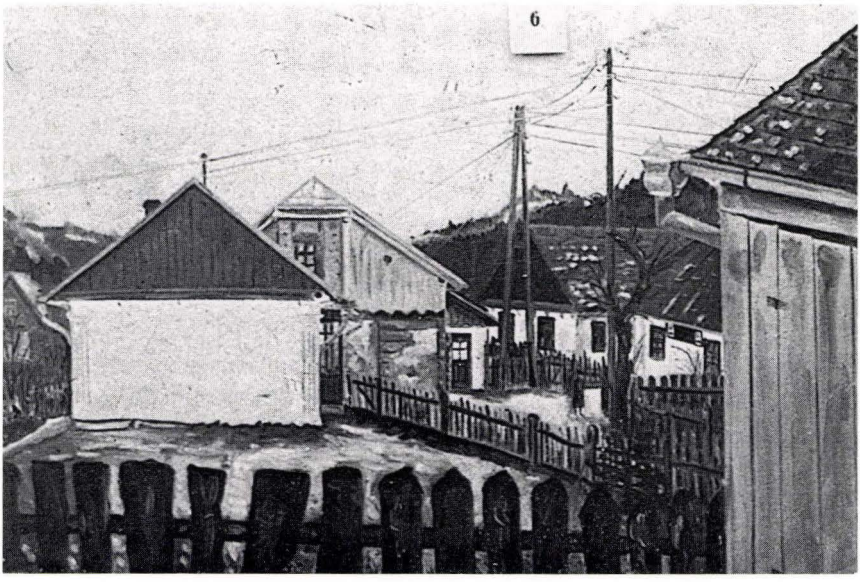
The Great Synagogue (Heshil)



The marketplace



The cemetery



Courtyards of Jewish houses

Skole and its Jews Before the War — Photographs



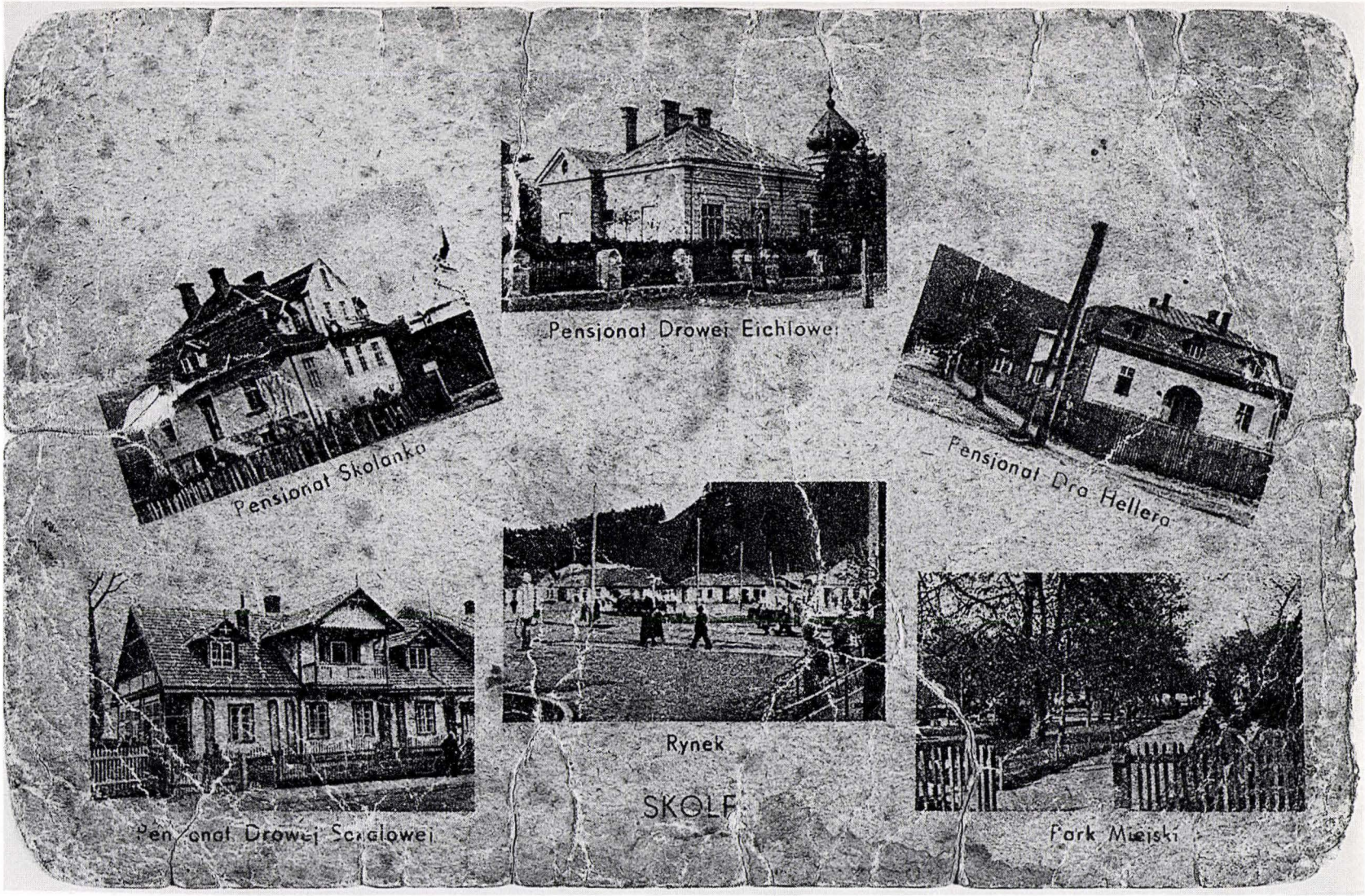
The railway station



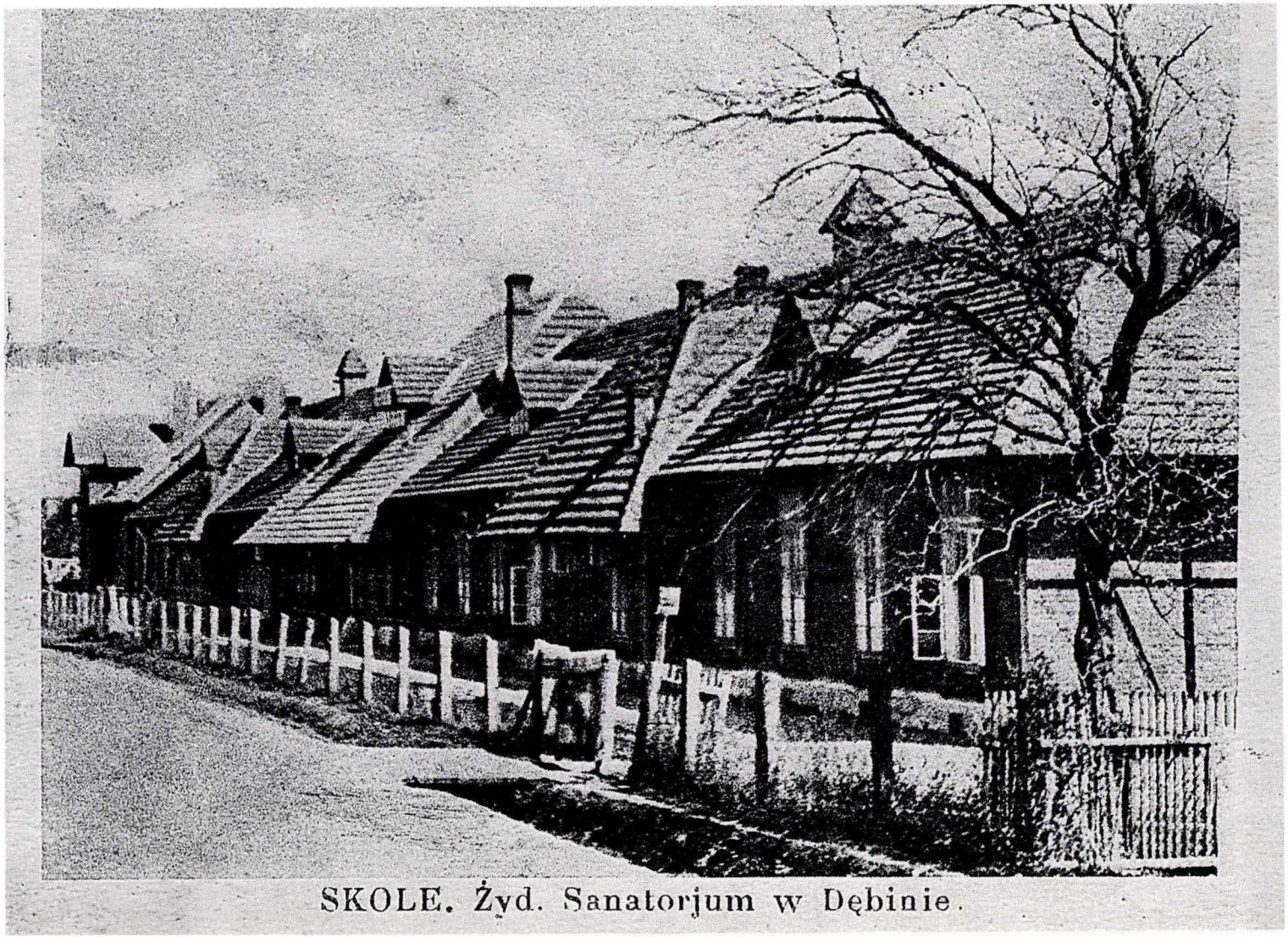
The beach at the river



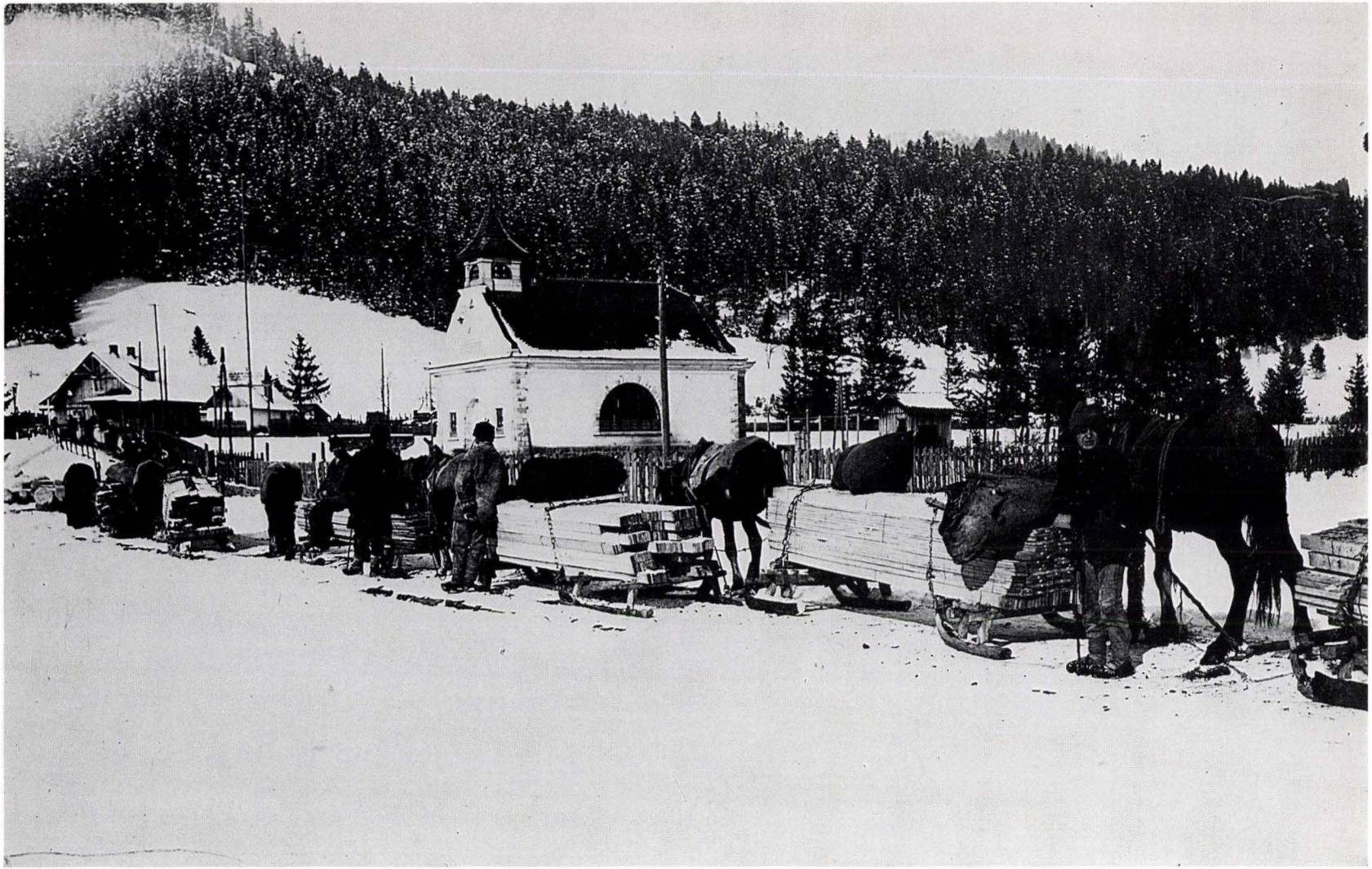
The road leading to the river



Guest-houses in Skole (from a postcard)



The sanatorium for Jewish children in Dembina, near Skole



Transporting wood to the sawmill



A farewell photograph before emigration to Israel (In the background: the sawmill)



A public meeting celebrating the Balfour Declaration



A eulogy for the murdered Jews outside the Great Synagogue



School children on an outing in the Botivla fosrest.



A farewell photograph before emigration to Israel



The Hebrew school, *Safah Berurah*



The *Achvah* organization



Young members of the *Achvah* organization



Members of the *Ha-Shomer Ha-Tzair* organization


קבוץ "הפועל" דעל "שיבה בחול"
סקולה. 9..ת"ש 1933



The actors after a performance



Members of the "Jewish National Fund" committee



Members of the *Ha-Shomer Ha-Tzair* organization



Members of the *Betar* and *Ha-Tzahar* organizations



Young Jews from Skole



A memorial meeting for the Jews of Skole and the vicinity held in Haifa when the State of Israel was founded



A memorial meeting to mark the publication of the *Skole Memorial Book*





