ZŁOCZÓW MEMOIR

1939 – 1944

A Chronicle of Survival

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum

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by
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Authors Choice Press
San Jose New York Lincoln Shanghai

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2026

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Authors Choice Press
an imprint of iUniverse.com, Inc.

For information address:
iUniverse.com, Inc.
5220 S 16th, Ste. 200
Lincoln, NE 68512
www.iuniverse.com

Originally published by Shengold Publisher, Inc.

ISBN: 0-595-19399-4

Printed in the United States of America

To Lina

Introduction

Ten years ago my granddaughter, Lynn Shapiro Helmer, became interested in her "roots" and asked me to write a history of our family. With the encouragement of Lynn and my daughters, Edith Tennenbaum Shapiro and Selma Tennenbaum Rossen, the project expanded into this memoir.

The memoir is based on a diary written while in hiding, as well as notes, photographs, and documents, and their survival is nearly as miraculous as our own.

In July 1944, after the Nazis retreated from Zloczow, we returned to our apartment and found it ransacked and vandalized; documents and photos had been torn out of albums and strewn over the floor. I got down on my hands and knees to sort, collect and repair, and was overjoyed to discover that much was salvageable. During the Russian occupation, I myself regretfully destroyed certain articles and documents which I felt could place me in jeopardy, but apart from that almost everything else was intact.

We were determined at that point to leave Zloczow and Poland forever, and head towards Palestine or the United States. I packed these rescued treasures in a separate suitcase, making sure to include a portrait of my late father which I had found in the debris, ripped out of its frame but otherwise unmarred. Leaving Poland at that time involved the illegal crossing of three borders. We had no difficulty making our way past the Polish-Ukrainian or the Polish-Czech borders, but at the Czech-German frontier our guide betrayed us to the authorities. Fortunately he betrayed only our luggage; the police seized the luggage but we managed to hide elsewhere. We waited for the night, when the illegal crossing would take place in greater safety.

In addition to my wife, myself, our two daughters, and my mother-in-law, Bessie Horowitz, there were other people involved, including

Sonia and Dr. Solomon Jollek, friends currently residing in Westchester County. We had all decided to forgo the luggage and to try to cross the border on our own – until my wife remembered the documents and photographs! Apart from nostalgia for the photographs, we held our law school diplomas in exaggerated respect because we thought they would be essential in helping us start our new life.

Given the known relative benevolence of Czech authorities, Lina and I decided to try to reclaim our papers. We had the children and my mother-in-law wait for us and went. The others thought we were out of our minds and proceeded with their plans to cross immediately, which they did successfully.

Lina and I arrived at the police station and were brought before a young lieutenant who asked us who we were. I had decided on candor and told him, "We are Jews on the way to Palestine." I added that we had lost all our people in Poland, all our possessions, and that we could not bear to remain. We had come to him to retrieve our photographs and documents. We did not care what happened to the rest of our luggage.

The lieutenant opened a suitcase which was the one with the papers. Father's portrait was on the top. "Who is this?" he asked. "My father —he was murdered by the Nazis," I told him.

Without another word the lieutenant returned everything to us and ordered a man to escort us to the house where the children were waiting. As we were leaving, he said, "Good Luck!"

We crossed the border several hours later in darkness and snow, but we were warmed and encouraged by our experience with the officer.

I thank him and owe the book in part to him.

More immediately I should like to thank all the members of my family and particularly my daughters who encouraged me to complete the book. I am also grateful to Sue Machlin, who coordinated the project, and to Bridget Cimilluca, who patiently typed several drafts as well as the final manuscript.

West Orange, N.J.
October 1985

1

For a period of four weeks, from October 23, 1943, until November 26, 1943, I kept a diary.

* * *

Saturday, October 23, 1943

. . . After a three-month stay in the cellar underneath the barn we returned yesterday to "our room," a modest improvement in our miserable situation after a downward spiral that has lasted four years, so far.

F-O-U-R Y-E-A-R-S. I have to spell this out. The mere arithmetical digit "4" seems to me utterly inadequate to describe the time we have been living through—a time in which too much happened. In order to escape the magic circle drawn around the "4," I must visualize that it represents four times 365 days, each of which, with merciless uniformity, has been drawn out into twenty-four hour/centuries. Only now am I able to understand how long, how mercilessly long, is the period we have lived through. "Lived through." How easy to say or write. Surely, it does not seem right to use the same words, to give the same meaning, to a pleasant vacation, a German Akzion, a Bolszewicki resettlement.

When I was a teenager engrossed in historical novels, I complained that I had not been given the opportunity to live in those heroic times, particularly during the Napoleonic wars, and regretted that I retained only a child's memories of World War I. I could not foresee then that it was my destiny to live in an epoch against which nearly all previous history would pale, an epoch both grandiose and petty, sublime and sordid, merciful and cruel. What we have lived through has had enormous scope and broad dimensions, spread over many lands and waters; at the same time

it has been concentrated for us in a tiny space, circumscribed in the gigantic/microscopic time of four years.

So far this, the most sorrowful chapter in the history of mankind, is not closed, but it is my growing conviction that the end of the tragedy is approaching. This gives me incentive, the courage to try to bring back to life and record these events, whose darkness was only occasionally dispersed by brief rays of private joys.

* * *

We were in good spirits. Out of a dungeon, in a real room with doors and windows. My God, windows! The Germans were in full retreat.

* * *

Curiously, our refuge in our bitter exile is the house where we spent our last vacation before the war.

Yesterday morning, after emerging from the cellar into daylight, I looked at the faces of my wife and our fellow sufferers and saw them aged fifteen years. I was seized with despair at our seemingly endless misery. I am writing these lines on a beautiful, sunny October day. My memories float back to the glorious summer of 1939. How full of life did these young faces look during the last days of happiness.

Of course, there were problems, too . . . .

* * *

Two shots interrupted my writing. Oh, those shots!

* * *

The war has revised our values drastically. Things that long ago seemed of utmost importance, indeed vital, today do not seem to be worth mentioning. It is not easy for me now, in this confused state of mind, to coordinate my thoughts and bring order to these reminiscences. I shall try to keep my mind off annoying matters and write about the past, following as much as possible the chronology of events.

* * *

The summer of 1939, perhaps the best summer of my life. I recall that the weather had been fine since the middle of June, and remained so until the end of September.

Early in July we left home to spend our vacation by the sea. We stopped in Lwow at the De la Pais coffeehouse, where we met some friends who persuaded us to forgo the trip. "The situation is tense," they said. "Nobody can tell what may happen."

Few of us realized that in this veiled way we were talking about war, even though the case of Czechoslovakia was still fresh in our minds. (The German occupation of Austria was regarded as an internal affair.) We trusted the British statesmen to resolve the crisis. We knew our history and believed that but for the mishandling of negotiations by Sir Edward Grey before World War I, there would not have been a war. It seemed to us that in spite of Munich, or perhaps because of it, England would not repeat her mistakes. We misjudged that. But mostly we misjudged the Germans. And what was worse, we did not believe people who knew the Germans, refugees from Germany who had recently arrived among us and tried to warn us . . ."

* * *

When I look through the yellowed pages of my diary, I see that my estimate of the military and political situation was correct. There was no doubt in my mind that Germany was defeated. But whether it would be in time to save our lives was questionable, even in late '44. I shall leave the diary for a while, to begin from the beginning.

* * *

In *Rashomon,* the Japanese film, the story is told through the eyes of three persons, and three different versions emerge, at some points completely contradictory. My law school teachers cautioned me to be wary of eyewitnesses. In reconstructing this story, I consulted my wife and my daughters, and our recollections of some events differed. What I have set down is mostly my own story of a Jewish family, in a small town in eastern Europe, and of a folk that vanished from the face of the earth.

* * *

For the first few years after their marriage my parents lived in the small town of Gologory (Bare Hills), where my father was born, and where his forebears lived since the reign of the Polish King Jan III, Sobieski, who in 1673 saved Vienna from the Turks. On the surrounding hills, from which the town took its name, there was an old Jewish cemetery where they were buried, as testified by the still legible Hebrew inscriptions on the gravestones.

I was born during the Passover holidays on April 9th, 1909, in Zloczow, Poland, which was my mother's hometown. That part of Poland was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. My father had gone off to report to the Austrian draft board, and Mother had moved back to her parents' home to bear her child. Doctor Minz assisted at the birth. Twenty-five years later, he also delivered my two daughters.

My maternal grandfather, Meir Kapaun, a very religious man, was afraid that my progressive parents might, God forbid, give me a goyish name. So he seized me, I was told, wrapped me in his *bekesha,* the long black coat worn by religious Jews, and took me to the registry where he endowed me with the names of his late father, Shmuel Lipe.

According to my mother, the registrar, a good friend of hers, tried to dissuade him, but to no avail. This may be incomprehensible today, but in the Poland of that era, the bearer of a distinctive Jewish name was subjected to much taunting, particularly in childhood, and indeed such was my occasional experience.

Because of his poor eyesight, my father was soon released from military service. He collected his wife and newborn son, and we returned to Gologory.

My father Leib (Leon in Polish) was born February 7, 1886, in Gologory. Both my elder daughter Edith and younger granddaughter Debbie share the same birthday. Father was of medium height and handsome. In his later years he put on some weight, but being stout in those times was not considered a defect; on the contrary, a man of means was expected to look corpulent.

Father was self-educated and spoke excellent German, Polish and Ukrainian, in addition to Yiddish. He was a successful businessman and we were well-off.

My mother, Rachel Lea, was born in Zloczow on January 1, 1885. She was a year older than Father, petite, pretty, vivacious and very witty. She was nicknamed Kapuncia, from Kapaun. Born in a larger

city, she had a more formal education than Father. My parents were very much in love.

We lived in Gologory until the outbreak of World War I. Even though I was very young, I do have some very vivid memories of that time.

My parents' apartment was the meeting place of a small group that comprised the cultural elite of the town. Mother was one of the founders of a Zionist women's group in Zloczow. When I came to the United States, a friend of hers gave me a photograph of the group. There was in Gologory a Baron Hirsch School, founded by and named after the prominent Jewish philanthropist, and its sole teacher, a lovely lady, Mrs. Kerner, was a friend of my mother's. (We were to meet Mrs. Kerner in America years later.)

Mother felt confined in Gologory. In fact, she hated it and longed to get back to Zloczow. She was very much attached to her parents and traveled frequently to visit them, taking me along. I loved these trips because friends and relatives showered me with chocolates and gifts. One aunt was an exception and I did not like her. I got a good spanking when I told my mother: "Let's get out of here. They don't give anything."

In Gologory, as in many small towns, everybody had a nickname according to appearance, occupation, behavior, or place of origin. These nicknames were useful, since there were always a number of people with the same name, and the nickname identified the individual. Often nobody knew how a nickname was acquired; it just stuck.

I mentioned Mother's nickname, Kapuncia. Father was called "Langer Leib," because he was tall by the standards of the town. Father's family nickname was Borsuki (badgers). Whether it came about because most of them were short and squat, or because they were tenacious, or great teasers, I never found out. But there it was. You often got an empty stare if you asked for Mojsze Tennenbaum, my grandfather, since there were half a dozen men of that name in town. But say Dawid Mojsze Borsuk and there was instant recognition. Aha!

There were in Gologory, Mojsze der Blinder (one-eyed), Jankel der Schuster (shoemaker), Srul der Mishigener (crazy), Icik der Podkaminer (from the town Podkamien), and so on. Family nicknames were: the Rybki (fisherman), the Ciganer (Gypsies), swarthy in appearance, and so on. One family that dealt in onions was called Cebulaki (cebula—onion in Polish): that came to connote prosperous, but gross



My father, Leib Tennenbaum.

and boorish, uncouth and illiterate. These folks were unable to read even their prayers and muttered in the synagogue, pretending. Some members of this family emigrated to America and came to see us after our arrival there. They had been here for over a quarter of a century and had prospered, but even America could not change their general make-up.

I remember all four grandparents well. My father's parents were first cousins, not unusual in Gologory where the whole town was interrelated. They were both short and stocky.

Grandpa Dawid-Mojsze was a robust man. Often he covered the ten-mile distance from Gologory to Zloczow, where he did his shopping, on foot. I managed this feat a few times myself as a teenager. To Lwow, he traveled by haywagon, an overnight excursion that required a lot of stamina. He was well-respected, both as a merchant and as a kind of country healer. People turned to him for medical advice, since there was neither a doctor nor a pharmacy in Gologory. He prescribed



My mother, Rachel Lea, nicknamed "Kapuncia," second from left, with members of Zloczow Women's Zionist group, of which she was a founder.

various herbs, which he gathered himself, and other treatments, cupping glasses, mustard, and similar simple but surprisingly effective cures.

I believe that Grandma Freida was a year older than Grandpa. I was the eldest grandson, the only one, until many years later. Grandmother Freida used to keep a jar of my favorite candy cane under the counter in the store they owned.

I visited them often. In Gologory I played soccer with the boys, I was the only one with shoes; they played barefoot. I also rode horseback and had a great time.

My grandparents had another son, Nehemiah, who after serving with distinction in the Austrian army during World War I became the record keeper of the Jewish Kehilah, self-governing board, of Gologory and surrounding villages. My friend, Sig Schotz, preserved a birth certificate with my uncle's signature. There were also two daughters who married far away from home, and retained but a tenuous connection with their family. One of these women, Rachel, became quite wealthy and owned land in the county of Rawa-Ruska. That entire family perished in World War II, murdered by the Nazis.

My maternal grandparents lived in Zloczow. My maternal grandfather Meir was a *yeshiva bocher* (scholar); as was customary in those days, he had been brought over from his native Litwa by my grandmother's prosperous merchant family to marry my Grandmother Etel.

Grandpa Meir was tall, gaunt, ascetic-looking; during his later years he became a vegetarian. He spoke only Yiddish, and never, but never, walked in front of a church. He taught Talmud to a handful of selected students, was very strict, and did not spare the rod. Eventually I, too, became his pupil and he was greatly disappointed when he realized that I had no intention of becoming a rabbi.

Unusual for a man in those times, Grandpa Meir was a good cook, perhaps because Grandma Etel was such a bad one.

Grandma Etel came from a prolific family. My great-grandfather, Szulim Friedman, had twenty-two children from a succession of three wives. Some members of that family emigrated to the United States and Canada.

Grandmother Etel was the businesswoman of the family. She looked frail, yet she made daily rounds of the neighboring villages on foot, gathering produce which she sold to customers in town.

These grandparents were prosperous and able to bestow a handsome dowry on my mother.

All four grandparents died in their seventies. Grandpa Meir, who lived with us after Grandma Etel died, lived the longest. When he died, as is customary for religious Jews, he was laid out on the floor on a bed of straw, with candles at his feet. This sombre scene and his waxen face remain vividly in my memory.

The background of Basia (Bessie), my mother-in-law, was similar to my mother's. Basia was born on December 31, one day before Mother's birthday, but the year is uncertain. Anyhow, Basia and Mother were neighbors and friends before their marriages. Basia had a much older brother who as a young boy left for Vienna where he subsequently married and settled down.

My wife's father's name was Salomon Horowitz. He came from a wealthy family, cut a dashing figure and was well-educated, a graduate of the so-called "little matura," six grades of *gimnazjum*. After he served in the Austrian army, he became an official of the court, director of a court chancellery, which is comparable to a county clerk in our municipal system. He married, naturally, the town beauty, Basia Goldman. They had two children: my wife, Elzbieta, nicknamed Lina, and a son who died young. In contrast to me, my wife was given a "civilized," that is, non-Jewish name by her enlightened parents.

Salomon and Basia entertained a lot, since Basia was a fabulous cook. Her gefilte fish was famous and she continued to cook her specialty for many years after we came to America.

When the First World War broke out, Salomon took the family to Vienna, where they remained until 1917. Lina went to a nursery school in Vienna. They were spared the first Russian occupation of Zloczow, 1914-15, since they did not return until 1917.

Unfortunately, in 1919, Salomon died suddenly during a visit to Lwow, then Lemberg, and was buried there. He left his family a fortune—in paper money. Luckily, Basia also inherited a share in a family restaurant (a gold mine during the war) which became her main source of income, since the paper fortune soon became worthless. Basia lived with her widowed mother and my future wife, whom I met under circumstances which I will describe later.

* * *

When my wife and I were born in the province of Galicja we were Austrian subjects, since Galicja was annexed by Austria at the end of the eighteenth century when Poland, of which it was a part for nearly a thousand years, was dismembered and divided among its three predatory neighbors, Austria, Prussia, and Russia. The province remained within the Austro-Hungarian Empire until that in turn disintegrated in 1918 at the end of World War I. The Treaty of Versailles restored Galicja to the revived Polish republic.

The eastern part of Galicja, which includes our families' hometowns of Gologory and Zloczow, was annexed by Russia after World War II, through an agreement initiated by President Franklin Roosevelt at Yalta and sealed by President Gerald Ford at Helsinki.

Austria-Hungary was an empire under the rule of a Kaiser. The crown rested at that time on the head of the ancient monarch Franz Joseph I. The history books describe him as an autocrat, but his rule weighed lightly on Zloczow and Gologory.

The heterogeneous empire encompassed many nationalities. There were the two major partners, the German-speaking Austrians and the Hungarians, but also Italians and a variety of Slavs, Poles, Czechs, Croats, Ukrainians, Bosniaks, Herzegovinians, and Rumanians. It was a miniature United Nations. All these nationalities lived within their ethnic boundaries, enjoyed full religious freedom and considerable local autonomy. People were much freer then than they are now in that part of the world.

For its time, Austria was a liberal country. The official language of a province was the prevailing language of the ethnic group that lived

there. In Galicja the official language was Polish, spoken in the schools, from public school to the university, in the *starostwo* (county governments), in the courts, and in the provincial parliament, which had its seat in Lemberg (Lwow). German was the official language of the empire and in the provinces of Austria proper. In Galicja it was taught starting with the third grade of public school. The crown was the common link. The main support for the crown came from the army, and from the aristocracy which provided the prime ministers and other high officials in the army and in the administration. The aristocrats of all nationalities intermarried and with some exceptions considered themselves Austrians, first, and members of their own national group, second.

In spite of the liberties that the various nationalities enjoyed, the centrifugal forces grew stronger with the advent of the 20th century. The Czechs, especially, through their representatives in the parliament in Vienna and through open and clandestine organizations working inside the country and abroad, were pressing for more political autonomy. As they became stronger, they strove for full independence. There were additional pressures both inside and outside the empire, such as the pan-German and pan-Slavic movements. Another factor was the growing strength of the socialist parties. The pan-Germans dreamed of a huge German empire from the Adriatic to the Baltic, from the Rhine to the Black Sea and beyond. Pan-Slavism, on the other hand, was a movement fostered by the Russians that looked forward to a commonwealth linking all the Slavs. The idea found support primarily among the Czechs, but was opposed by the Poles because they realized that such a political entity would necessarily fall under Russian domination. The pan-German empire was realized for a brief period under Hitler; the Pan-Slavic dream in now a reality under the name of the Warsaw Pact, and it is, as the Poles foresaw, dominated by Russia.

As for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it was only a matter of time before it would succumb to these pressures and disintegrate. This unique political entity, which was both ahead of its time and yet had outlived its time, disappeared after World War I.

How did this political and social situation affect the Austrian Jews? The sizable Jewish population occupied a singular position. With the Jewish nationalist movement still in its infancy, with no link to the soil, dispersed among various ethnic groups, the Jews considered themselves as a religious rather than an ethnic minority. Some of the wealthier and better educated Jews assimilated more or less successful-

ly into the most prevalent ethnic groups, and some even changed their religious affiliation.

Like other segments of the population, the Jews enjoyed full religious freedom and participated in the political life of the country. The religious life was governed by an elected leadership, the Kehila, which kept the birth and death records and issued marriage licenses. Rabbis appointed by it performed marriages and divorces. Thus the political, social and economic status of the Austrian Jews, while inferior to that enjoyed by Jews in Germany, France, or England, was privileged, as compared to the overt persecution and second-class status of the Russian Jew.

Anti-Semitism varied from province to province and even from city to city; it was more virulent among the peasantry who were influenced by the xenophobic clergy; it was less so among the better educated city dwellers.

There is a quote attributed to Dr. Karl Lueger, the anti-Semitic burgomaster of Vienna, at the turn of the century: *"Wer ein Jude ist bestimme ich"* (I decide who is a Jew). On the other hand, there was also a joke about the Kaiser: The Austrian soldiers carried on their caps a round badge with the insignia FJI, Franz Joseph I. "Not so," said the man in the street. "The letters should be read: *'Fuer Juidische Interesse'* (For Jewish interests)." However, the Kaiser was known to be anti-Semitic. Yet the founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, an assimilated Viennese Jew, did not become engrossed with the idea of a Jewish state until after he witnessed the trial of Dreyfus in France.

In Galicja the Jews dominated the retail business and had a large share in the operation of the wholesale business. Many factories were owned by Jews. There were Jews in the judiciary, and in the provincial and governmental bureaucracies on the lower and medium levels. There were Jewish landowners, Jews in the arts and professions, in politics and in journalism. *Die Neue Freie Presse,* the foremost Austrian newspaper, employed many Jewish writers.

Jews were also elevated to the nobility, for example the Barons Hirsch and Rothschild, who supported Jewish schools and other institutions. The leader of the Socialist Party, Victor Adler, was Jewish. There were no official restrictions as to where a Jew could reside, and many lived in the capital cities of Vienna and Budapest, as well as in the capitals of the provinces. In contrast, few parallel opportunities were available to Russian Jews.

All of this constituted a good reason for the Jew to feel himself at home in Austria. Many were ardent Austrian patriots. I know that my

father was. I remember him arguing with a friend who believed in assimilation with the Polish community and was a supporter of Polish independence. I remember my father holding my hand, running along the tracks behind a train that carried a member of royalty (was it the Kaiser himself?) and shouting at the top of his lungs: *"Vivat, vivat! Hoch der Kaiser!"*

Of course the Jews in Austria were not universally prosperous. There were stretches of poverty, particularly in our part of the empire, Galicja, which was one of the poorest provinces, home of Poles in the western part and of Ukrainians to the east. Galicja had also the greatest concentration of Jews, in small towns which were predominantly Jewish, and in the larger towns, where a third of the inhabitants were Jews. There were also Jewish families living in the villages and hamlets, among Polish and Ukrainian peasants.

Some modern American Jews imagine Jewish life in the "Old Country" as it is portrayed in *Fiddler on the Roof.* However the Galicjaner shtetl was nothing like its Russian counterpart. Gologory was a typical small town in Galicja, but no Anatefke. There was none of the dire poverty, no pogroms, no Cossacks with *nahaykas* (the whips carried by the dreaded Russian police), and definitely no singing along with peasants in the taverns.

I can recall only one village policeman in Gologory; he carried a long saber which he probably never unsheathed. There was also a single gendarme, a frequent friendly visitor to my grandfather's store, where he lit his pipe, had one or two shots of vodka, patted me on the head, and left for his round to the next store and the next, until he was solidly drunk. Often my grandfather helped him home, where, so went the tale, his wife sobered him up with the help of a broom.

Generally, considering the times, the overwhelming majority of Jews in Gologory made a fair living. Some were quite prosperous and traveled all over Austria, buying and selling.

I remember my father coming back from trips to Vienna loaded with huge kilo bars of chocolate, with almonds, figs, dates, cans of sardines and other goodies not available in a small town.

Holidays were celebrated joyfully and in peace. Since the town Jews took care of the orphaned and poor, there was always an *oyrach* (invited guest), usually an orphan, at our table. Money had real value then, and a heller, the smallest coin, worth about a quarter of an American cent, bought a lot of candy.

One Purim, or was it perhaps Chanukah, Grandpa Dawid-Mojsze gave me a silver five-krone piece. (One krone was 100 hellers.) I



Wedding picture (1904) – Lina's mother and father, Basia and Salomon Horowitz (Bessie and Solomon). Bessie survived the war and came to the United States with the Tennenbaum family. Solomon died in 1919.

started to cry. I knew what to do with a heller or two hellers, or even a ten-heller coin. But what can one do with a huge hunk of silver? My grandfather could not understand at first why I was crying, but when he did, he laughed, and gave me a ten-heller piece, advising me to give the large coin to my father for safekeeping.

* * *

Consistently, there was movement in our part of the world, as the young and enterprising moved to larger cities which offered opportunities for educational as well as economic advancement. From Gologory people went to Zloczow; from Zloczow to the university cities of Lwow and Krakow; and on to Vienna and Budapest, Paris and Berlin, and even across the ocean to Canada and the United States. Some of the more adventurous skipped the intermediary steps and went to Western capitals on their first move. The world was open then, no passports or visas. Many Austrian and German Jews had come originally from Galicja.

* * *

In Zloczow, the sons of the wealthier Jews went to the *gimnazjum* (high school), for eight years to obtain matura (the diploma that opened the doors to the universities) and to the study of law, medicine, philosophy, and teaching on university level. After six years' study a little matura was obtainable, a prerequisite to pursuit of pharmacy or dentistry. A diploma from a *wydzialowka,* (an intermediate public school), consisting of the usual first four grades plus an additional three grades, qualified one for the seminarium, teachers' school which lasted four years. Few Jewish girls in Zloczow were interested in a teaching career, setting their sights instead solely on marriage.

In their striving for advancement, Austrian Jews took advantage of all these opportunities and made rapid progress. At the outbreak of the First World War, the overwhelming majority of lawyers and doctors in Zloczow were Jewish. Our corpulent, jovial Doctor Gold, who was also the burgomaster of the town, liked to prescribe for his patients his own favorite medication, a shot of vodka taken at least twice a day. He did have a large practice! Two members of the parliament which sat in Vienna were also Jews: Dr. Rappaport, a rabbi who held a doctorate from the University of Vienna, and a landowner whose name I can't recall. Both were clients of the lawyer, Izak Mittelman, whose apprentice I was to become, and I knew them well.

2

Since Jews fared so much better under Austrian than Russian rule; the personalities of those who emigrated, as well as their motives, differed. The Russian immigrant was, in general, a better educated, socially conscious individual who could not find fulfillment in his native country. Often he carried with him Marxist ideas, and in his new country joined or created centers of socialist activity. By contrast, the Austrian immigrant, called derisively *"Galizianer"* by Russian and German immigrants, was frequently the poorly educated boor, an army deserter or an adventurer lured by visions of gold with which the American streets were supposedly paved. The German Jews looked down on both. They had come early and prospered early. They were and still are basically hostile to Zionism.

Interestingly, it was the *Galizianer* rather than the Russian who adjusted rapidly to the new country and who prospered. As some of them would defiantly say: "If I had known how to sign my name, I would have become a *shammes* (sexton in a synagogue), but thank God, I didn't, so I had no choice but to become a businessman."

Caste or class-consciousness is a Jewish trait. The rabbinical families are the Brahmins; the *tzadikim*, rabbis with a large following, descendants of many generations of prominent rabbis, rank above other rabbis. Next come the landowners, manufacturers, lawyers, physicians, and below them government officials. The merchants are the next caste, and the next are the *balmaluches* (craftsmen). People without a specific skill or in undignified occupations, such as the water carriers, the *balagulas* (wagon drivers), or the wood handlers, rank even lower. The matchmaker occupies a special place, low caste, yet is sometimes held in high regard. Finally, janitors, maids and the like, that are narrowly divided from those at the very bottom, the *kaptzunim* (paupers).

In our part of the world, individuals who assimilated and spoke German at home considered themselves a notch superior to those who spoke Polish or Yiddish. Among the craftsmen, the jewelers were at the top, while the cobblers remained on the bottom. A wholesaler or an exporter was more important than a retailer. *Shnorers* (beggers), who performed small services at weddings and funerals, or professional *minionim* (men who made up the ritual ten required for religious services), outranked beggers who sought a few hellers or a piece of *chalah* from door to door.

It was not easy to break away from the confinement of one's class, since businesses and professions were handed down from father to son and from generation to generation. Even begging ran in families. Intermarriage between members of various classes was not too frequent, except that daughters of wealthy merchants wed rabbinical scholars, and an occasional *oysher* (rich man), particularly a widower, often chose for his wife a pretty maiden from a lower class whose father could not afford a dowry. Since practically all marriages were arranged, the dowry was an essential part of the system.

Erudition, especially knowledge of Talmud, was highly respected, and the illiterate were held in contempt. It was an insult to call someone a *grober ying* ("boor" is not an exact translation), more insulting than *kaptzan* or *balagulah*. The Yiddish language abounds in insults and imprecations. My friend Leon Feldman knew a curse for every letter of the alphabet.

The Jews always helped the indigent since it was a *mitzvah* (good deed) to give to the poor; however, compassion was often mixed with contempt since, right or wrong, it was felt that a poor man had only himself to blame. There was a saying that being a *kaptzan* is worse than being dead. However, the Talmudic scholar who had no interest in earthly goods and devoted his life to studying the Scriptures was exempt from this negative view of the poor.

* * *

Because of my mother's interests, my parents' house was the center of Jewish life in Gologory. She was used to an intellectually active life and was interested in new ideas from the West, particularly the fledgling Zionist movement. Ours was a *balabatish* home (not easily translated, connoting culture and hospitality).

In such a home there was a large bookshelf containing a fine Torah, a gift from my grandfather to my father, next to a complete edition of

the Babylonian Talmud, the Shulchan Aruch (compilation of Jewish laws), and other Hebrew books; German classics—Goethe, Schiller, and Heine; poems by the Polish poets Mickiewicz and Slowacki, as well as many modern writers. Books in Yiddish abounded: Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Mocher Sforim. I remember also *Altneuland* by Herzl, and a small book about the pogrom in Kishiniew, with gory pictures of slain Jews lying in the streets.

At gatherings in our house the men were bareheaded, but no Jew in Gologory would venture outdoors without a hat. I remember an exception, a schoolteacher named Schechter, who was a "Deutscher" progressive. On Shabbes he did not wear a *bekesha*, did not attend services, and smoked cigarettes in the street. He was usually the object of stony stares; in olden times he would have literally been stoned. Schechter emigrated to America in later years.

On Saturdays, an air of tranquillity descended on the town. Men put on their *bekeshes* and *strahmel* (round fur hats adorned with foxtails). Father later discarded this attire, but in Gologory he conformed. Women also paraded in Shabbes finery, including wigs worn on their shaven heads. Mother, although she was religious, had not cut off her hair after marriage and did not wear a wig.

I attended a *cheder* (Hebrew school), and wore *peyis* (sidelocks), like all the other boys. I must have been about four years old when my mother's friend, the schoolteacher at the Baron Hirsch school, got hold of me, produced a pair of scissors, and deftly cut off my *peyis*. I was horrified. With all the progressiveness of my parents' home, I was still a *cheder* boy. I was sure that I would be struck down by lightning. Back at the *cheder*, I pulled my cap over my ears in an effort to cover my shame, but to no avail: I was jeered by the boys, scorned by the *melamed* (Hebrew teacher), and generally ostracized. However, soon thereafter, World War I broke out and we moved to Zloczow. I continued my religious education with my grandfather, Meir, who tried to induce me to grow my *peyis* back, but by then I had learned that God had not sent down an angel to strike me for my sin, and besides, the majority of the boys in Zloczow no longer wore sidelocks.

* * *

In a small town like Gologory one's co-religionists exerted an iron grip. This was as true for gentiles as for Jews. To be suspected of being an unbeliever could even be dangerous in deeply religious hamlets. The power of the village priest over his peasant flock was total, while

among the Jews, the *tzadikim* held a similar hold on their followers. For these believers, both Jews and Christians, nothing had changed since the Dark Ages. Jews begged forgiveness for their sins once a year, during the period of High Holidays, trying to placate God through charity or donations to the holy rabbis. The Christians made offerings to their priest and churches, lit candles, confessed and received forgiveness. Indulgences were dispensed at kermises which were combined with county fairs.

In Zloczow and Gologory there were two such fairs each year, in the spring around Eastertime and in the fall after the harvest. We boys loved the fairs, since discipline was relaxed and there were circus performances, and the stalls were loaded with candy. A heller went a long way. People gathered from far and near for business and for pleasure.

Jews and Christians met at kermises to trade in cattle and horses. There were no written contracts; a handshake repeated a couple of times sealed the agreement and it was unthinkable to renege on such a deal.

Since my mother hated Gologory for being *kleinshtetldig* (provincial), I am sure that we would have moved to Zloczow sooner or later, but the outbreak of the war precipitated the move.

* * *

For me, the outbreak of World War I has come to signify the end of the world's innocence and the end of a Golden Age. Before 1914, literature, music, painting, and sculpture were at a peak. The war brought a series of violent upheavals that were to shake and eventually destroy the established order. Old empires collapsed and new ones arose, revolutionizing the political, social, cultural and economic systems of the entire world. Today, nearly seven decades later, the end of this process of change is still not in sight.

My family was drawn into the maelstrom, and the easygoing, simple life-style under the reign of Kaiser Franz Joseph I came to a sudden end. The Kaiser, who had come in as a tyrant, who had squelched the 1848 uprising, was to be revered in his later years, particularly by Jews, and remembered as a benign if not clever ruler. He was arguably the last Victorian of the world.

Even before the actual start of the war, since Austria added to its already restless heterogenous provinces, Bosnia and Herzegovina, there had been ominous rumblings from the Balkans. The tinderbox

was there; it needed only the spark. The shots fired at Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, which killed the successor to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, set off the explosion. There is an irony in this, since the Kaiser had despised his successor.

I clearly remember the day war was declared. My mother and I were in Zloczow, as Father had been called again to appear before the draft board. We were in the square in front of the *starostwo*. A large crowd had gathered. A military band was playing. A man was speaking. People were yelling "Hurrah," and "Long live the Kaiser." But my mother was crying. When I asked her why, she just squeezed my hand. I looked around and saw that several women and some men were also crying. I did not understand it at all.

The same afternoon we went to look for Father at the building where the draft board was meeting. In peaceful times it was used for weddings, balls, and as a theatre for itinerant groups. Now a sentry stood guard at the entrance.

The conscripts in the building were not allowed to communicate with the crowd outside but once in a while someone close to a window could be spotted. We tried to get a glimpse of Father but had no luck. The men were advised of the decision of the board by means of slips of paper in three different colors, a necessary procedure since many of the peasant lads were illiterate. White was for induction, red for discharge, and yellow for further review. Occasionally a man would show his slip through a window and there would be a gasp, followed by an outcry of joy or sorrow.

We waited a long time. Uncle Nehemiah showed us his white slip. (He served in the trenches during the entire war and never suffered even a scratch. He was later to die in a World War II concentration camp.) My father received a red slip. We went home to Gologory for a last, brief time.

Vastly underrated, the Russian army advanced with unexpected speed and overran the Austrian defenders. The Austrian army, which was later to give an excellent account of itself against the Italians, fought poorly against the Russians and Serbs, because, it was speculated, it contained a large number of Slavs who were unwilling to fight against other Slavs.

Soon there was fierce fighting in the hills around Gologory and for the first time in my life—it was not to be the last—I heard the sound of cannon. Gologory was soon taken by the Russians and burned to the ground.

Many people ran away; others found shelter in the church, in a few

buildings on the hills, or in the villages with the peasants. My grandfather, Dawid-Mojsze, was more fortunate than many others, since on his property there was a massive 17th-century stone tower. It was fireproof and so was still in excellent condition and habitable. It even had a dungeon used by Grandfather to store perishables. Grandfather moved in and, even though he rebuilt his house after the war, he liked his tower so much that he lived in it for the rest of his life and kept his stores in the house.

I loved his new home. When I came to visit him after the war, I would nest in the ledge of the window, which was at least a yard wide. I even slept there.

Russian soldiers were in Gologory when we left for Zloczow. I remember the trip vividly. Houses and huts were burning on both sides of the road. Soldiers, busy with looting, paid us no attention. I saw them leading away cattle and carrying off fowl and household utensils. Everywhere women were crying. One time Mother covered my eyes, but she was too late; I had seen Austrian soldiers dead in the ditches. When we reached Zloczow, it, too, was occupied by the Russians, and again there was looting.

We remained in Zloczow in my grandparents' tiny apartment throughout the Russian occupation, which lasted a year, for the first time undergoing a change of nationality without changing residence, an experience we were to repeat often. Eastern European borders changed so rapidly that they were jokingly referred to as borders on coasters.

The Russians brought with them a peculiar smell that permeated the air; it came from the tar with which they blackened their boots. The ruble supplanted the krone, the kopek the heller; the *nachalnik* replaced the *starosta*, and the *nahayka* (whip)–wielding policemen, the friendly gendarmes. There was one particularly fierce Russian policeman with a handlebar mustache, who was the terror of the town. We called him "Ivan," perhaps his real name. He chased the street vendors, mainly Jewish women, from the marketplace, not sparing his *nahayka*. People soon learned to pay him off, but even tributes did not halt all the harassments.

In anticipation of an Austrian counteroffensive, the Russians rounded up men and put them to digging trenches. Father was caught and had to dig for an entire day, and that evening he could barely move. Afterwards he and a couple of other men hid in the attic until the Russians retreated. In fact, the few young men who had escaped the draft, along with the older men, soon disappeared from the streets.

The Austrian army, its backbone strengthened with German battalions, succeeded in throwing the Russians back to their own borders. This time there was little shooting around Zloczow as the Russians hastily retreated. There was, however, looting by stragglers and the local peasants, who immediately appeared with sacks on their backs to take advantage of inevitable interludes when Zloczow became no-man's-land, one army having moved out and the other not yet on the scene. No one was ever around to punish them for these forays.

Once again we became Austrian citizens. Men emerged from their hiding places to be recalled by the reconstituted draft boards. Father was again discharged.

It was the year 1915. I was six years old and enrolled in a secular school. I had gone to the *cheder*, but this was different. The first semester of the first grade was half over. I had learned to read and write Polish at the age of four, and arithmetic was always very easy, so the adjustment to the work went smoothly. It took longer to learn to accept going bareheaded and to get used to playing with Christian boys, for in Gologory one did not play with *shkutzim* (gentile kids).

I was also exposed for the first time to classroom prayer, the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary. The Jewish boys stood apart in silence. Teachers were few, so classes lasted only three hours a day. I remained at that school until the end of the first grade.

In 1916 Father was called again before the draft board, and this time he drew a yellow card. The Austrians were scraping the bottom of the barrel. He was assigned to the citadel of Przemysl, about 100 miles west of Zloczow, for light duty and further examination. Mother decided to follow him first to Przemysl and later to Lemberg, the capital city of Galicja, where she sublet a room. I was much taken with Lemberg, with its wide-paved streets and tall houses and streets lit at night with gas lamps. This was heady stuff for a little boy from a small town. Lemberg was teeming with refugees from the east.

While in the army, Father had met Izak Brandes, a man who was to become his business partner until the outbreak of the Second World War. The Russian army was again on the offensive, and since my parents wanted to avoid another Russian occupation, we moved 100 miles west to Rzeszow, a city of about 30,000 people. The Brandeses and our family shared a house. They had a son, Lonek, and two daughters—Rozia, my age, and Pepa, a few years younger. From then until the Second World War we were to live in the same house with the Brandeses, the last one in Zloczow.

Rzeszow was quiet, because most refugees went farther west, some

to Vienna and to cities in Bohemia and Hungary. Rzeszow was a Polish city without Ukrainians. I went to school again, to the second grade. I enjoyed reading. At first Mother selected my books for me: *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and—do not ask me why—a story about the martyrdom of some female saint were among the first. On my own I chose a children's edition of *Robinson Crusoe*. From then on I've always loved to read.

At night I went to *cheder*. One evening, when I was about seven, a group of us were attacked on the way home by a gang of older Polish boys yelling "*Zydowskie parchy*" (Jewish filth), and other obscenities; they threw stones at us and beat us with sticks. Someone struck me in the arm, causing me to drop my prize possession, a flashlight. After the gang ran away, I found my flashlight glowing through the mud where it had fallen. We did not resume going to the *cheder* until the days grew longer, and we did not have to walk in the dark.

Otherwise life was pleasant in Rzeszow. Many of its streets were lined with horse chestnut trees, and I liked to walk in their shade. Suitably the main street was "Chestnut Alley." In the spring my parents enrolled me in a day camp which lasted several weeks. It was held inside a large park where we played games, were served hot cocoa, but we had to bring lunch from home. I carried mine in a lunchbox with a sign *"Moje Sniadanie"* (my breakfast). Thus I acquired the nickname, Moje Sniadanie, which I disliked and which stuck with me all that summer.

Rationing was introduced later that year and meat, potatoes, sugar, and salt were available only with ration cards. However, we did not suffer, since bread, milk, eggs, and poultry were easily obtainable from nearby villages. Still, a lively black market developed for the rationed items.

In 1917 the threat of a Russian offensive evaporated since their armies had been defeated disastrously at Tannenberg, in eastern Prussia, by the Germans who were led by Paul von Hindenburg and Erich von Ludendorff, the two generals who later brought Hitler to power.

My mother was devoted to her parents and wanted to be with them. Food supplies were diminishing and we knew that there was food in the Ukraine. Probably my parents were worrying also about property left behind. And there was the intense longing for home. Consequently, by fall of 1917 we were back in Zloczow where we were to remain until the end of 1944.

For a while we lived in rented apartments. Shortly before the war ended, by the middle of 1918, Father acquired our permanent home at 11 Sokola Street, which had been built in 1904 or 1905, after a fire had almost destroyed the city. At that time too, a second disaster, a cholera epidemic, struck the town and claimed many lives. My mother earned the respect of the townspeople when, in disregard of her own life, she nursed her parents and others back to health under the most primitive conditions. It must have taken great courage to act as nurse under those circumstances. Miraculously, Mother herself escaped the illness. (She was not so lucky when, forty years later, during a typhus epidemic in the ghetto during the German occupation, she attended to my mother-in-law. She would not let us, my wife or me, come near. She nursed my mother-in-law back to health, but contracted the illness herself and succumbed.)

The house on Sokola Street was sturdily built and had two floors and a basement. The living quarters were on the upper floor while the factory, begun by Father and Mr. Brandes, occupied the lower floor and the basement. A third partner, Mr. Lerner, was soon bought out by Father and Mr. Brandes. Mr. Brandes had an inventive mind and was responsible for the technical part of the business, while my father was the businessman and administrator. For many years the partners got along well and the business grew.

The partners produced a staggering variety of goods that included, sometimes simultaneously, candy, marmalade, soap, candles, sauerkraut, cigarette wrappers and cylinders, paper bags and wooden crates. They also had a printing shop which later became the main business around which other products were developed. During the last days of the Austrian Empire, the main products were candy, marmalade, and sauerkraut. I recall the wagonloads of sugar, fruit, and cabbage stored in the large courtyard. I particularly remember apples, some as big as a child's head. How sweet and juicy they tasted! A child having his own candy factory — I was the envy of all my friends. I used to go into the shop to tear away chunks of melted candy, still hot from the stove. The business grew larger and more diversified; temporary buildings were erected in the yard and space was rented in the two largest buildings in town, the Sokol and Kasino. The partners became rich. And then in November 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed.

* * *

Kaiser Franz Josef died in November 1916 and did not see the demise of his empire. His successor, Kaiser Karl, was young and handsome but did not enjoy the prestige of his predecessor. There had been something in the old man's whiskers that radiated a sense of confidence and continuity. That was how my father had felt, anyhow. The new Kaiserin's name was Zita. Years later she and I were both operated on by the same surgeon, Dr. Rudolf Nissen, a distinction shared also by Albert Einstein.

Although there were portents of disintegration, the man in the street did not expect an immediate collapse, and when the end came, it was a shock for people like my father, whose fate was linked with that of the empire.

The Germans who controlled Galicja preferred the Ukrainians over the Poles, and with good reason. The Poles had no affection for them, whereas the Ukrainians were Germanophiles and remained so throughout the existence of the Polish state. Thus, when the Germans retreated in 1918 from the Ukraine and eastern Galicja, they made sure to transfer their power to the Ukrainians.

Russia was at that time torn by the convulsions of the Bolshevik Revolution. In the Russian Ukraine the infamous hetman Petlura seized power and his soldiers committed savage pogroms against the Jewish population. But in Zloczow we had only a few days of shooting in the streets, and looting by the suddenly leaderless soldiers (since all the officers had shed their uniforms and disappeared), and the ever ready peasants.

The black and yellow Austrian flag was replaced by the yellow and blue colors of the Ukrainian Republic, and the Ukrainian Tryzub (trident) replaced the Austrian eagle. The central Ukrainian government in Kiev was very remote; local authorities headed by a lawyer, Dr. Wanio, restored order and issued a new paper currency named Karbovanetz or Hryvnia. The new money was printed in my father's shop, and was of course worthless, but it had to be accepted. The krone was still in circulation, but its value decreased daily and it soon became just as worthless. My father's fortune evaporated, as did those of many people, including my future father-in-law.

Unlike the Russian Ukrainians, the local Ukrainian authorities cooperated with the Jewish population, and Jewish officials in the *starostwo* and in the courts retained their posts. A Jewish private school, where Polish had been the official language, was permitted to function. I attended it in the fourth grade.

The Ukrainian authorities had reopened the *gimnazjum*. Many children skipped fourth grade and entered the first grade of *gimnazjum*, but my parents felt that I was too young for that and sent me to the Jewish school instead. They had additional reasons; the official language in *gimnazjum* was Ukrainian, and my parents doubted that the Ukrainian regime would last. Also, in the Jewish school my teacher was my mother's cousin. Of course, even in private school Ukrainian was mandatory as a second language.

Meanwhile the Poles were biding their time. They feared but respected the Germans; they despised and were contemptuous of the Russians. Toward the Austrians the feelings were more mixed, since many Poles, particularly the aristocrats, had done well during the Empire, and many occupied high positions, including prime minister in the central government. However, the dream of a restored, independent Poland had not died.

In the beginning of World War I the leader of the Polish Socialist Party, Jozef Pilsudski, declared himself on the side of the so-called Central Powers, Austria and Germany. He raised a legion of volunteers to fight against Russia, which he considered Poland's worst enemy. There was an expectation that an independent Polish state would be created from the liberated Russian territories. But the successes of the Russian army early in the war upset these plans. In 1917 the Germans who fought for survival, and the new Bolshevik government which needed time to consolidate its power, concluded a separate peace treaty at Brest Litovsk which ceded Polish provinces to the Germans. (A similar situation arose in 1939, a marriage of convenience between the same parties, the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.) The Polish state was forgotten. The Polish legions mutinied and Pilsudski was interned. In the meantime another Polish leader emerged, Ignacy Paderewski, the composer and pianist, whose main asset was his friendship with President Woodrow Wilson.

In 1919 the Ukrainians in eastern Galicja were barely holding on. Germany surrendered; the Poles established a government in the provinces liberated from the Germans. The Poles now pressed southeastward toward Lwow (Lemberg). A new Polish legion led by Jozef Haller marched from the west. This was an anti-Semitic band that committed many crimes against Jews. Their favorite pastime was cutting off the beards and sidelocks of orthodox Jews. They staged a pogrom when they conquered Lwow, murdering a number of Jews. We looked to their conquest of Zloczow with fear. The retreating

Ukrainian army put up little resistance. After the now customary looting of the stores by the fleeing Ukrainian soldiers and local peasants, the Hallerczyki, as they were called, entered Zloczow. They wore four-cornered caps, different from the legion's round ones.

There were attacks on religious Jews; some were shorn of beards, but no pogrom. Since mainly Poles lived on Sokola Street and there were no stores, we escaped harm. During all these upheavals, we had barricaded our gates with iron bars that were strong enough to withstand several assaults, and no one ever broke in and the house was never looted.

Remaining in place, we changed citizenship. We became Poles as the yellow and blue flags came down and white and red flags were displayed. On the walls of the government offices the white Polish eagle replaced the tryzub. But not for long. The Ukrainian army staged a counteroffensive and the Poles fled. Down went the white and red, up went the yellow and blue. This time the Ukrainians were able to hold out only for five weeks and then were gone for good. Up went the white and red, down went the yellow and blue.

However, that was not the end of the local battles in our part of the world.

After a brief period of peace, several months, we were invaded again, this time by the Bolsheviks. Overnight there were red flags everywhere. Pictures of strange faces—Lenin, Trotzky, and others—were plastered on walls and fences. What a strange army they were, barefoot, wearing motley clothing of all colors and origins, partly civilian, partly military. A red star was pinned on everyone's cap.

Bolsheviks occupied the Sokol building, where they held meetings lasting days and nights. At first, we went in to listen. Speaker after speaker exhorted the virtues of the Revolution in Russian, which no one understood, but also in Ukrainian, Polish, and Yiddish. The previous government was abolished and new officials, commissars, were installed. All currencies were declared null and void and replaced by the Soviet ruble. However, the peasants refused to accept it and food disappeared. The Bolsheviks introduced rationing, but there was only black bread and salt to buy with the ration cards.

This first Russian occupation lasted only a few weeks. Trotzky's armies were soundly defeated by the Poles in a battle on the banks of the Vistula, which the Poles christened "*Cud nad Wisla*" (miracle on the Vistula). The Russians retreated deeper into the Ukraine. To their credit, they did not loot. This time the returning Polish army also be-

haved in an exemplary fashion. They were greeted enthusiastically with songs and flowers. Pilsudski, released from internment, became the first head of state of the reconstituted independent Polish Republic, ratified at Versailles.

It was 1920. Peace had finally come.

* * *

Food was still scarce and Mother and I used to go foraging in nearby villages. On one of the trips she met a friend whose pretty little daughter was helping her mother carry a bag of potatoes. I gallantly offered to assist the young lady and, good children that we were, we walked together in front of the women while they walked behind catching up on news of the years during which they had lost contact with each other. I never dreamt that that little girl would one day become my bride and that we would be married for fifty years and, hopefully, for many more.

3

There are those who make history, those who write about it, those who live through it, and some who experience it from all these perspectives. Each view is unique, each tells a different story. I have lived through some recent history, had no hand in making it, and am about to write about it as I saw it.

* * *

Two years after the big war ended, our little wars finally came to an end. The Polish state was reborn within borders which, with minor changes, remained stable until the outbreak of World War II.

Allies in war, the shapers of the post-World War I order could not reconcile their differences in peacetime. The leaders of the Big Three—France, England and the United States (Georges Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson)—had different ideas. For Clemenceau, total destruction of the German military might and the prevention of its resurrection was the ultimate goal. Lloyd George wanted to eliminate Germany as competitor to its colonial empire and then have England retreat to its "splendid isolation," far from the European cauldron. Wilson, whose country had entered the war to "end all wars," dreamed of a League of Nations as arbiter of disputes among the powers and of a new political order with national borders defined through "self-determination of nations."

The result was a dismal failure. Wilson and Lloyd George did not understand Europe. The Austrian Empire was dismembered, to the dismay of my father, the Austrian patriot. I remember him muttering to himself: "Wilson and his goddamn fourteen points!" A vacuum was created in Central Europe and with it the seeds of World War II were sown. Unfortunately, my father was right, as it turned out; the numerous small nations could not keep the peace.

Galicja was ceded to Poland in its entirety. A story made the rounds in Poland that when Galicja was mentioned Lloyd George snapped, "Why bring Spain into this?" The British representative Lord Curzon wanted the line to be established farther west, and this "Curzon" Line was accepted by Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta in 1944 as the border between Poland and the USSR.

The dissolution of the Austrian Empire eliminated some minorities but also created new minorities within Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

The Polish Republic contained the Ukrainians in Galicja and the Bialorussians in the northeast, Germans in the coal region of Silesia, Lithuanians around Wilno, and three million Jews. The Polish representative at Versailles, according to a contemporary, complained that they were going to inherit "so many Jews." A Frenchman (Clemenceau?) allegedly replied: "You are getting a marble table, so what does it matter that the table has a slight crack?" The ethnic minorities felt no allegiance to the Polish state, and the Poles did nothing to gain it. The Jews had no place to go.

* * *

Most of the nineteen years of Polish independence was dominated by Josef Pilsudski. At first, life in Galicja, renamed Malopolska (Little Po5land), differed little from that in Austria. I entered *gimnazjum* in 1920, graduating in 1927 with the highest grades in all subjects. I was also a good athlete and captain of the volleyball team. Classes were held Monday to Friday, with half a day on Saturday. The teachers were Poles, except for a single Ukrainian, and a Jew who taught religion. Most of my teachers had taught during the Austrian occupation and were excellent. New teachers were mostly Polish war veterans with limited education or teaching experience. Many were anti-Semites who made up in fierce chauvinism what they lacked in education. While the level of teaching deteriorated, grading remained fair and Jewish students were treated equally with Poles.

Discipline was strict and extended to our behavior outside school walls, since anyone belonging to an unauthorized organization, caught walking beyond set boundaries, or smoking, was expelled. However, these rules were defied repeatedly. Many Jewish students including myself belonged to Hashomer Hatzair. We took our young ladies to a lovely park, the Kempa, off limits to us after dark, and the bathrooms

at school were always thick with cigarette smoke.

Soon I found the Hashomer too radical, and with some other boys and girls I helped found a more conservative group, called Atid (the Future). I became the chairman. In addition, I took private Hebrew and French lessons, and I also tutored. Although my parents were prosperous, my allowance was very modest; I had to buy luxuries, such as a camera, a bicycle, and tennis equipment from my own earnings.

It was while I was taking Hebrew lessons that I again met my future wife. As she tells the story, her friend, Yetka Zwerdling, warned her that a new boy was joining the class, and that she had better stay away from him, because he was "hers." My future wife replied that Yetka could keep him. However, when I entered, I looked around, and immediately took the seat next to my wife-to-be. And that was that. I still choose to sit beside her.

I formed a close friendship with a Jewish boy, Ignac Herman, whose family was completely assimilated; his brothers and one sister had even converted to Catholicism. With Zbyszek Glowacki, Tadek Szwarc, Poles, and Siunda Mamczyn, a Ukrainian, I became part of a close work-and-play team. We were called the Four Musketeers.

Until I was thirteen years old my parents did not "spare the rod." The worst hiding that I remember happened when a circus and carnival came to town. It opened on Yom Kippur, of all days! I sneaked out from services and went to look, but once there, I forgot everything else and went from ride to ride until darkness fell. My parents, who had been looking for me frantically all over town, found me riding happily on a swing. It was a rude awakening. Obviously the spanking I received on that occasion was memorable because I can still feel it. I spent the night tearfully imagining my parents' sorrow at finding me dead next morning.

My Bar Mitzva was held in my father's synagogue; he and I went up to the *bima* to bless the Torah. Afterward my father served a *kiddush*, and that was that. Otherwise I celebrated that birthday like any other, by inviting a few boys and girls to my house to dance to phonograph records and to play games, especially post office, as innocent as were those times.

I devoured books. I was one of the few boys in Zloczow lucky enough to have a room of my own. It was lights out at 10 o'clock, but I read under the covers by flashlight. I was caught occasionally, but by then I was too old to be spanked. I also read in school during classes, which was strictly forbidden. Our two-seated desks had a lower shelf where

we kept our books and also a top that could be slid forward and down, useful for hiding books held in one's lap.

Some students used this device to conceal crib sheets. (Zloczow was said to be the capital of cliff notes which were published by Zuckerkandel, a firm well known in Poland and, before World War I, in Austria.) I had no need of such aids since I was a good student and learned easily.

Once during a Latin lesson, my teacher called on me three times to read and interpret the text, but at that moment I was feverishly worrying whether Old Shatterhand, the hero of a popular Western by the German writer Karl May, would escape the trap set for him by the Indians. Lost to the world, I could only stare at him with glazed eyes as he kept calling my name. Each time I failed to respond he gave me an F, setting, I'm sure, some kind of record.

From Karl May, I went on to Jules Verne, to Conan Doyle, to Alexandre Dumas, to Jack London, a favorite American writer, who was by far the most popular foreign author in Poland (and Russia also, to this day). I read the plays of Shakespeare and Moliére. I read *Gulliver's Travels* and *Don Quixote*. I subscribed to a publishing house that specialized in Nobel Prize winners. I did not neglect Polish writers; I loved the novels of Henryk Sienkiewicz and could recite from memory whole chapters from his trilogy.

I was not unique. This ardor for reading was shared by my friends, including my future wife, Lina.

The first book by a Russian writer (whose name I don't remember) had the intriguing title *Seven Gallows*. I had selected it believing that it was a mystery, but it was the story of seven revolutionaries sentenced to be hanged by a czarist court. The book was very depressing and made me keep away from Russain writers for many years.

Mother, although progressive in many other respects, kept a strictly kosher house as did 99 percent of all the Jewish housewives in Zloczow. Ham was served in our bedroom only to Lina, whose doctor prescribed it during her pregnancy. Surprisingly it was Father, who in spite of a more traditional background, breached the *kashrut* laws when he traveled on business. One year he happened to be on a trip during Yom Kippur; he became very hungry, but the restaurants were closed. He remembered that a family friend who had converted and married a Christian was now living in the town. He decided to pay her a visit, hoping to be offered something to eat. When no food was forthcoming, he asked his hostess for a bite to eat. The lady gave him a surprised look

and said: "But Mr. Tennenbaum, don't you know what day it is? It is Yom Kippur and I am fasting." It was one of my father's favorite stories. "You can never fathom a Jewish soul," he always added.

On Passover and Rosh Hashanah, a new suit would be made for me, but no old suit was ever discarded. It was worn in school or for play. When the pants became shiny, the fabric was reversed, resewn and worn some more. I hated these reversed garments with the pockets and buttons on the wrong side, but this was a normal custom even in wealthy households, where nothing, absolutely nothing, was ever discarded, whether clothing or food. Eventually the garments were given to the poor. To throw away even a slice of bread was considered a sin. It hurts my European feelings to see the waste that is customary in this country.

Children were given monetary gifts on Chanukah and Purim; cheder teachers and Jewish servants received an extra week's wages called Chanukah gelt. A saying went: "A belfer (religious teacher) does not work for the salary, only for the Chanukah gelt," meaning that the bonus is cherished more than the normal salary.

Chanukah was not considered an important holiday. It did not compete with Christmas. The word Christmas would not even be mentioned in a Jewish home. On Chanukah we went to cheder as usual.

Purim was another matter. Jewish children put on costumes and frolicked like American children do on Halloween. Occasionally Mother, the vivacious lady that she was, wore a costume herself and went with me and my playmates singing and dancing in the street, with other adults joining in as well.

* * *

The first few years of the reborn Polish state were marked by runaway inflation. The first established currency, the mark, became virtually worthless. A loaf of bread cost millions. Most business transactions were conducted in dollars, which became the de facto currency. But soon food became plentiful and inflation came to a halt. A new currency, the zloty, replaced the mark and remained fairly stable until the outbreak of World War II.

* * *

Father's business, the firm of Brandes and Tennenbaum, flourished.

The partners now specialized in the manufacture of paper products for the pharmaceutical industry. The firm became known throughout Poland and grew larger every year. My father became one of the leading citizens in Zloczow. He disdained politics and refused an invitation to run for City Council, but in 1921 or 1922 he accepted an appointment as a judge-layman to the Superior Court in Zloczow. It was an honorary position, a carryover from the Austrian court procedure. The court consisted of one professional judge and two lay judges who adjudicated civil matters. The system was soon abolished, having fallen out of favor with the new Polish authorities. However, my father served frequently as an arbiter for people who chose a layman instead of going through lengthy and costly legal proceedings. Father donated his fees to the Jewish National Fund.

During the fluidity and uncertainty of the early postwar years, many people emigrated to America, while a few idealists went to Palestine. But the United States soon passed stringent immigration laws which restricted the flow from Eastern Europe, including Jews. In Palestine, Arabs, resenting Jewish immigration, staged pogroms which claimed many lives. A native of Zloczow, Emil Oper, a member of a prominent family, lost his life in a Palestinian pogrom, the first Zloczower to fall there.

In the early days of the struggling Polish Republic, help came from America; food, clothing and money arrived for the newly impoverished, and a distribution center was established. My mother's uncle, Isaac Friedman, had come to America in the 1890's. He now returned as the representative of the Zloczower Society. He stayed at our house and made the biggest impression on me since the pictures of Kaiser Franz Josef. Uncle spoke with a nasal voice, like George Jessel. Everyone admired his wide trousers and colorful ties. He wore a belt, whereas we wore suspenders. He did not carry a wallet but kept a bundle of bills held together with a rubber band, loose in his pocket. Continuously he jingled coins, and explained American money to us—the penny, nickel, dime, quarter, and the huge silver dollar.

While Father and other Zloczower Jews took an occasional drink with dinner on Friday, Uncle liked his schnapps for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and in between. He told us of the wonders of America where a fellow named Ford paid his workers five dollars a day. At that time a ten-dollar bill fed a family in Poland for a week. We kids decided that he must be a millionaire.

I vividly remember the day when the money was distributed. Uncle Issac sat behind the table in our dining room, flanked by my father, a

couple of rabbis, and the chairman of the Jewish Kehilah in Zloczow. In front of him was a small strongbox with a ciphered lock, the first time any of us had ever seen such a contraption. I longed to own that box, but he gave it to my aunt, Laura Reichard, saying I was too young. I yearned for that box for a long time.

Uncle called the names of the beneficiaries from a long list. I was stationed at the door, and relayed the name to the head of a long line of people crowding the corridor and stretching all the way down the stairs to the gate. Once a beneficiary was identified, Uncle ceremoniously took the bills from the strongbox and handed them to the lucky recipient. (At that time American bills were larger than they are today and looked every inch the valuable dollar.)

Amounts received varied from one to several hundred dollars, and comments by the recipients were appropriate to the gift received. From loud cries: *"Gebentcht sol er werden; A mazel of zahn kopf; Er zol leben bis hindert un zwonzig; Wus far a tairer zin, tochter,"* to *"Fabrent zol er nor weren; A shlag zol im trefen; Der chazer, der ganif."* (May he be healthy; May fortune remain on his head; May he live to 120; What a dear son, daughter; versus, May he burn, may the devil take him, the pig, the crook.)

The largess of the American relatives was amazing, proving again how rich a country America was. Uncle Isaac encouraged this notion. I told him I had read about a millionaire who loved strawberries so much that he traveled around the world to keep up with the season. Uncle Isaac bragged that in America one can stay put and eat strawberries all year round.

The second visitor was my American Aunt Clara, the stepsister of my grandmother Ethel, whose father had had twenty-two children. She was a legend in the family, a beauty, a little plump but that was no disadvantage then. Two years younger than my mother, daughter of the fourth wife, Clara left for America as a young girl. She had lived for a long time in San Francisco; this in itself made her different from all the other Zloczower folk, who lived in Brooklyn. She had married a much older man, who left her a rich widow. She married a second and third time, and each marriage multiplied her fortune. She visited us with her third husband, a dignified Viennese gentleman in a stylish white suit and straw hat. He spoke only German or English with his wife and pretended not to understand Yiddish, although he was from Galicja.

Aunt Clara dressed like a character from *Hello Dolly* in long gowns

with tucked-in waists and wide-brimmed hats. Unlike Uncle Isaac, Clara represented no one and gave away no money. After a short visit with us Clara and her husband left for Vienna. We did not hear from her until a few years later when, widowed once more, she had a sad story to tell. Her husband's Viennese relatives had included a brother-in-law, a slick operator who had swindled them out of more than a hundred thousand dollars, an almost incomprehensible sum to us. She stayed four months, and I remember her best for her appetite. She would go to a grocery store, select a herring from the barrel, and eat it then and there—she loved herring so much. She gave me a ten-dollar gold piece for my coin collection when she left.

The impressions of America left by the two visitors altered as I read American writers like Zane Grey, Jack London, Upton Sinclair, and Sinclair Lewis. Also, Mother's cousin Laura returned to Poland after staying only a year, with tales of outrageous conditions and very little intellectual life. There were evidently many Americas.

In Poland, life was returning to normal. Food became plentiful and cheap, and the ancient art of bargaining, dormant during the war, blossomed again. Adjacent to our house was the Green Market where peasant women daily displayed milk, butter, eggs, poultry, fruit, produce. My mother was not very good at bargaining, but our partner's wife, Bettie Brandes, was beautiful to watch. A dialogue between her and a peasant developed usually something like this:

> Mrs. B: "What do you have today in your dirty basket?"
> The peasant pulls out a hunk of butter from a huge straw basket. Mrs. B takes the butter in her hand, looks at it, smells it: "What did you do? Pee on it to make it look yellow? Do you have a chicken?"

A live chicken comes out from the seemingly bottomless basket and Mrs. B blows at the chicken's behind, a ritual intended to show that the chicken has no fat and that it is a disgrace to its gender.

And so the bargaining went on happily until a deal was struck, with the peasant swearing on her mother's grave that this was the best chicken she had ever raised in her life, and Mrs. B just as firmly insisting that she must be out of her mind to pay that kind of money for such a dead hen!

It used to be my chore to take the chicken to the *shoichet* to be slaughtered ritually. He was located on the wrong side of the tracks, which in Zloczow meant on the other side of the stream, Zloczowka, that passed through the outskirts. The stream farther down was used

for swimming but only by the *shkutzim* (gentile boys). We were forbidden to go swimming, so I did not learn how to swim until after I graduated from *gimnazjum*.

We observed all the holidays. I did not like Yom Kippur because I had to stay all day in the synagogue, fasting; but Passover was, and still is, my favorite holiday. I loved to accompany Mother to the bakery to select the matzos. However, Grandpa Meir would not eat ordinary matzos. Instead he supervised the baking of his own *shmira* (protected), absolutely kosher, coarse and heavy matzos, which I'd taste only during the seder.

* * *

The first election to the *Sejm* (Polish Parliament) was conducted democratically. Voting was for lists representing various parties. The Ukrainians boycotted these elections, and consequently the Jews (led by Zionists) with prominent men such as Dr. Leon Reich and Izchak Grinbaum were able to elect a large bloc, proportional to their segment of the population.

Several splinter parties participated; three parties emerged strong enough to form a government, on the right the National Democratic Party led by Paderewski; on the left Pilsudski's Socialist Party; in the center the Agrarian Party led by a shrewd peasant, Wincenty Witos. Paderewski was the first prime minister; his party, the Endeks (National Democrats) was strongly anti-Semitic. He was an inept politician who, unable to cope, retired to America and music. Pilsudski, disenchanted with the bickering, stepped down as head of state and retired, temporarily biding his time. A Socialist, Stanislaw Wojciechowski, was elected the first president.

4

Wojciechowski visited Lwow on the occasion of *Targi Wschodnie* (the Eastern Trade Fair),when an attempt was made on his life. A Jewish university student, Steiger, was accused of the crime and the Polish Dreyfus case was born. The accusation was groundless, based solely on identification by a hysterical Polish housewife named Pasternak. The defense of Steiger pooled together the best legal talent that Polish Jewry had to offer, outstanding among them Dr. Leib Landau, the best orator I have ever heard.

A Jewish newspaper, *Chwila* (Moment), published in Polish in Lwow, reported the proceedings verbatim; during the evening family and neighbors would gather in our living room to read aloud every detail of the trial. *Chwila* soon quadrupled its circulation and became the voice of Jewry in our part of Poland. It was an outstanding paper by any standards. Its front-page editorials were always interesting and beautifully written in Polish that was seldom matched by rival newspapers edited and written by Poles. It was also frequently censored leaving empty columns.

The Austrian criminal code still in force in our part of Poland required an 8 to 4 vote for a guilty verdict. The jury voted 8 to 4 for acquittal, a tremendous victory for the defense, considering the vicious campaign by the anti-Semitic Polish press. The verdict caused great joy among Jews and dismay among anti-Semitic Poles. Perhaps because of the Steiger affair a new Polish criminal code soon abolished the jury system. The new code was in force when I entered law school.

The bitterness created by the trial lingered on and the relationship between Poles and Jews grew progressively worse.

* * *

In 1926 Pilsudski staged a military coup that kept him in power until his death a decade later. Jews welcomed him because of his socialist past and reputation as a liberal. Besides, his wife was rumored to be Jewish.

There was a second parliamentary election. A motley group which included Pilsudski's hard-core partisans, dropouts from other parties, and opportunists formed a new party called the BBWR, the Non-Party Bloc of Cooperation with the Goverment. They won a third of the Sejm membership. The Ukrainian and Jewish representations each became reduced to about a third of the seats they had held before. All this was immaterial, however, since real power was in the hands of Pilsudski and his colonels, who ruled by edict. Ignacy Moscicki, an unknown chemistry professor, was elected president, a purely ceremonial function.

Zloczow was represented in the Sejm by its mayor, an attorney, Dr. Moszynski. A liberal who associated with all, he forged good relations between Poles and Jews and between Poles and Ukrainians. Respected and well-liked, he was a Churchill look-alike, a bon-vivant bachelor, a ladies' man who openly carried on a lifelong liaison with the wife of our starosta. He was an excellent bridge player. Later as a law student, I was often invited to play bridge with him in his office. I was very young then, and greatly enjoyed the game, the deep leather chairs, his charm, wit, the inside stories about the government in Warsaw, and his generous selection of cordials.

Dr. Moszynski carried a small envelope of cocaine in his vest pocket which he sniffed freely during our games.

I first decided to study chemical engineering, but there was a quota, a *numerus clausus,* practically a *numerus nullus,* in Polish universities, which restricted the number of Jews admitted to medical and engineering schools. Hence, even though I had graduated at the top of my class, I still needed *protekcja* (influence). A friend of my father's, Ignacy Jaeger, a member of the Sejm, spoke up for me and I was accepted to the Polytechnic of Lwow in the fall of 1927. We, the six Jews in the chemistry class, were all assigned to the same laboratory table. Accustomed to friendly relations in *gimnazjum,* I was shocked by the ostracism. The year 1928 was a particularly stormy one at the universities. Roving bands of Polish students attacked Jewish colleagues with sticks into which razor blades had been inserted, chanting *"zydzi do Palestyny"* (Jews to Palestine). These hooligans, mostly members of right-wing fraternities, were called *zyletkowce* (after the Gillette razor).



Lina's gimnazjum *class, 1926. Seated, 3rd row, 3rd from left, Lina, next Lidja Kokuszyn (Lina's best friend at the time, later participated in anti-Semitic riots in Lwow), next Jetka Zwerdling (Geller). 2nd row, 2nd left, Niuna Goldman (Rosen). All other Jewish students besides Lina and the two mentioned perished.*

(Jewish students were killed, among them a member of my fraternity, a bright young man named Celermeir. The Police sided with the attackers and prevented us from fighting back.)

Suddenly there was a halt in the riots. However, from then on, and until World War II broke out, sporadic outbreaks of violence took place.

We were grieved that some old friends from our *gimnazjum* joined the hoodlums. Lina was devastated upon seeing her best friend, Lidja Kokuszyn at the head of a mob that yelled obscenities against Jews.

Lidja was a Russian immigrant whose family had escaped the Bolshevik Revolution. She claimed that her father was a nobleman related to the czar. She was an excellent student, the best in Lina's class. She also wrote poetry and had written verses about Lina and me. We could not comprehend the transformation.

That year I lived in Lwow, sharing a room with Ignac Herman. I was not to remain an engineering student for long.

* * *



Lina and I in 1926

While still in *gimnazjum*, when I would much rather have played *kitchka*, a game like American baseball except that a short stick substitutes for the ball, I began to learn my father's business after school. It was Mother's idea; she was very firm, and I spent increasingly more hours in the factory. I missed out on soccer and volleyball as well, sports we favored as we grew older.

The factory employed fifty to sixty women and men—Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews. The employees liked me; I liked many of them; our relationships plus my familiarity with the business were to play a vital role in the future.

In 1928, while I was at the Polytechnic, Mr. Brandes, Father's partner, suddenly demanded a larger share in the business. He felt that his technical skills had a greater value than my father's business acumen. My parents, reluctant to break up the long, until now friendly and successful relationship, were ready to give in, but I, recalled from school to discuss the matter, opposed the change as strongly as I could. I knew that while Mr. Brandes was indeed a genius at generating new ideas, my father's business judgment was at the core of our prosperity.

My opinion prevailed; Father refused the demand. The wife of our partner and their older daughter, Rozia, tacitly sided with us, but Mr. Brandes was adamant.

He claimed that he was ill, entered a sanatorium in Austria, and left the matter unresolved. We thought that he was malingering, as he had during the past war, to avoid induction into the Austrian army. It also seemed to us that he was upset because Rozia and I, although great friends, had no intention to marry, which was his dream. Soon Mr. Brandes returned, cured apparently, and still determined to dissolve the partnership. Tempers grew hot until finally, a year later, the partnership split up with considerable animosity. Mr. Brandes worked out the division of equipment; Father divided the receivables and other assets. Father could choose first among items deemed equivalent by Mr. Brandes, and vice versa. The employees could choose whom they wanted to work for.

To our pleasant surprise and to Mr. Brandes's shock, all senior workers chose us, even after Mr. Brandes wooed them with promises of higher wages. The bookkeeper went with Mr. Brandes, which was fine with me. His sister married Lonek, Brandes's son, who was a school dropout and the black sheep of the family. We hired a new bookkeeper, a handsome young fellow, Jakob Henis, who eventually married Rozia. We were just as fortunate with our customers; they liked my father and remained loyal to him.

Father let me choose our share of the machinery. Mr. Brandes didn't care what I did because even before the dissolution of the partnership he had wanted to replace old machinery with new, regardless of cost.

For me this was the time of difficult decisions. At nineteen I could go on with my studies and leave my father to fend for himself, or, if I decided to join him, I had to give up the engineering studies. It was unthinkable to give up the university altogether. I decided to switch to law, where class attendance was not mandatory and only the signature of a professor at the beginning and end of each semester was necessary for formal enrollment. Oral examinations were given at the close of each year and could be taken then, or after vacation, but before the next semester started.

It was not easy to change programs in the middle of a semester, but again with the help of Father's *protekcja,* I made the switch. There were problems, of course, but I managed.

When I left for the Polytechnic, Lina was still in *gimnazjum.* I proposed marriage; she accepted, and promised to wait for me until I



My gimnazjum *graduation picture, 1927.*



Lina's gimnazjum *graduation picture, 1928.*

finished and received my degree. We decided to keep our engagement secret. After graduation, she too enrolled at the University to study French and music. When I switched to law, she followed, using her own *protekcja*. We became colleagues as well as engaged, but we never studied together because our work habits differed. I liked to study alone, intensively for about eight weeks, ten hours a day. Lina preferred to study with someone else, anyone but me, in a more leisurely fashion.

At twenty I began a new life. I worked full time at the factory, at first handling only the technical details, but gradually taking on more and more administrative responsibilities. Soon I earned the respect of the business community even beyond Zloczow, traveling all over Poland on visits to customers.

Attending classes at the law school was not mandatory, but was helpful; teachers and students became better acquainted, and the examinations were less rigorous. The first year was particularly difficult since I had started in the middle of the semester and conditions in the factory were stressful.

* * *

There was much excitement that year when we bought a car, a Buick. I learned to drive, but not before I ran into the gate to our courtyard. However, the damage was minor.

* * *

In business we held our own. In spite of fierce competition with Mr. Brandes, we ended the year with a profit. Mr. Brandes, having extended himself unwisely by aquiring new machinery, went bankrupt.

When he chose, Mr. Brandes could charm a snake out of a tree. One day he cornered Mother, and with tears in his eyes begged for a reconciliation. We held a family conference, and this time I voted for reunion. First, because I wanted to have more time for my law studies which I had begun to enjoy, and second, because I was sorry for Mrs. Brandes and Rozia, and also for Mr. Brandes. I saw signs of bad times on the economic horizon and the advantages of less competition. Since Mr. Brandes was bankrupt, there were legal complications. In the final agreement Father became the sole legal owner of the combined business while Mr. Brandes was to share 50 percent of the profits, from which he was to pay off his debts. He never was able to do so, and then the war intervened. Except for Mr. Brandes's office force, the personnel of both factories was rehired and I became officially the managing director of the new business.

* * *

In 1929 Europe was badly shaken by the crash of the largest Austrian bank, the Creditanstalt. The high unemployment and disastrous inflation in Germany were casting a shadow over all Europe. Early in 1930, we in Poland started to feel the effects of the depression. The impact on Poland might have been less severe, as it was predominantly an agricultural society and small farmers could live on the produce of their farms. The colonels were universally blamed for mismanaging the economy, even though, in fairness, it was not their fault. The economy of all Europe and, for that matter, the entire world was in terrible shape. Money was scarce, interest rates rose as high as 36 percent. Many stores in Zloczow, as in the rest of the country, went into bankruptcy, some forced, others to be rid of burdensome obliga-

tions. Credit was rarely extended and most business transactions were conducted strictly on a cash basis. Consequently there were fewer and fewer transactions.

In our factory, incoming orders declined steadily and many of the machines stood idle. We had rehired all the workers from both factories at the time of reunification and now we had little work.

Remarkably, in spite of the year-long separation, the intense competition during that period, the bitter quarrels, the occasional personal insults, all was forgotten and everyone received equal treatment. We called a meeting of all senior employees and I explained to them our critical position. It was imperative, I said, to reduce the number of employees in the factory. However, we realized the hardships that the move would cause and I outlined a plan. First, we would call for voluntary retirements. Next, we would lay off peasants whose families owned land, since they could live on what they could grow. We would then release one member of a family wherever two or more were employed. Special hardship cases were to be treated individually. My suggestions were unanimously accepted and promptly carried out. We also reduced the work week from forty-eight to forty hours, from six to five days. It was as unusual in Poland as it might be in the United States for employers and employees to act together for the benefit of both sides. It was unique in Zloczow.

These steps, harsh as they were, got us through the worst period. It was our good fortune that our business depended largely on the health industry, as most of our production went to pharmacies. Since people cannot choose the time to get sick and they get ill in bad times as well as good times, the industry suffered less than others and none of our customers went bankrupt.

A Polish pharmacy was licensed, the number of stores strictly regimented, and permission to open a new establishment was rarely given, requiring highly placed *protekcja*. In Zloczow there were three pharmacies when I was born and none added in my lifetime. In Gologory there was none.

Our business soon picked up. Within a year or so we were not only able to rehire all the workers who had been laid off, but we added others. At the outbreak of the war on September 1, 1939, we had 102 people on our payroll. We had retained the five-day work week, considering Saturday work as overtime—another first in Zloczow.

The way we handled our employees during the depression strengthened the bonds between us and them, and the good relations survived the Russian and German occupations.

While we came out of the depression unscathed, it left a lasting impression on me. The experience of living through one world war, the worst depression the civilized world has ever known, and the horrors of the Second World War have made me doubt whether anything is ever stable and have made me wary of my fellowman.

There is a Yiddish song with the plaintive line: *"Wo zenen meine ziben gitte yor?"* (Where are my seven good years?), an allusion to the biblical prediction that seven good years will always succeed seven bad ones. Our seven good years occurred during 1931-1937, paradoxically during a bad time for the rest of the world. But my family lived in an oasis of prosperity isolated from the hostile environment of a worldwide depression which reached even to America.

The flow of dollars stopped, people were returning to Poland, there were sad letters from relatives and friends; but my family enjoyed rare luxuries. For example, we owned one of the four cars in Zloczow; we had telephones not only in the office but also at home, even though there were few people to call. We installed running water in our house when only four or five other houses in Zloczow had this luxury. We prided ourselves on acquiring one of the first radio receivers in town, and whenever there was a concert we put the loudspeaker on the window ledge and a crowd would gather below to listen. Mother, who suffered from gallstones, traveled every year to Karlsbad in neighboring Czechoslovakia which, although it had lost the luster it enjoyed during the times of King Edward VII, was still the gathering place of the mighty and wealthy. Father, on the other hand, did not take a vacation until years later, when he felt that the business was secure in my hands.

My personal life was also stabilized. I had my work and I continued my law studies, as did Lina. Except for a twice-a-week seminar, attending classes was not mandatory. We both chose to attend a class in comparative constitutional law, where I delivered a paper on the thesis that the American Constitution was the most democratic in the world. (A conviction that I still hold, although I now think that the judicial system built around it is a disgrace!)

We traveled to Lwow for these sessions and on the same occasions we visited the three theaters in the city and also explored the new sensation, talking pictures. The first talking movies came to Zloczow only years later and were of poor quality.

The trips were pleasant, shared with other students from different towns. One time we met a handsome count who attached himself to us, not concealing his obvious attraction for my fiancée. One of her aunts

was diabetic, and since Zloczow had no laboratory, we carried her urine specimen in a corked bottle wrapped in brown paper to Lwow for analysis. We became so engrossed in conversation that we left the bottle on the seat of the train. Lina and I then went to see a film before class. The count knew which seminar we were to attend and, lo and behold, there he was standing at the university gate in his immaculate attire, including bowler and cane. After kissing my fiancée's hand, he gave her a package wrapped in fancy paper and tied with a bow. It was of course, that specimen bottle.

Another incident was not so funny and almost ended in tragedy. The train station in Zloczow was a distance of two kilometers from the city. One night, returning from Lwow, we were caught in a blizzard. The driver of the droshki lost his way, as there were piles of snow several feet high on both sides of the road. The horses became panicky, but somehow the driver was able to calm them and found his way back to the main road, after we had landed in a cemetery and were quite sure we would freeze to death.

There were other incidents, some funny, some not, but life on the whole was pleasant. My memories from this period are happy ones.

When we were in *gimnazjum*, my future wife and I associated mostly with gentiles. I played tennis and volleyball and was one of two or three Jews who exercised at the Polish sports association Sokol, which ordinarily did not admit Jews. I was a founding member of the sports club Janina, which started as a school organization but was later infiltrated and eventually taken over by the military. After graduation from *gimnazjum*, I still maintained my close relationship with the Musketeers, but I began to develop new friendships and new allegiances. I switched to a Jewish sports club of which I became the gymnastics instructor. In law school, I joined the Jewish fraternity Makabea. Lina also formed new friendships and joined new groups.

At that time Jewish fraternities ceased to mimic the puerilities of the German Burschenschaften, while the Polish fraternities continued to ape also their jingoism, rowdyism, and drunkenness. We retained fencing but otherwise we were more serious, placing emphasis on intellectual development and Jewishness. We constructed a demanding examination on the history of Judaism and Zionism as prerequisite to advancement from junior grade of Fuchs (fox-apprentice) to that of Bursch (fellow).

I helped found a branch of the fraternity in Zloczow which we named Herzliah. Lina did the same for an affiliated sorority, and we

each became president of the respective organization. Lina also helped found and became chairman of a Society to Help Underprivileged Youngsters, which collected books and money for the Jewish children in the Zloczow slums.

Simultaneously some graduates of the *gimnazjum* and some university students formed a social club. In rented rooms we gathered on weekends for political discussions and also to play chess, dominoes and cards. We staged plays that we wrote ourselves.

A "talking newspaper," a Saturday-night or Sunday-afternoon feature, was a great success; we read articles and satirical stories written by members, and some were indeed exceptional.

A second social group of nonmaturists (those who did not graduate *gimnazjum)* was mainly a dramatic ensemble which included some genuinely talented individuals—writers, singers, dancers, and painters. We joined with this group in 1935 for a variety show in Yiddish, *Di Dritte Seder Nacht* (The Third Night of Passover). I was the master of ceremonies, partly because of my contribution, and also because I owned a tuxedo. This show was so successful that we were able to perform it publicly to an overflow audience which filled the Sokol, the largest hall in Zloczow. A copy of the program was saved by my friend, Sig Schotz, and I also have a photograph of the group.

I think that these activities were in part an escape from an underlying problem rarely confronted openly. We had a sense of futility; we feared that for young Jews in Poland there was really no future.

The situation of Jewish *gimnazjum* graduates was particularly unpleasant, since medicine and engineering were almost totally restricted. Entry into law schools was easier, but Jews were barred from desirable government judiciary departments whose employees mainly were former legionnaires, very few of whom were Jewish. Soon, private practice of law was also to be closed to Jews.

A Jew could enroll in a teaching college, but again few teaching positions were open to Jews, who were restricted to teaching Jewish religion. In addition, the continuing depression also brought scarcity and low wages to clerical and sales positions, where prejudice was less of a problem.

In reaction, many young Jews became affiliated with extremist political movements: in Zloczow we were about equally divided between Zionists and Communists. The Zionists were split into many groups ranging from followers of Jabotinsky to Hashomer Hatzair, the former, extreme right, the latter overtly or covertly Communist.

The Communists, genuine idealists, believed that through overthrow of the existing system a better world would be created for all and that the Jewish Question would disappear.

Fearful of the Polish police, many Communists kept their affiliations secret. Some were not revealed until after the Russian invasion in September 1939. Others, however, preached their beliefs in the open and suffered for it, serving terms in jails, and in the Polish detention camp, Bereza Kartuska, opened by the colonels in the thirties.

However, while the conditions in that camp were harsh, to my knowledge no atrocities or killings were committed.

The leader of our local Communists was Punio Imber, a brilliant lawyer, related to the poet who wrote the "Hatikvah." He and I clashed frequently because I strove to maintain the apolitical character of our social group. I did succeed and the club continued to serve as an amiable meeting place for all parties. Punio and I respected each other, which helped keep the peace. There was among us a very tiny minority of assimilated Jews who still clung to the belief that they were accepted as Poles and were part of the Polish community. They felt the only way to gain even some acceptance was through conversion to Christianity, and a few did take that final step.

During my first year at the University with my fellow Musketeers, I organized in Lwow a *gimnazjum* reunion to which we invited our former professor, Dylski. He was an excellent, well-liked teacher, but he was also timid and the butt of many pranks. He was deathly pale, with a nasty scar on the neck that reached from ear to ear, the result, it was said, of a suicide attempt.

Planning to get him drunk, we bought quantities of vodka and beer, and drinking ourselves, we fed him both in large quantities. He remained sober while all of us became dead drunk, I for the only time in my life. That was, incidentally, the last time the Musketeers met as a group.

5

In December 1931 our club held a Chanukah ball. Lina ran the affair, the high point of our social season, and I volunteered to print the invitations in our factory.

Lina came to our office to examine the galley proofs. Mother invited us upstairs to our apartment for tea, asked her how the preparations for the ball were going, and then, teasingly, who was going to be her escort. Lina's haughty reply was that she had several boys to choose from. Mother laughed and said: "But wouldn't it be nice if you went with Lipa as your fiancé?" I was stunned but soon very happy. Mother showered Lina with kisses. She called Father from the factory and told him: "I just got the children engaged."

Father cried and embraced Lina and me. Mother ordered a sleigh and we traveled to my future mother-in-law's restaurant to tell her the news. Lina was late to the ball committee meeting that evening, but when she told the others why, no one was surprised. She asked: "Don't you want to know who the man is?" The reply was: "We know, Kicia." I have always called Lina "Kicia" (kitten). The name stuck and until the present day we call each other Kicia, and so do all our friends.

Thus my bride has always maintained that she was trapped into marrying me. We decided to delay our marriage until we both graduated from law school in June 1932, two years later.

Career options were still limited. Public law and notary law were closed to Jews, leaving us only private practice. (A Polish notary should not be confused with the American notary public, a clerk who certifies signatures or identifies documents.)

In the early thirties a law was promulgated whereby the Polish notary-lawyer was given sole authority to execute real estate contracts, thus depriving lawyers in private practice of a major source of income. It hurt the Jewish lawyers, some of whom lost everything.



Father, Mother, Grandfather Meir (shortly before his death), Lina, in our dining room, 1933.

In spite of the grim outlook, we both entered private practice. Zloczow was the seat of two legal tiers, the county court, which heard minor civil and criminal cases, and the higher district court, which heard major cases and served as a court of appeals. For that reason Zloczow had over forty lawyers, a huge number disproportionate to the population. Lawyers had flourished under Austrian rule but now were less fortunate. There were no large law firms as in the United States, but many single lawyers in solo practice or with one or several apprentices who were called applicants.

I became an applicant with Dr. Isaac Mittelman, my father's attorney, a distinguished gentleman of the old school, perennial chairman of the Legal Society of Zloczow to which all lawyers, judges, and prosecutors belonged. He was a Jew but he had become assimilated into Polish society. Both of his daughters converted to Catholicism; the elder one married a Supreme Court judge.

Dr. Mittelman was one of four Jews in all of Poland to be a member of the elite Society of Polish Jurists.

Dr. Mittelman's practice consisted mainly of appeals from the county courts to the district court and higher, to the high court of appeals in Lwow where he represented landowners and banks. I can still see him, always immaculately dressed in a black, vested suit, starched white shirt with a wing collar, black bow tie, watch chain



Dritte Seder Nacht *group, 1935. I was Master of Ceremonies of this variety show. Known survivors besides myself include: Gina Beer, Ignac Herman, Sig Schotz, Kuba Schnapp, Oscar Altstock, Arie Zimmer, Adolf Herman, Rozia Lerner. The others perished.*

hanging from his vest pocket. He smiled warmly as he peered through his wire-framed old-fashioned pince-nez, suspended from a black ribbon around the neck. Old-fashioned dress, yes; starched shirt, yes; but the starch was limited to his shirt. He was otherwise progressive, full of wisdom and vitality. He was seventy years old when I joined him, but he walked with the springy step of a man half his age, joked that there was an error on his birth certificate of at least twenty years. At the end of my association with him, although he had been integrated into Polish circles, he too was stripped of much of his practice when the Polish banks and many of the Polish landowners discarded him in favor of a Polish newcomer.

Lina, the first woman lawyer in Zloczow, joined another lawyer, a young, very astute, rotund, pleasant man, Dr. Mojzesz Schwager, an ardent Zionist. Occasionally she and I appeared on opposite sides of a case. One such encounter which I vividly remember was a paternity case, where I represented the defendant, a seventy-year-old man with a well-earned reputation as a womanizer. Lina represented the seventeen-year-old peasant girl who had been in my client's service and was, she claimed, seduced by him. My case was lost before it even began, but the judge made quite a performance of the trial.

In the Polish court, the judge did all the questioning of witnesses. The opposing attorneys could amplify his questions only at the judge's discretion. Under this procedure the court was less of a circus than it is in the United States and trials were much briefer. The proceedings were not recorded. At the conclusion the judge dictated a summary. The attorneys could then raise objections and ask for corrections.

In this case, the presiding magistrate, Judge Miller, who was still a young man, threw the rules out of the window. He asked the girl to describe the times and the number of the sexual encounters in detail, and she complied with both words and gestures. Every attorney who had business in court that day, others who didn't but had heard about the goings-on, all crowded into the room to hear the case. My client's defense was that he was "too old for that sort of thing," and was impotent besides, because of a veneral disease. Lina, unflustered by the large audience, pleaded her case firmly and won, to the applause of the onlookers. It took me a long time to live down that defeat.

We were married the following year, on November 24, 1933. The day was beautiful, sunny and warm, unusual for that time of the year, a particularly pleasant gift from the gods, since the previous day had been typical of Polish November, with skies overcast and snow mixed with sleet. The Zloczow rabbis happened to be on strike, an unusual event in Poland, because of a salary dispute with the Kehilah, the Jewish autonomous authority, and they were not officiating at weddings. The president of the Kehilah, Dr. Sternschuss, Lina's cousin's husband, referred us to a rabbi in the adjacent little town of Sassow, eight kilometers away.

We originally planned to have a quiet wedding at my parents' house, avoiding the customary Jewish celebration in a hired hall crowded with gate-crashing strangers or uninvited guests. Instead we ended up with the biggest and most elaborate wedding the town had ever seen. Besides private carriages, Father hired every droshky in town to ferry the wedding party to Sassow. More than a hundred people invaded the rabbi's court.

The Sassower rabbi was the head of a distinguished and widely revered rabbinical family and held court for pious and devoted followers. All crowded to witness our marriage ceremony, since for them we were a most unusual couple, modern, assimilated in dress, speech, and custom.

We were led by the rabbi's *gabbi* (aide), Abe Henis, father of our bookkeeper, into his chambers. The rabbi, dressed in a Turkish-style

flowing robe, received us seated on a huge bright-colored divan. He greeted us solemnly with a long speech while we tried hard to maintain our dignity. And so, we, enlightened university graduates, were married by a *Hassid*, in the Hassidic manner. We still have the *ktubah* (marriage certificate), in the rabbi's own handwriting.

After the ceremony the caravan returned home, where dinner was served to 150 guests. As usual there were also uninvited guests, including a few of our former teachers. The next day a reception was given for our seventy employees. Throughout, our two mothers presided over a kitchen staff supplemented by hired cooks who prepared all the food. Out-of-town guests, including our fraternity and sorority colleagues and their families, stayed with us for the entire week.

When the festivities were over, Mother was heard to announce she had found enough food in the larder for another feast. Cousin Jozef Friedman said as he left: *"To byly staropolskie gody weselne"* (a genuine, old-fashioned, Polish wedding).

We lived at first with my parents. We were the first in our crowd to get married and the first to have a child, a girl, Edith, who became the darling of the town, a toy as it were. She was quick to walk and talk. I was ill in bed once, I remember, when she walked over and asked me: *"Chorenki?"* (Are you ill?). Edith loved to play in the box department of the factory which was run by my mother. We forbade it, but still she hid there and listened to the girls' singing and "helped" them in their work.

Thirteen months later, our second daughter, Selma, was born. At that time Father bought us a villa on the best street in town, Podwojcie. However, we could not move in immediately because it was occupied. But we did enjoy its huge garden full of flowers and berries. The wild strawberries were particularly delicious.

Father, remembering the several devaluations of money, did not trust it in any form, not even the American dollar. He believed in real estate, which survived not only war and depression, but increased in value in the aftermath of either. (He also believed in keeping a large inventory of raw materials, and accumulated such a huge stock that we lived on it during the Russian and German occupation. There was even some left when the Germans finally retreated in 1944; the soldiers of the advancing Russian army cleaned out the remainder.) In order to buy our house Father sold several thousand gold dollars. As it turned out in hindsight, not the wisest decision.

* * *



Only wedding picture, November, 1933, on the road to Sassow. Back seat, myself, next to Sanio Kahane (killed by peasant, who originally offered him shelter). Front seat left, Ignac Herman (survived in hiding with converted family member), Sig Schotz; Kuba Schnapp, next to driver.

After my graduation from law school, I frequently suffered severe abdominal pains. The doctors in Zloczow could not agree on a diagnosis. For us, former subjects of Austria, Vienna was the mecca of medicine. We decided to travel there to consult a Dr. Porgess, reportedly the best internist in Europe. In a more positive vein we saw this as a good excuse for a trip abroad. It took some time to obtain the passports. We were able to take three hundred zlotys per person, all that was permitted by currency regulations. We journeyed to Vienna in January of 1937.

We were much impressed by the size and architectural grandeur of Vienna, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. We walked along the Rings, concentric avenues around the city's center, and saw the exquisite displays of merchandise on the main shopping streets, the Koertnerstrasse and the Rottentrumgasse. We visited the royal palaces and the splendid museums, attended the shows in the theaters and night clubs and, greatly bewildered, witnessed the goings-on in the homosexual bars on the Am Graben square. We heard the famous

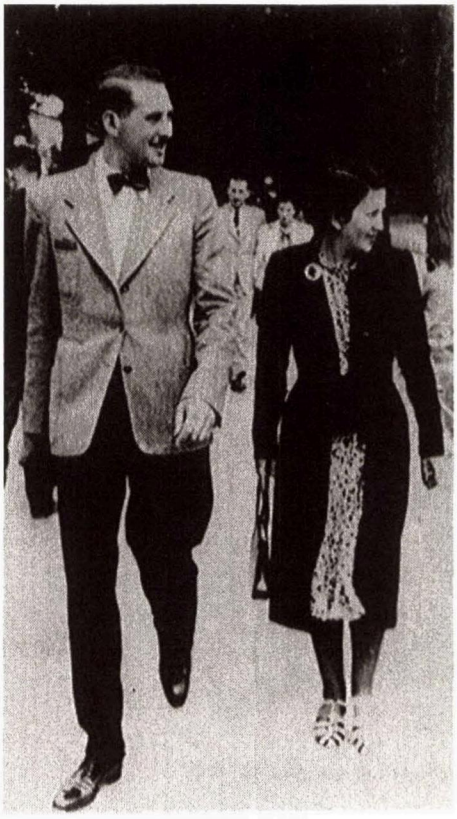


Myself, Father, Mother, Lina, in backyard of our factory, 1935.

singer, Alfred Piccaver, in the opera, where, of course, we ran into a Miss Mansberg from Zloczow.

But beneath this splendid facade we saw unmistakable signs of depression, poverty, and unrest. We visited my wife's uncle and his family and were appalled by their crowded living conditions. Unemployment was widespread and getting worse by the day, we were told. On a walk on the Augartenbruecke (one of the several bridges spanning the Danube) we saw men shoveling snow, their feet wrapped in rags, one or two of them wearing tuxedos. Hitler was on everybody's mind. In the cabarets, the jokes were of the *Galgenhumor* (gallows humor) variety. Chancellor Schuschnigg, who at that time still had the support of Mussolini (the German-Italian axis was not yet cemented) was waging a gallant but losing fight to keep Austria from the deadly grip of Nazism. Graffiti on the walls and also printed posters read, "*Heil Hitler*," "*Tot zu Schuschnigg*," "*Jude verecke*."

Professor Porgess diagnosed my sickness as a duodenal ulcer. Much relieved and in spite of the political situation, we managed to enjoy



Lina and myself on vacation trip to Krynica, 1937, during our "seven good years." *(See p. 68).*



The "famous" *picture of Edith and Selma, our daughters, sent to Krynica in 1938 to prove that we were really a married couple.*

ourselves greatly. We overstayed our planned four weeks, ran out of money, and then borrowed from various people with unsuspected benefits to them. After Hitler conquered Austria, we returned the money via Switzerland. We also sent money to our relatives, who used it to leave Vienna. They were luckier than many of us, since they spent the war years in Shanghai. Their children now live in Australia.

The Anschluss was still a year away. Austria was an outpost of the West and still relatively free and liberal. We were sorry to leave. Polish customs officers at the border made anti-Semitic remarks as they emptied our suitcases on the floor of the train compartment. Then and there I made up my mind that one day I would leave Poland for good.

* * *



Some employees of our factory at a party, 1937. Top row; third from left, John Dacko, next, Dziunek, next , three Jewish workers. 3rd row, 3rd left, Rozia Dacko, next, Miss Craniuk (who wished for war), myself, Kuba Henis. 2nd row, 3rd left, Mother, Father, a worker Olga, Izak Brandes, his grandson, Mrs. Brandes. Bottom row, 4th right, Stefa (fiancée of Edzio Reichard). All Jewish employees of our factory except Donia Galatzer perished.

In the summer of 1937 Selma, our younger daughter, was stung by an insect and developed a severe infection with high fever. At first the doctors in Zloczow did not take the illness seriously.

The medical profession in Zloczow was divided in two competitive factions, each maligning the other. Probably both groups were correct; based on my own experience with my illness, I had little faith in any of them and thought they were all a disgrace to the medical profession. My uncle, Dr. Reichard, belonged to one faction, and his colleagues took care of Selma. I committed a faux pas and called in someone from the rival group, a social friend, Dr. Gerber, for consultation. He said frankly that he could not diagnose the illness, but did not like the look of what he saw. He advised us not to waste any more time but to rush the child to Lwow. He recommended that we see the well-known professor, Dr. Hilarowicz.

As often when needed, our car was being repaired, having been "done in" by Polish roads notorious for their terrible condition. Dr.

Copy of our Ktubah *(marriage certificate), in handwriting of Sassower Rebbe, 1933.*

Gerber put his own car and driver at our disposal. We left at once and drove straight to the professor's office in Lwow, having arranged an appointment by telephone. Dr. Hilarowicz diagnosed the condition as an abscess, saying we were too late and that nothing could be done for the child. We were shocked and terrified but we did not give up. I called several friends, a few pharmacists among them, for referrals. One suggested that we consult with Professor Groer, a pediatrician who had just returned from a lecture tour in the United States. I was able to reach him by telephone and describe Selma's condition. He told me to check into a private clinic where he would meet us to examine the child.

We contacted the one private clinic in Lwow, the Red Cross (no connection with the world organization). Since the bulk of its cases were maternity, however, the clinic refused us admission for fear of contamination. I again called the doctor, who advised us to take a room in a hotel. We checked into Hotel Krakowski, where Dr. Groer came to examine the child. We expected to see an older man in a dark suit, striped pants, perhaps, with the inevitable pince-nez and a stethoscope hanging out of his pocket. Instead we saw a young, very handsome man, dressed stylishly in a sports jacket and knickerbockers, with a Leica camera slung over his shoulder. We took to him immediately, and it soon became obvious that he liked us too. He reassured us that all would be well, but first he had to perform a minor surgical procedure. He added that a blood transfusion would be required before surgery and he gave us the name of a professional donor to call. Lina found his name in the telephone directory and called his home. The following conversation took place:

Lina: "May I speak to Mr. X?"

Woman at the other end: "Mr X is not home. Who is calling?"

Lina: "I am in my hotel room waiting for him."

Woman: "What! Who are you?"

Lina: "I am waiting for his blood."

Woman: "I am Mrs. X, his wife. What blood? What are you talking about?"

Lina: "He promised to be in the hotel this afternoon."

I was not present when this exchange took place, having gone out for a new drug that Dr. Groer had prescribed. When I returned I found my wife laughing hysterically. She tried to explain, but could not stop laughing. She had called a newspaper editor with the same name as the

blood donor. To this day we wonder whether the editor's wife believed the explanation.

After the surgery was performed the fever disappeared almost immediately and the child's recovery began. Father arrived, along with a maid to help care for the child. Everything improved rapidly. Our room looked like a garden, since all our friends and acquaintances had sent flowers. A theatrical group was staying in the hotel and its members came by to entertain Selma with songs and skits.

Mother was in Karlsbad at the time of the crisis and did not know of the child's illness. We met her at the railroad station in Lwow and, naturally, she was surprised to see us there. When we told her what had happened, she immediately took charge. Her first order sent us to the movies, she knew that we needed to relax.

We all stayed in the hotel for a few more days and returned home with our child restored to health. It was our maid's first trip to Lwow and she basked in the glory of her adventure, telling all her envious friends stories about the wonders of the big city, even though she had been afraid to take even one step out of the confines of the hotel.

* * *

Upon our return home, Mother insisted that we take a vacation, so we went to the Polish spa, Krynica, located in a valley in the Carpathian Mountains. We made many side trips by car and one on rafts on the River Dunajec, where we passed the Dunajec Gorge, one of the most beautiful spots in Europe. A band of Gypsy musicians greeted us on landing. It was the custom to order trout fresh from the river, and this we did. It was fun, even though there were more bones than flesh on the fish that we were served.

Most of the guests in our hotel were from Warsaw and Lodz, and it seemed that the men were often of mature years while their ladies were gorgeous blondes considerably younger. All the couples registered as husband and wife and naturally no one questioned them. We did not quite fit in. We swore that we were husband and wife with two children, but no one believed us. Perhaps we looked too young, even though I sported a moustache. We wrote home for pictures of the children. Mother, too busy to do it herself, entrusted the picture taking to a maid who dressed the children in folk costumes and called a street photographer for the task. When we received the pictures, they caused much hilarity among our new friends, who doubted their authenticity.

This was our last carefree vacation. We returned to Krynica the following year, but the mood of 1938 was much different from that of1937.

6

Our "seven good years" were gradually eroded by political and economic developments in Poland and in the outside world, particularly by the events in Germany.

Pilsudski died on a sunny day in May. There had been rumors that he was ill, but the general public did not know that he was dying of cancer. I was going out that day for the morning papers and saw, at the Sokol Building across the street, that the janitor was lowering the flag to half-mast. I asked him what had happened . He made a gesture with his hands as if smoothing his moustache, our sign language for the marshal; then the janitor turned down his thumbs.

I went back home and told my father the news. He became very pensive, saying: "Nothing good will come of this." His mood was shared by others. Gloom and pessimism prevailed in the city, particularly among Jews. We had trusted Pilsudski. The frequent government anti-Semitic decrees were blamed on his ministers and were said to have been promulgated without Pilsudski's knowledge. Whether this was true or not, no one knew, but we were afraid of the colonels whose sympathies were openly with Hitler.

The Poland that was reconstituted in 1918 was like a jigsaw puzzle, loose at the joints, never really a single unit. One-third of the population was made up of Ukrainians, Jews, and other religious or ethnic subgroups. The Poles were also divided. The heritage of one hundred years of foreign rule by three regimes, each different in its political and social makeup, was not erased by twenty years of independence.

There were deep divisions also among Jews in social, cultural, political, and economic areas. I was familiar with six of the large Polish cities in which the majority of Jews lived: Warsaw, Lodz, Lwow, Krakow, Wilno, and Katowice, all with different life styles.

Krakow, an ancient capital, was the most beautiful Polish city.

Wawel, a well-preserved castle, was the final resting place of kings and notables, and held among others the remains of Marshal Pilsudski and the great Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. Krakow had retained its medieval image with remnants of city walls and bastions. The parks of Krakow had been modeled on Vienna. The Jews of Krakow were perhaps less politically active than their compatriots in Warsaw, Lwow, and Wilno. It was a sleepy city where everything ceased functioning on the stroke of ten p.m. In Lwow, the streets, too, emptied at ten, but coffeehouses teemed with politicians and card players until the wee hours of morning.

I remember Warsaw as a lively, outstanding, hospitable city with a thriving, large Jewish population. Fine restaurants and opulent nightclubs were abundant. At midnight the streets were almost as busy as during the day. The Old Market with its painted houses going back to antiquity was a lovely sight.

Lodz, Poland's second largest city, was dirty and grimy, the smoke from its many textile factories darkened the sky. The water was undrinkable, and the food terrible, except for the fish, Jewish style, served in kosher restaurants, which was delicious. Some of Poland's wealthier Jews lived in Lodz where they had prospered in manufacturing and commerce. At the same time the Communists had their strongest foothold here.

Katowice was a solid industrial city built for efficiency. It offered little social life. The few Jews whom I met there preferred to speak German, and were condescending toward Poland. This did not change even after Hitler came to power.

Wilno was the most openly Yiddish of the large cities. It was not uncommon to find advertisements for lawyers and doctors in Yiddish, something that would have been unthinkable in Lwow or Krakow. A single modern street led to the cathedral. The rest of the city impressed me as a conglomeration of shtetlach and villages.

On my first visit to Wilno, traveling by train from Warsaw, I engaged in the usual conversations with my fellow travelers. There is something to be said about the sociability fostered by train travel as opposed to the stern isolation of flying. When the folks heard that this was my first trip, they showered me with advice on what to see and, even more important, where to eat. I asked the woman across from me whether she could recommend a hotel. She named one or two and then added hesitatingly that she herself owned one. She suggested that I might like to stay there. I replied that I would be delighted.

When we arrived in Wilno I saw that her hotel was across the street

from the railroad station. I was shown into a large room with a high ceiling and two Gothic-style windows. Over the double bed was a portrait of a stern, bewhiskered man in military uniform with many decorations and a sash around his chest. He looked familiar, but I couldn't place him. She told me that it was Czar Alexander I of Russia, who had once slept in that room.

The bed with its huge three pillows and *pierzyna* (featherbed), all immaculately clean, promised a good rest and indeed I slept soundly.

* * *

The designation "Polish Jew" was a misnomer, since we were as different as the regions from which we came. Accent, behavior, dress, cultural background, and political sympathies were tip-offs to origin. The Jews from Galicja were often Germanophiles and therefore the events in Germany were a greater shock to them than to the Russian or Lithuanian Jews brought up to feel mistrust towards the Germans. We were also much more assimilated into the Polish culture.

It was the rise of Nazi Germany that unified Polish Jewry, first in fear and finally in death.

* * *

After Pilsudski's death, the colonels ruling Poland showed openly that their sympathies were with Hitler. New anti-Semitic decrees and laws were promulgated. The one that upset people particularly was an edict against ritual slaughter. It affected kashrut, since most Jewish households in Poland, including ours, observed it. Boycott of Jewish stores was encouraged by campaigns with slogans, such as *"Swoj do swego po swoje"* (Buy Polish from Poles), and, more open: *"Nie kupuj u Zyda"* (Don't buy from a Jew). I remember the shock in Zloczow when a barber opened a shop with a sign over the door: *"Fryzjer katolik"* (Catholic barber), since barbering had always been a Jewish occupation.

The low point of the colonels' collaboration with Hitler was Poland's participation in a cowardly, and, as it turned out, politically stupid and militarily suicidal dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. The tiny slice of Czech Silesia that they acquired was to make the German attack from the south in September of 1939 much easier for the enemy.

* * *

After the Napoleonic wars, Europe knew peace for nearly a century. It was shattered by the outbreak of World War I. The treaty of Versailles had restored a precarious order and semblance of peace, but it had also planted the seeds of World War II. After the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a void was left in Central Europe. With all its faults, the empire had held all the centrifugal forces together. It was Metternich, I think, who said: *"Waere es kein Oestreich, dann muesste mann es schaffen"* (If Austria did not exist, it would be necessary to invent her). But there is an opposite claim by historians that Austria was doomed in any case, precisely because of these centrifugal forces.

I believe that the events of the 20th century support Metternich's thesis. After Versailles, America withdrew and the future of the peace rested on weak French and unwilling English shoulders, and on the totally ineffective League of Nations. Of the states that emerged from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, few had the resources to survive for long as political, military, and economic units.

The uncertain peace was soon challenged by the sinister forces of a reborn and rearmed Germany led by a shrill but brilliant fanatic; Italy run by a megalomaniac; a Russian colossus to the east governed by a bloodthirsty tyrant.

Of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe the only real democracy, Czechoslovakia, was soon to be offered as a sacrifical lamb to Hitler in the vain hope of buying peace. Hitler and Mussolini flexed their military muscles and were met by sternly determined Western appeasers. In Oxford the student body voted not to fight for King and England; the British Labor Party voted to abolish the Air Force. Munich and the umbrella became the symbol of then and future appeasers.

Poland, looking both to the east and west, had to be wary. Until the advent of Hitler, Poland's only concern had been the feared and hated Russia which Pilsudski had defeated in 1920. The *Moskal* (Moscovite), the derisive name for the average Russian, had been Poland's arch enemy for the last three hundred years. But now they had to look as well toward their western neighbor, the reawakened and newly dangerous German. Significantly, while fear of Russia was tinged with contempt, the fear of Germany was mingled with great respect.

According to a story that made the rounds in Poland, when Hitler marched into the Rhineland, Pilsudski suggested to France the idea of toppling Hitler from power by a simultaneous invasion of Germany from east and west. When France declined, Pilsudski turned around and signed a friendship and nonaggression treaty with Germany.

Shortly thereafter, to cover his eastern flank, Pilsudski signed a similar treaty with Russia. Neither pact was worth the paper it was written on.

I have described the pleasant and comfortable life that my family led in prewar Poland, but we were not unaware that we were living on a volcano threatening to erupt. Even before Hitler came to power, reporters, writers, politicians, and others of all nations played a guessing game we called "Whither Europe?"

Throughout the world the depression was still rampant. In Germany, millions were unemployed. Hitler initiated a vast military and industrial program.

Books and articles appeared daily, some serious, some sensational; a book on the subject of Germany by an American newspaperman, H.R. Knickerbocker, was an overnight bestseller. It appeared shortly before Hitler suffered his only setback—he lost an election for the first and last time.

In 1933, Germany, in the opinion of many, had a fifty-fifty chance of becoming Nazi or Communist; that scared the conservatives. President Hindenburg and the industrial potentates overcame their distaste for the "Austrian corporal," as Hindenburg called Hitler, and handed him the reins of power as an alternative to a Communist victory. These people had the illusion that they could dominate Hitler. Instead, from the fateful date, January 30, 1933, until his death, Hitler dominated Europe and the entire world.

Contrary to the restrictions imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, he started rebuilding the German army, navy and air force on an unprecedented scale. He also built a network of strategic roads. This was preparation for war, which must have been obvious to the statesmen of the West, but except for Churchill, they chose to close their eyes and minds.

Many in the West preferred to see Hitler as a kind of clown, a Chaplinesque buffoon and the Germans as mindless automatons. But of course, Hitler was a brilliant manipulator. He gave the German people work and he restored their national pride through armament. The Germans were willing to follow him anywhere.

The persecution of the Jews seemed of no concern to the Germans and the rest of the world, although they were not in ignorance of it. In fact, many both in Germany and abroad shared in the prejudice.

Hitler took advantage of the weakness and indecisiveness of the West and of the power vacuum in Central Europe. With one brilliant stroke after another, he sent the German army back into the Rhineland; he swallowed Austria and Czechoslovakia with not so much as a

whimper from the Western Powers; and, indeed, in the case of Czechoslovakia, with their blessing. His "salami tactic," one slice at a time, worked so well that he succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of his countrymen and the astounded generals. All this was done without shedding a drop of German blood.

Next, he demanded the return of the German colonies held in trust by various Western nations under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, but that demand was a ruse to divert the attention of the West from his real aim. At his feet lay prostrated, spiritually sterile Europe, his for the taking with all its material and human resources necessary to achieve his goal of world domination.

It was a decadent Europe which pleaded for "Peace in our time"; in Hitler's eyes, it begged for conquest.

Many in the West hoped that Hitler would turn eastward in his quest for *Lebensraum* (breathing space) and the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, was wildly cheered when he returned from Munich where he had signed Czechoslovakia's death warrant. Again only one man's voice, the voice of Winston Churchill, cried out against this policy of appeasement. But his was a voice lost in the wilderness.

Through a new medium, radio, Hitler was able to reach every town and village in Germany and indeed in the entire world. We, the Jews in Poland, listened anxiously to his speeches and to those of Goebbels and Goering. They were, all three, spellbinding speakers, able to rouse their audiences to frenzy. Today, as seen on television, those people look and sound ridiculous, but not so in the context of their time. Those who were not yet born when these events were taking place, those who do not know what World War II meant to Eruope, can remain detached and laugh at the spectacle. To me and others like me, a half century later, these images still evoke terror.

The day after listening to one of Hitler's speeches, I wrote a letter to Sig Schotz, a friend who had emigrated to America two years before. Sig preserved the letter and returned it to me after the war. In May 1938, sixteen months before Hitler invaded Poland, I wrote:

> ". . . You have won a prize [departure to America] of which only a few can dream, and almost none can realize. Surely you know that in the short time since your departure our situation has become even more unbearable . . . The shadow of Vienna hangs over our heads . . . We have reached the conclusion that the situation is hopeless . . . Materially we still have no reason to complain. An impartial observer . . . might consider my attitude hysterical . . . [but] we are looking into the possibility of emigration . . . "

A postscript from my ever practical wife read: "Please send us the address of our mother's uncle, Isaac Friedman. Please, it's important that you give us his address and impress on him to write to us."

The brief honeymoon between the Polish colonels and Hitler ended abruptly when he demanded the return of the Danzig corridor to Germany. The Poles refused to give in and war became a certainty. Pilsudski's inept successor, Marshall Smigly-Rydz, coined a hopeful slogan: *"Silni, zwarci, gotowi"* (strong, united, ready). He boasted that should Germany dare start a war, the Polish army would be in Berlin in ten days. Many Polish people shared this confidence; some actually desired war. I was petrified when a female supervisor in our factory, whose husband was a musician in the army, said, "I wish war were breaking out today!"

When the colonels broke with Hitler, they eased their vicious anti-Semitic campaign. We were suddenly called "Our Jewish compatriots" and invited, actually compelled, to contribute to the Polish war chest. But the population at large did not join in this new warm feeling for Jews. Anti-Semitic slogans appeared regularly on the walls of Warsaw, Lwow, and other cities.

* * *

The French army and other Western armies were *perhaps* prepared to wage World War I once again, but Poland's army was still lingering in the Napoleonic era. Pilsudski believed in the cavalry, and the cavalry was a highly prestigious service, second only to the air force. The cavalry wore colorful uniforms and were armed with sabers and lances. More perspicacious officers, among them Wladyslaw Sikorski, were shunted aside. (Sikorski had served as prime minister and later became prime minister of the Polish government-in-exile in London. He died in a mysterious plane crash on Gibraltar after a meeting with Stalin.)

The officer corps offered a secure career for high-school graduates who had neither the inclination nor the aptitude for higher education. The noncommissioned officers were known for their fondness for drink rather than for military prowess. Both the commissioned and noncommissioned officers were almost exclusively Polish nationals. The officer candidates' school, the Podchorazowka, accepted only Polish nationals. The most ambitious officer candidates entered the air force, which had few planes but offered adventure, the mystique of the blue uniforms, and better pay.

While the officers were professionally inept, nobody could deny their personal courage. For that and for their patriotism they were held in high esteem by the rest of the population.

The core of the armed forces consisted of conscripts, mostly simple peasant boys, many barely literate, but tough and courageous, ideal cannon fodder. The Prussians had made good use of such forces during the War of 1870 and World War I. There is a wonderfully pathetic story by Henryk Sienkiewicz about such a soldier, in *Bartek Zwyciesca* (Bartek the Conqueror).

The army equipment was woefully inadequate, obsolete, of World War I vintage. There were few planes, scant heavy artillery. For field artillery and transport the army relied almost exclusively on horses. A modern military industrial complex was to be built in the triangle bordered by the rivers Wisla and San in the heart of the country, but it did not materialize in time. The Polish army was no match for the modern superbly equipped and superbly led German army.

Still with all these shortcomings, the Polish army gave a good account of itself during the brief war, performing relatively better than the French army one year later. The Poles showed their worth as fighters when, better equipped, they faced the Germans again in the battle for Britain and in the hills of Monte Cassino.

I had "A" status, which meant that I was subject to immediate mobilization. However, I never served. Polish law stipulated that a high-school graduate had to be inducted into officer candidates' school and subsequently commissioned as an officer. Since the Polish army did not want Jewish officers, very rarely were Jews actually inducted except as physicians and pharmacists, since there were not enough Poles to fill those needs. Mainly Jews were put into the reserves.

Our parents were only too happy about this policy, as were most of the young Jewish men. A few bent on assimilation into Polish society were resentful of this discrimination. Also, the revisionist faction of the Zionist movement (Jabotinsky's wing) wanted their members to serve, not for love of the Polish fatherland, but to gain military training which they felt would be useful later in Palestine.

I did receive some military training in high school where it was mandatory. We were made to march, drill, and taught to shoot under the supervision of real soldiers. We also learned how to assemble and take apart machine guns. This ended when one of the boys, the son of the starosta, was accidently shot and mortally wounded.

Złoczów,dnia 4.maja 1938

Mój Kochany !

Nie pisałem do Ciebie dotychczas albowiem, abstrahując od znanego Ci zapewne mego lenistwa w załatwianiu prywatnej korespondencji,uważałem Twój wyjazd za pewnego rodzaju wycieczkę krajoznawczą w czasie której listyeod znajomych i temsamem obowiązek odpisywania na nich zabiera drogocenny czas przeznaczony na dokładne zgłębienie zwiedzanego kraju.

Obecnie jednak kiedy Rodzice Twoi podzielili się ze mną połowicznie dla Nich radosną wieścią, że zostajesz na stałe w Ameryce, uważam,że nadszedł mój czas. Dodaję jeszcze,ze piszę o połowicznej radości w znaczeniu podwójnym, albowiem obok radości że wydostałeś się stąd ciąży nad Nimi zrozumienie odległości,która Was dzieli. Jak mnie znasz niebardzo jestem sentymentalny i dla tego ilekroć Rodziców Twych odwiedzam staram Im się a ściślej Mamie Twej, bo Ojciec jest mego zdania, wytłumaczyć,że wygrałeś los o którym niewielu tylko danym jest marzyć a nikomu prawie urzeczywistnić. Zapewne wiesz z wiadomości,które otrzymujesz z domu,że od czasu Twego wyjazdu, mimo iż nie tak długi czas dopiero upłynął sytuacja nasza stała się bardziej jeszcze nieznośną a cień Wiednia zawisł nad naszymi głowami.

Rozmowy,które obecnie między sobą toczymy krążą dookoła kilku tematów,które mimo iż znamy je na pamięć, iż są one dla nas już truizmami odmieniamy we wszystkich przypadkach i rodzajach by codziennie dojść do tego samego niezmiennego przekonania,że sytuacja jest beznadziejna. Przynajmniej na okres lat najbliższych. Nie mówię tutaj o tych, których niezależnie od położenia ogólnego gnębi zwykła codzienna bieda, ale my ostatecznie tj.Otek, Lutek, Wilek, Sanio, Kudisch i ja, aby wymienić tylko najbliższych z punktu widzenia materialnego nie mamy jeszcze chwilowo powodu do narzekania. I byłoby dla kogoś ktoby stał poza szybami naszego terrarium jako niezainteresowany, może niezrozumiałe,że my ludzie bądź co bądź nie źle aytuowani i prowadzący tryb życia nawet z punktu widzenia zachodu wcale znośny tak narzekamy. Uważałby nasze stanowisko za histeryczne,ale mam wrażenie,że Ty,który jeszcze nie tak dawno tę gehennę poniżenia moralnego wraz z nami przechodziłeś potrafisz nas zrozumieć. Doszło do tego,że każdy z nas z osobna i wszyscy razem rozpatrujemy możliwości emigracyjne.

Letter written to Sig Schotz, sixteen months before the war, expressing the fear of coming war and the helplessness of our situation, and exploring the possibility of emigration, 1938.

7

August 1939

August has always augured war. In olden times after the harvest was gathered in, a king or a knight would shackle his maiden, put on his armor, gird his sword, saddle his horse, and go off to war, which was always so much fun. He was thus able to kill his enemies, rape women, burn villages, pillage castles, and come home with booty. A hero.

Little has changed since then. Making war has become merely more complicated and more deadly, and more elaborate reasons and rationalizations are now required.

August 1939 was tense. People sensed that war was unavoidable, but still hoped for a miracle. Our personal lives, however, went on very much as usual. I made a tour of the major Polish cities; as it turned out, my last. On the trip I could hear the rumbling of passing military trains headed west, and several times our train was delayed to let the convoys go through. Streets everywhere were filled with soldiers, reservists, called into service.

This is how I recorded these last prewar days in my diary, four years after the events described:

> . . . I remember one evening right after Hitler's conquest of Czechoslovakia. We were at a coffeehouse in Zloczow. Wilek Hessel, one of our closest friends, brought to our table a German Jew. After Hitler's rise to power this person had fled to Czechoslovakia, next to Silesia, and finally found refuge at the Hessels' home in Zloczow. The visitor revealed that he was only waiting for the necessary visas because he meant to travel on to Latvia and from there to Sweden. He was convinced that Hitler would conquer Poland.
>
> We tried to argue that his fears were exaggerated. He showed us



Jaremcze, 1939, Lina and I on our last pre-war vacation.

next his German passport stamped with a large yellow J stigmatizing his Jewishness. We reacted with a mixture of surprise, fear, but mostly revulsion. We discussed the yellow patch which we had heard German Jews had to wear on their chest. But we still had no premonition of the terrible events that these tokens presaged, and neither did the German refugee, although he was much more fearful than we were. None of us realized with what iron will and crusader cruelty our persecution was planned, nor that Hitler was destined to set the hands of history's clock on the "finis judeorum" hour.

We gave up the idea of the seaside vacation and went instead to Jaremcze, a charming resort in the lower Carpathian Mountains. In our hotel, there was a family which had escaped from Czecho-

slovakia. They kept apart; day after day they remained at the radio, listening to the news, as if waiting for something to happen. Only today do we comprehend the look in their eyes—the look that revealed desperate fear of the inevitable.

[At the time] We shouted at them: "Don't spoil our mood! This is vacation time! We don't want to hear." We closed our ears and ran to our rooms to change for the next party. But downstairs in the dining room, the radio kept on issuing communiqués, its sound piercing the thin walls of the hotel, stubbornly insistent. But all this—the German Jew and Czech family—we were to understand only years later.

We succeeded in keeping cares away and this last pre-war vacation in July 1939 was pleasant. After we returned home, we had an immediate worry over the scarcity of money, a result of war loans and the tense situation with people being drafted into the army. With some Jewish friends, we formed an informal circle where we conducted unending discussions. We were unanimous in the belief that the policy of *"Zaolzie"* (the sellout) of Czechoslovakia was backfiring. But even the most pessimistic among us did not predict the tragic fruits of that policy. Lina left with the children for a vacation. They were to stay at the house in which we are in hiding now. August went by . . . .

That month newspapers and radio were reiterating that negotiations were still going on. The British and the French met with the Russians to no avail. Stalin kept the West in the dark as to his real intentions. He presented demands which he knew that the Western Allies could not meet, while conducting simultaneous secret negotiations with Germany. The Western statesmen issued daily pronouncements of progress, which were eagerly absorbed by us and evidently believed in the West. We, the Jews, hoped that an agreement with Stalin would be reached and the catastrophe averted, but even in this late hour we did not anticipate the destructiveness of the coming storm.

When the news came of the Ribbentrop-Molotov accord, we were thunderstruck. For Hitler and Stalin the agreement achieved what each needed—time. Both knew that in the end there would be only one winner and each expected to be the one.

When I heard about the pact, I knew that war was unavoidable. That same day I fetched my wife and the children home. Karol Skrzeszewski, whose house we were renting, complained that I was

breaking up the company and sowing panic, but I was firm. (He and I have spoken about this since, he insisting that he too said that war was a matter of days. Perhaps his memory is better.)

Two days later more induction papers were distributed and I expected mine momentarily. But first I wanted to assure the financial security of my family in the event I was called. I thought that I had succeeded after I obtained a large order for a first aid kit for the army.

Next evening we were in a coffeehouse when a soldier came running and called out all officers. We thought: *now*—but that was only a rehearsal.

On August 30 I received a telephone call from a Mr. Bauer, a pharmacist in Lwow, who ordered me to work three shifts and rush delivery of the kits. I questioned this and he replied that the order was from "high up" and that I should understand what it meant.

On August 31 I was walking with Wilek Hessel, when suddenly officers of the garrison appeared from all directions heading toward the barracks. A garrison alarm . . . Because of similar alarms in the past, we were not too concerned. But on that day, one hour later, the entire garrison marched out and we never saw any of the soldiers again.

Overnight the Sokol Building was turned into a mobilization center. All night long I watched through the window as solid-looking crates made of light shiny lumber were unloaded from trucks. They contained uniforms and rifles. An air alert was ordered; we covered windows in dark material and extinguished outside lights, preparations aimed against an air gas attack. So far in this war there has been no gas used and it is clear that no one in the Polish military circles or other responsible agencies had any idea how the coming war would be waged.

But the Germans knew.

Total mobilization was finally ordered. I must say that there was no panic, not even pessimism. It was generally believed that Poland's sharp retort to the German ultimatum and the feverish work of British diplomacy would prevent war. The splendid outward appearance of the soldiers inspired confidence. (The quality of their uniforms was indeed excellent.) Only Otek Roth, another close friend, warned that "we are lacking heavy artillery"; and the rest of us knew that the air force was small, but we thought that it would meet the challenge. We were supported in this belief

by the press, which reported that our air force was superior to that of the Germans.

Even Otek was stating a fact rather than expressing concern. We clung to Smigly-Rydz's promise that "We will not give away even a button from our coats," which, we believed, had some basis in fact. Nobody made special purchases of goods except that the peasants were buying salt.

We believed that the strategic situation was good, that Danzig and East Prussia were safe. There was a lot of saber-rattling.

The surge of optimism during the forty-eight hours before the war started was strongly fostered by the Polish press and radio. After the war began and went badly, this flurry of optimism was attributed to propaganda by the Fifth Column, the saboteurs, which lulled the public into false security.

My induction papers came: I was to report to my unit, near Warsaw, on September 22. But by then I was already a Russian subject.

I remember the evening of August 31, the day before the war broke out. The park was thronged with people discussing recent events. It had been a day devoid of real news. The weather was balmy. We wondered whether we should go dancing. I believe that we did not. We spoke about the garrison, speculating about where it had gone and remembered a few of the officers, some of whom had married local girls. We had no premonition of the events of the next morning.

On September 1, I woke up and as usual turned the knob of my radio. Instead of the customary call for morning exercises, silence. My first thought: something is wrong with the radio. But it could not be, since the dial was lit and there was static. Suddenly I heard a voice: "Attention! It's coming!" A moment later: "It passed." Silence again. I got up immediately and told my wife: "Listen. War!" I dressed quickly. I went into the street where everybody I encountered already knew and spoke of the war. But people were calm, totally optimistic. Food hoarding began. Even then, people did not realize what was happening. When I insisted, Mother went to a store and bought half a pound of tea and coffee and five kilos of sugar. Only after I persisted, Lina took over and made more substantial purchases. Father arranged with a miller to obtain a sack of flour. I did not grasp the full impact of the situation—although I thought I did—because I remember looking at

the thronging peasants at the salt wholesaler and thinking: "No, that is stupid. Whatever—there will be no shortage of salt."

I outfitted myself, or rather Lina outfitted me with a shaving kit and a pair of boots that cost sixteen zlotys, exactly sixteen zlotys, which I double-soled for four zlotys and hobnailed, all strictly in accordance with instructions in my soldier's handbook. (The boots are worn now by Hela Skrzeszewska.)

We heard that Lwow had been bombed. In the streets traffic was roaring, but the people were still calm. I brought the radio to my office to be able to listen to what was happening. Otherwise the work in the factory went on as always. And so did life.

German radio was transmitting a speech by Goebbels in which he accused Poland of having started the hostilities. In his version, Polish bands had invaded peaceful German towns and the German army was forced to retaliate. Polish communiqués were sparse and lacking in details. Westerplattte, the Polish stronghold in the neutral city of Danzig, had been attacked, we learned, and fierce battles were raging on the ground, on the sea, and in the air.

Earlier that year a room in the newly acquired villa on Podwojcie Street was vacated by a tenant who was soon to release the rest of the apartment which we expected to occupy. We asked our good friend Wilek Hessel to move in temporarily. We still lived with my parents across the street from the Sokol Building, the largest and most prominent structure in Zloczow. Lina felt that Sokol was an obvious target for the German Luftwaffe and for safety we decided to move with the children to Podwojcie Street. However, my parents refused to leave the house and the factory.

During the first evening of the war, our elder daughter, Edith, disappeared. We were frantic, we searched everywhere. Hours went by with no trace of the child. It was completely dark when she returned home by herself. She had spent the day at the home of an acquaintance, an older woman, who had let Edith play with a doll collection. Neither the woman nor Edith was aware of our anguish. After we found Edith, we retired to Podwojcie for the night.

The first indications of disorganization started to filter in on the second day of mobilization when it appeared that there were no guns for the conscripts and that the gas masks being issued were obsolete. Soon there were no boots. On the third and fourth day conscripts were sent home because they lacked uniforms and rifles. They were told to report in a week.

On the second day of the war in Lwow, Polish students took to the streets chanting anti-Semitic slogans and attacking Jews with bats and the infamous razor blades embedded in the bats, vicious weapons that cut through clothing and caused deep wounds. Men, women and children were attacked indiscriminately to the chant, "*Precz a Zydami*" (Down with Jews), "*Armja bez Zydow*" (Army without Jews). The radio and the newspapers blamed the riots on the Fifth Column, German provocateurs.

Strange things began to happen. Overnight all coins disappeared, to be replaced by tiny paper money that looked like candy wrappers. The familiar and always ominous parade of peasants with sacks over their shoulders was seen in the streets. This time, many of them carried axes. "For what?" we asked ourselves. Tobacco all but vanished, as did salt. There went my confidence that salt would always be available. In the market, the few peasants who still showed up were increasingly offensive. They refused to accept money, demanding instead salt, sugar, or articles of clothing in exchange for food. Thus the barter system was initiated which was to last for the duration of the war.

We did not know whether we would be able to obtain money from the banks for the payroll but we still kept the factory operating.

The euphoria of the first couple of days of the war soon gave way to anxiety.

* * *

In the meantime we experienced several air-raid alarms but no air raids. The days flew by. The news became scarce and bad. There was increasing talk about a Fifth Column. Ukrainians were suspected.

From German radio stations we heard incredible news. Katowice taken? Silesia overrun? My God, I was just there—only a few days earlier. Polish radio neither denied nor confirmed this. In the factory we stopped working on orders from businesses in territories apparently occupied by the Germans.

On the fourth or fifth day of the war, I remember hearing a German communiqué that Radomsko was taken. Having often traveled that route, I became frightened, for I realized that the link between Silesia and Warsaw was now cut.

Our railroad station a mile away from the center of town was bombed in the first air raid on Zloczow. There were no casualties

but we were very frightened. Defending Zloczow was a single, small-caliber anti-aircraft gun located in the hills overlooking the station. It occasionally barked feebly like a dog yelping at the moon, afraid perhaps to reveal its location to the fearsome birds in the sky. It was soon withdrawn and we missed it although it had been useless against the high-flying German planes.

The fine weather persisted. For several days there was not a cloud in the sky and people said: "The weather assists the Germans. God is with Hitler."

"Isn't God always with the stronger battalions," a Prussian king once said.

The one bright piece of news came when France and England declared war on Germany. We listened to a speech by Colonel Beck, the Polish foreign minister, who promised victory.

The declarations of war by France and England were cheered loudly in the streets. Radio Warsaw was jubilant. This, it was believed, would be the turning point of the war. The Western Powers would invade Germany and teach Hitler a lesson. The onslaught on Poland would stop, as Germany would be forced to divert its main forces to defend its western front. Alas, the Western Powers had no desire to fight. The appeasers thought that they could still find a way to pacify Hitler, no matter what the cost to their national dignity and to the free countries of the East. German advances continued, the air raids never ceased, Westernplatte fell, Warsaw was surrounded, the Vistula was crossed at several points, the euphoria died, the cheering stopped. Despair set in.

The first refugees arrived. I remember a military truck loaded to the brim with luggage on top of which were perched women and children. They were accompanied by several military men ranking from major to colonel. The vehicle parked under the wide branches of a large tree, offering shelter from the sun. Two officers descended with gasoline cans in their hands and asked where a gas station was located. Every so often they looked up at the sky. More and more vehicles followed, cars, trucks, buses, even fire engines loaded with people, baggage, bedding, in ever increasing disorder. At first, excapees took time to rest, but as time went on they stopped only for gas, or to ask directions.

Cars were now speeding in the direction of Zaleszczyki on the border of Poland and Rumania. I shall never forget the unending rows of cars, particularly on the night of September 8. I was performing my duty as block air-raid warden with another man

and we asked ourselves, "Where in Poland did all these cars come from?" Some bore license plates from as far away as Warsaw and Lodz.

Mingled with the escaping vehicles were artillery pieces and an occasional tank loaded with soldiers perched on top like bunches of bananas. The soldiers were a sorry lot, more scared than the civilians. The officers too were scared, but they retained their arrogance and often at gunpoint demanded priority in lodgings, food and petroleum. The refugees' fear began to affect us as well.

* * *

. . . After a few more days the cars holding refugees were followed by all sorts of odd vehicles: bicycles, motorcycles, droshkies, even haywagons. Little gas was available by this time and what was available sold at fantastic prices.

Our factory mechanic told me that he had been offered a motorcycle for his bicycle. Beautiful luxury cars were traded for horse-drawn haywagons. The first refugees on foot arrived, their lines growing from day to day. The most numerous were Jews from Warsaw, Lodz, Krakow, Bielsko, Tarnow and smaller cities.

Only a few Polish radio stations were still transmitting—Lwow, Wilno, Baranowicze, and Warsaw II, but the reception was disturbed and news practically nil. We lived as if in a trance. There was another raid at the railroad station with the first casualties, a young boy, a refugee from Nowy Sacz, killed by a bomb fragment, and a railroad cashier hiding in a cornfield, machine-gunned from a low-flying plane.

Cars were now speeding in the direction of Zaleszczyki on the border of Poland and Rumania.

* * *

Order still prevailed among the local civilian population but among the military disarray was more and more discernible. First, soldiers appeared singly with terrifying stories. A soldier could never see the enemy, only fire and iron on the ground and in the air, they said. Nothing could resist this avalanche of fire and steel. The planes were the worst. Unstoppable, they flew low, firing indiscriminately at soldiers and civilians. The officers ran away first, telling everyone, "Save yourselves whichever way you can. Run

away wherever you can!" The cities burned, piles of corpses were strewn on the roads, and on and on, one report worse than the previous one, all sounding fantastic and terrifying at the same time. The soldiers also uttered the terrible word "treason," and charged their officers with cowardice . . .

There were no more newspapers. In the absence of definite news, all sorts of stories were circulating, repeating, belaboring, exaggerating the already terrible news. Other rumors brought fantastically good news: The German offensive was broken, five-hundred to a thousand British planes had arrived to help Poland. This appeared in the last issue of *Chwila* to reach us. Other news claimed that Polish units occupied Krolewiec, that Berlin was bombed, and so on. We somehow wanted to believe this, but the presentiment of disaster hovered over us.

From Lwow, fifty miles away, refugees were arriving on foot. We packed knapsacks. We started to prepare the "defense" of Zloczow against tanks, because there were rumors that single tank units had broken through in various places and were threatening our town, any time. Our defense consisted of barriers made of cobble-stones torn from sidewalks and cement sewer pipes. (Zloczow was just then installing new sewers.) Timber and barbed wire were all heaped chaotically. Radio was transmitting these and similar instructions for anti-tank barriers. Once trapped, tanks were to be destroyed by the defenders with cans of gasoline.

I still ponder the mindlessness with which the democratic nations, and Poland among them, prepared for this war.

The local commander, an elderly major with whom I used to play tennis, disappeared and a young second lieutenant took over and tried to maintain order. The officers ignored him, but some soldiers listened. He assembled them in the local military barracks, then led them marching and singing through the streets of Zloczow. He was probably hoping to raise the spirits of the civilian population. God, how we did need this lift! As the marchers were coming into Podwojcie Street there was a distant sound of a plane. The marching soldiers scattered like a flock of swallows when a stone is thrown among them. The lieutenant had difficulty rallying them again. Those whom he induced to march again were no longer singing. Instead they kept glancing at the sky, panic in their eyes. We saw that it was a thoroughly vanquished army.

We returned to Sokola Street from Podwojcie.

On the night of September 12, I remember that we went to bed, calmed by some better news that I do not recall. We were awakened by a strong and persistent hammering at the gate. A loud, frightened voice was shouting, "Mr. Tennenbaum, Mr. Tennenbaum."

Someone went downstairs to open the door. Mr. Kolodziejczyk, a pharmacist from Lwow, was there, terribly frightened. He kept shouting, "People, save yourselves! People, run! We were sold out! Lwow is burning!" We gathered around him and tried to calm him, but without success. All we could get out of him was that people were running away from Lwow, which was a sea of flames. He kept repeating: "Treason, treason!" We gave him some food and he left immediately afterward. None of us slept that night; instead we considered what was to be done now.

Within the next several days friends and acquaintances from Lwow and other cities arrived with their friends and families. Our house became a kind of hospice. My mother, wife, and the maids took turns and stayed in the kitchen day and night, serving hot soup cooked in a huge kettle normally used for boiling water for our baths. People slept on chairs or on the floors, in the corridors, and in the factory. A few of the elderly were given our beds. All refugees told blood-curdling stories about atrocities committed by German flyers. We learned about the Stuka, a plane that swoops down seemingly out of nowhere and strafes the roads, indiscriminately slaughtering innocent civilians.

This was a new kind of war.

The refugees were bewildered. Most had no idea where they were running to, some naming Russia, others Rumania, a few hoping to reach Palestine. Meanwhile they had run out of money and petroleum.

We stopped work in the factory, but still the workers gathered daily to discuss the news and the future awaiting them. Three groups formed; Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews, each in a different room, portents of days to come.

After September 8 the flow of refugees became a trickle and eventually ended. The last couple of nights were quiet. Except for Warsaw II, the secondary, feeble station still transmitting, Polish radio stations were stilled. Warsaw II continued to broadcast for a few more weeks, even after all of Poland was already overrun. It reported that Warsaw was still heroically holding on. The reliable information came from the German stations; German successes

were so tremendous that they had no reason to embellish the news. We heard that Przemysl, the stronghold on the river San, had been taken, that the river San had been crossed, and that German advance columns had reached Lwow. We and the world learned the meaning of Blitzkrieg, the war of lightning conquests.

We talked of escape, but where to?

Did you ever watch a fly beating frantically against the panes of a closed window, trying to escape being squashed? That's how we were. We were without any ideas about what to do or how to act. We held a family council and concluded that I alone was in immediate danger and that therefore I alone should escape to Rumania. Before the war, I had made several anti-Nazi speeches at public rallies, and had made public fun of Hitler and his henchmen at an amateur theatrical a few years earlier at the Sokol Hall. Father was safe, we believed, being older, uncompromised, and well-liked by his gentile personnel whom he had always treated with kindness and generosity. And who in the world would harm women and children?

A few weeks earlier our car had broken down—again—and this time it could not be repaired, since a replacement part had to come all the way from America. We hadn't decided whether to repair the old car or buy a new one, but now it was too late. Had the car been in order, would events have taken a different course for my family?

We decided to get in touch with friends to see what they were doing. Otek arrived in a horse-drawn cart in the morning, saying that Wilek was in bed the last few days with a strange sickness and a high fever. Otek's brother Lutek, his wife, Ada, and a few friends had arrived on foot durng the night from Lwow, and were in Boniszyn, Otek's estate. They were intending to go on but Otek was uncertain about what to do. He was afraid to stay, yet reluctant to leave his possessions. After we talked for a while, he decided that he would try to escape toward Tarnopol-Podwoloczyska or Zaleszczyki (Tarnopol, east of Zloczow; Podwoloczyska, a town on the Russian border; Zaleszczyki, a town on the Rumanian border, the main escape route of many refugees). I would go with them but Lina would stay behind, since taking two small children was out of the question. Our partner's son-in-law, Kuba Henis, was also to go with us.

I was to accompany Otek to Boniszyn as a first step and we would proceed from there. True, the return trip would involve backtracking through Zloczow, but Otek was stubborn. He did not

wish to make another stop in Zloczow to pick me up. We had to submit, since he supplied the transport. I packed two kinds of underwear, light and heavy, because even though the September weather continued fair and balmy, we thought the war might drag on into October! I added a fall overcoat, some canned food and other things, until the knapsack became so tight and heavy that I could barely lift it. I also took about a thousand zlotys and twenty dollars in gold.

At the last minute we took Lonek with us, the black sheep of the Brandes family. Mother was happy with this decision because she said Lonek was very shrewd and that this trait would come in handy. Wilek, in spite of his fever, asked to come along but Otek absolutely refused to take him, thinking that he would be a burden. Accompanied by the laments of our families, Kuba, Lonek and I said our good-byes. Mother and Father cried a great deal, but Lina was relatively calm. She told me later that she was sure that I would not leave.

We loaded the knapsacks on the wagon and climbed aboard. We moved. Suddenly we heard a cry: "Stop! Stop for a moment!" It was our neighbor, Mrs. Wachtman, who begged us to take her son with us. The boy, an eighteen-year-old, stood there with an expression of fear and entreaty on his face. I told him that I was a guest myself. Mrs. Wachtman attempted to kiss my hand. "Mr. Tennenbaum, have pity on me." My parents and my wife used this delay to say good-bye again. Mother pleaded for her neighbor: "Please take him." But Otek cut her off in his squeaky voice: "I take no one. Janek, go." The wagon moved. Father ran along for a few steps, breathing heavily. Irritated, I begged him to stop but he did not listen. Finally he could go on no longer and stopped to catch his breath. He cried. Lina waved. We turned into a side street and I could see them no more.

We traveled in silence. My teeth chattered with the shaking of the wagon. We passed the empty military barracks and several "anti-tank barriers." We finally reached the main route that, as far as the eye could see, was empty, the automobile caravan of refugees having stopped during the last days. The sky was cloudless, the heat suffocating. We turned into a country road after we passed the Greek Orthodox church. Behind us, in the city, the sirens sounded an alarm. We searched the sky. There it was, a single plane flying low along the railroad tracks. It dropped even

lower over the station, cruising slowly. We did not let it out of our sight. "Hope he does not see us," somebody said. After a while we thought that he was heading in our direction so we halted the wagon and dived into the field. But no, he turned the other way. We returned to the wagon. A dusty cloud appeared on the highway. An automobile, another, and yet a third, all military vehicles. That was all the excitement. We reached our destination and climbed down from the wagon, stretching our limbs with relief.

We entered the main house on the estate, which was in disarray with knapsacks and other possessions scattered about. I greeted Lutek, who introduced us to some of his friends, a few men and one woman. We talked. They told us about the last few tragic days of Lwow which was repeatedly bombarded, particularly around the railroad stations. When they were leaving the city, Zniesienie and Podzamcze, suburbs of Lwow, were burning. During the last two days the city had come under German artillery fire. A few German tanks had broken through into the city but had been halted and destroyed.

The friends intended to reach the Soviet border and go on to Russia. They were politically pink, one man a Communist of the drawing-room variety.

Lutek said that it was primarily treason that caused the situation. He had seen with his own eyes light signals issuing from different windows in his section of town. Others confirmed this and added their own observations. When it came to bombardment from planes, the Germans were not particularly courageous; one Polish fighter plane could chase away ten bombers. But unfortunately, there were few such fighters. Also, anti-aircraft guns were scarce. Everyone agreed that the officers' corps, especially the staff officers, were imbeciles and traitors and had been the first to run away.

Actually all this was nothing new, we had heard it from other refugees. The discussions shifted to plans. The new arrivals were of the opinion that the Germans would arrive the next day at the latest, and that we should begin our escape at once. Otek was again undecided; he was afraid of losing his horses. In general he was unpleasant and rude. Otek's wife, Pepa, offered me breakfast, which I refused. I was terribly unnerved and went outside. Henis and Lonek joined me. Both were very ill-at-ease because of Otek's

behavior, and because of the Lwow crowd that, in spite of the dangerous situation, was making pretentious efforts at sophisticated conversation. They were making our escape seem like a mountain-climbing or kayak trip.

For some of them, these excursions were expressions of snobbism or a need to ape others rather than reflections of their own wishes. They were great poseurs. They spoke French among themselves; a few even spoke English. Everyone was a professional; three were engineers, two lawyers, and one teacher, but not one had ever held a job. All were swaggerers and all were blind to the danger of the situation. They were typical of Jewish youth from good homes in the big cities.

No wonder Henis and Lonek felt estranged. Although I also came from a well-to-do family and had an education equal to theirs, I felt distant from them. True, I've always preferred riding in a car to hiking, trains rather than kayaks, and a hotel room has always suited me better than a tent. But I believed that I had more experience in life than they. My thoughts were churning. The three of us talked about what to do but came to no decision. Henis and Lonek looked up to me and were ready to say yes to whatever I said, but I was at a loss as to what to do.

I lay down on the grass to think. It was very quiet. Suddenly I heard a distant sound. My first thought—artillery. My heart palpitated. I listened again. Yes! No doubt. I picked myself up and went toward the house to share the bad news with the others. On my way past the stable I again heard the noise, accompanied by the jingling of harness. The two sounds clarified the matter; I sighed with relief, realizing that the pounding was not artillery but only the sound of horses' hoofs striking the ground. My nerves were stretched to the breaking point.

Otek had closeted himself with his father and brother for a prolonged consultation. It transpired that none of the stable boys wanted to go. After a promise of a large remuneration, one older man agreed to join us. Otek was still worrying about the possible loss of his horses. We were to leave with only a single heavy wagon, but I saw that it would still take a long time before we got away. Otek had just started to pack—he was packing the table silver!

I noticed some people heading in our direction on the country road and after a while I recognized my parents and the Brandeses led by Pawel Fedyszyn, a worker in our factory. When we met I

poured out all my grief and pain on my innocent parents. I lost control over myself completely. I blamed them. I quarreled with them in such a despicable, unjustified way that Otek and Lutek tried to calm me down. Mother also attempted to quiet me. She had tears in her eyes as did Father, who only looked at me without a word. They didn't know what was the matter, neither did I. I am still ashamed of my behavior. Today, Mother is dead . . . Father . . . ?

Mr. Brandes too tried to assure me, but in vain. By that time, I was truly hysterical. I threw myself on the ground and chewed the grass in desperate fury. Finally I said: "I am staying! No, I am not going!" I got up and started to walk toward the city, followed by Pawel, undoubtedly sent by my parents, who pulled up to me after a few hundred steps. Pawel and I walked together in the unbearable heat. My feet, unused to heavy boots two sizes too large, hurt after walking only one kilometer. As there was no reason to hurry, we walked slowly. We entered the first fences of Glinianska Street, a suburb with a distinct small-village flavor, when the sirens wailed again. They wailed several times before we reached the center of town.

On our way we passed soldiers walking singly or in pairs, with and without their guns, a few on bicycles. As they straggled along we saw that they had one thing in common; while we paid no attention to the sirens sounding alarm they sought shelter immediately in the ditches by the highway or under trees. Terror filled their eyes as they scoured the sky. Even after an alarm was called off, they didn't move for a long time.

We were near the power station when the sirens wailed again. I continued to ignore them and headed home hugging the houses. The streets were deserted.

Lina greeted me with joy, but was not surprised. I called for a basin of water and, discarding the heavy boots, submerged my feet with pleasure. I told her what had happened during the last few hours and of my decision to come home. She was unsure about this, but my mother, who together with my father and Mr. Brandes returned about an hour later, enthusiastically supported me. That settled it. Henis and Lonek stayed too. The decision had a salutary influence on me; I became completely calm and even happy.

In the afternoon we went to visit Wilek, who was also joyful about my return. The city had lost the busy and noisy look of the

> first few days of war. Only here and there were people rushing, seeking shelter in the doors of houses during the frequent alarms. At times a single vehicle loaded to the brim sped eastward along the main street.
>
> In the afternoon Otek arrived with my knapsack. They had also decided to stay; only Lutek's friends went on foot toward the Soviet border. We heard that some reached Tarnopol but that others got no farther than Zborow . . .

Lina was very frightened; each time the sirens sounded she would lose her composure. She was particularly afraid of remaining on our street because the Sokol across the way was now a military center, so I succumbed to her pleading and we moved for the second time to our house on Podwojcie Street.

I grasped the hopelessness of the military situation, as did others. But ultimately people with families remained, while others left, some of them managing to reach the Soviet Union where the majority of them survived the war. Few ever saw their loved ones again. Of the people mentioned in this episode of our futile attempt to escape, my parents, the Brandeses, Pepa, Otek, Ada, Lutek, Wilek, Kuba Henis, Lonek—all are dead.

Otek and his wife disappeared and died in Warsaw where they tried to assume Polish identities. Lutek was killed in Lwow after the Germans staged a pogrom in June of 1941. His widow, Ada, lived with my parents in Lwow until she too perished in one of the German roundups. Wilek was killed on the first day of the Russo-German war at the Zamek, the Sobieski castle which served as a prison for Austrians, Poles, Russians, and Germans. Mr. Brandes, in flight from the Germans, was killed when a worker in our factory refused to give him refuge. Kuba Henis was drafted into the Soviet army, sent to the front without any military training, and was last seen near Kiev, caught in the cauldron which contained several Russian armies. We never saw him or heard from him again. Lonek survived the war, but disappeared later inside Russia. I don't know what happened to Lutek's friends.

We kept moving from one apartment to the other, depending on which felt safer.

8

. . . There was a distinct feeling of relief and improvement in the situation three days before September 17.

A Jewish proverb says: "There is always improvement before death."

I'm not sure of the reasons for this baseless return of optimism; in retrospect I guess that we were cheered when the daily fear that the Germans were coming did not materialize. Also the heroic defense of Warsaw gave us a boost. Finally, the complete absence of genuine news generated the spread of gossip and speculation, fantastic, cheerful news—unfortunately false. The local military authorities were able to reestablish momentary order, which I heard occurred also in other cities. Finally the stream of refugees ceased; these people, apart from the news they brought, contributed by their mere presence to the mood of panic.

We were also cheered by the intervention of the police against Ukrainian mobs. The Ukrainians had been lying low but were now overtly jubilant. Their friends, the Germans, were coming. On the fifteenth day of the war, in front of their national house, the Kasino, they staged an antigovernment riot, raising their yellow and blue flag and the Tryzub, their national emblem, and provocatively sang their patriotic songs. Unfortunately for them, they chose the wrong day for this. A detachment of tough Polish riot police happened to be passing on their way from the front. It took them only minutes to disperse the crowd by vigorous use of their gun butts.

The sympathies and loyalties of the Ukrainian population were never a secret. At the time of the collapse of the Hapsburg empire they supported Germany and Germans. When the Germans retreated in 1918 they turned over local power and gave weapons to the Ukrainians rather than the Poles. It was with German help

that the Ukrainians established their short-lived republic which at one time extended all the way to Lwow. Zloczow was under Ukrainian control for a year and in consequence our relationships with the local Ukrainians was quite good. Jews from Galicja were pro-German too—a one-sided love affair, unfortunately.

The fifteenth day brought some news in addition to wild rumors.

Warsaw was fighting on! This really lifted our spirits. It tended to confirm our widely held suspicions that, had there been no treason, the military campaign would have taken a different turn. Warsaw was resisting! We listened with halted breath to the Warsaw II radio station whose transmissions came clearly on my radio. We dwelt on every word uttered by Warsaw President Stanislaw Starzynski. Even when the Bolsheviks invaded Zloczow, we still listened to Warsaw II until it finally went off the air for good. Its fall was a heavy blow in this period so full of suffering. I still remember President Starzynski's last speech; his tired, hoarse voice belied the text that was so cheerful and full of faith and hope. Perhaps the defense of Warsaw was madness from the military viewpoint, a crime from the humanitarian viewpoint, but it was the only ray of hope and a beacon for the Polish nation facing dark hours of slavery and inhuman suffering.

The fact of the heroic and thus far successful defense of Warsaw, along with the failure of the Germans to enter Lwow, gave rise to a flood of fantastic news reports, one more optimistic than the other. To the best of my recollection, some of these stories were also repeated by Warsaw II. The names of Generals Sikorski and Sosnkowski were reassuring; these two were not members of the coterie of colonels and we looked to them with hope. There were rumors that Sikorski was now in overall command, or at least in command of the southern front; that he had reorganized the defense; that he had shot treacherous generals and colonels; and that he had halted the German offensive. General Sosnkowski, so went the tale, had inflicted a terrible defeat on the Germans at Przemysl and Grodek Jagiellonski, two towns between Lwow and Krakow, and was now rushing to the rescue of Warsaw. Smigly-Rydz was mentioned only with irony and derision. The air force chief, General Rajski, was accused of treason. As I write this today, I do not know that this was a fact, but at the time it was vox populi. It was also rumored that the Polish cavalry had entered eastern Prussia and was approaching Krolewiec."

This entry, dated Friday, November 19, 1943, is the last in my diary referring to past events.

Other rumors spoke of a British army unit parachuting near Warsaw. Nobody ever mentioned the French, since nothing much was ever expected of them. Another rumor had Russia declaring war on Germany, its armies already fighting the Germans.

That last rumor turned out to be true to a point. One night one of our machinists came rushing to tell us of a Russian broadcast announcing that the Soviet army was coming to the rescue and liberation of the Western Ukraine.

9

September 17, 1939

On the morning of September 16 news spread rapidly that the Russians were coming. We were both hopeful and worried. Were they coming as friends and allies or as conquerors? Soon it became clear that it was the latter as the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact became known. Radio Warsaw II called it "a stab in the back." London called it treachery. We saw that, as had happened before in the 18th century, Poland was again being dismembered by its two predatory neighbors.

There were still a few optimists who argued logically but not realistically that since the Russians and the Germans are arch enemies, the Russians must be our friends. However, I noted that in the official Russian broadcasts our area was called "Western Ukraine." This was ominous, I felt, suggesting annexation. We were but part of the Ukraine, an "autonomous" Soviet republic.

The term Western Ukraine was to become the official designation for this territory and is so marked on Russian maps today. In its hundreds of years of recorded history, this part of Eastern Europe where I was born, where my parents, grandparents, and their ancestors were born and lie buried was never part of Russia. It is so today, as was determined at Yalta and sealed at Helsinki.

Soon the Russians were reported to be in Tarnopol, only forty miles east of Zloczow. At noon Russian planes marked with large red stars on their wings flew over, dropping leaflets which repeated in Ukrainian and very bad Polish what we heard in the broadcast, that the people of Eastern Ukraine could not bear the suffering of their brothers in the Western Ukraine, hence the invincible Red Army was coming to liberate them from oppression by landlords and manufacturers. The oppressed were never asked whether they wanted to be liberated.

We tried to picture what the Russians were like.

I recalled the Russians of 1914; endless columns of soldiers marching for days; Father hiding in the attic; the big policeman on the corner with his frightening *nahayka*; big sacks of flour and plenty of food.

We wondered about the Red Army. We remembered its barefoot, motley, poorly disciplined soldiers, holding daily mass rallies, with interminable speeches, huge red flags, and pictures of Lenin and Trotzky. No flour that time; the Russians were living off our land. Everybody wore shabby clothing and Father was always tieless.

We lived less than a hundred miles from Russia, yet we knew so little of what was going on behind the tightly sealed borders of that mysterious country.

Both times military bands played in the city squares, and—yes—always that pervasive smell of tar the Russians used to blacken their boots.

The German advance stopped. Whatever the future held, we were saved from the Germans. For us, the war was coming to a sudden end. How would we live under Soviet rule?

That night we slept on *Podwojcie*. After midnight I was awakened by heavy grinding noises, squeaking chains and sounds of heavy vehicles from the direction of the Tarnopol road. I waited until dawn, then dressed quickly and went outside to see what was happening. It was a beautiful, warm and sunny day—September 17, 1939. What we heard, saw and smelled was a composite of the Russians of World War I and the Bolsheviks of 1920. Again a military band played martial music in front of the city hall. An endless stream of military vehicles, infantry, trucks, artillery drawn by tractors and horses choked the streets. Some of the artillery pieces had long gun barrels of huge caliber unlike anything I'd ever seen except for pictures of German "Fat Berthas" of World War I. And tanks, of every imaginable size, some monstrous, armed with cannon and machine guns. Radio stations, field kitchens, medical units, bicyclists and motorcyclists, and again foot soldiers were everywhere. The soldiers were well-armed, many carrying machine guns. What a difference from the Polish army!

In spite of the warm weather, the Red Army soldiers wore *shynels* (ankle-length coats); they carried blanket rolls on their backs. The officers, called commanders, were not distinguishable by their dress. However, we soon learned to distinguish the insignia of rank, different studs affixed to their shirt collars, square for the noncommissioned officers, rectangles for officers, and diamonds for generals. The uniforms were all gray, but the caps varied, black indicating tanks and

artillery; gray, infantry; blue, air corps; red, the NKVD; and green, the police and border guard. A large number of women of all ranks wore unform skirts topped with overblouses, and used red lipstick. They too were armed like the men.

Only the officers wore sidearms, a holstered revolver hanging low from a belt, another suspended from the neck and stuck into the folds of the coat. In addition to the two pistols some officers carried machine guns.

I learned later that although the Soviet military draft was for three years, the majority of the soldiers had served longer, none knowing when they would return to civilian life.

We noticed that many soldiers had round faces, high cheekbones and slanted eyes which made them appear Oriental. Several faces bore pockmarks, signs of smallpox. Their boots were of cloth soled with rubber, their coats were unfinished at the hem, with thread filaments hanging down. Many soldiers of both sexes wore their caps with the visor turned upward at a forty-five-degree angle, which gave them a jaunty, tipsy appearance. They were well-disciplined; there was no looting or rape. The enlisted men were drawn mainly from the *kolkhoses*, (communal farms), and many were barely literate in spite of claims to the contrary. Our first impression was that the Russian soldiers were good-natured, likable fellows. We soon found that appearance was deceptive.

The soldiers broke ranks and settled to rest on the sidewalks under the trees. They took black bread and onions out of their knapsacks and washed the food down with drinks from their canteens. I did not see anyone drunk that first day.

On his last day of office our starosta issued a public proclamation ordering a display of white flags and calling for a friendly greeting of the Soviet Army. The majority of the population followed the starosta's orders. However, the Ukrainians showed their nationalist blue and yellow flags and a handful of local Communists (newly emerged from hiding) and their sympathizers displayed red flags. The starosta, the mayor and members of the city council went to the outskirts of the city to meet the incoming army of occupation. A separate unofficial Ukrainian delegation showed up, with the tiny enthusiastic group of local Communists.

I was not present at this encounter, but I heard about it from workers in our factory. The Russian commander rebuffed the official group led by the starosta in rude language; he ignored the Commu-

nists, but warmly greeted the Ukrainians. Photographs were taken of Ukrainian girls embracing Russian soldiers and giving them flowers; these were later displayed prominently on the front pages of Russian newspapers. Little did our local Ukrainians know that they were moving from the frying pan into the fire.

With a few friends I stood near city hall and continued to watch the parade of the Russian troops. We wondered how this army would fare against the Germans and unanimously decided that the Russians would not stand a chance, although we had very little on which to base that conclusion.

This was a frightening thought, since we were also equally certain that war between these two unlikely allies was inevitable. We were becoming despondent. Sanjo Kahane, a lawyer friend of mine, tried to cheer us. "One of their big guys is a Jew named Kaganovich," he said, "which is the same as Kahane. I believe that it will be okay after all." He succeeded in making us laugh at this reasoning. Somebody else said, "Enough of this," and suggested a game of cards. I enjoyed playing poker for small stakes. However, this time we played for stakes tenfold higher than usual. At first I hesitated but my friends mocked me. "Come on! They will take your money away anyhow. Let yourself go! Have fun!" I did and I had, and I won a large sum of money, soon, alas, to become worthless.

We often ask one another: "Where were you when . . . ?" Well, I spent the day the Russians entered Zloczow playing poker with colleagues in a law office usually devoted to more important matters. As it turned out, we were setting a pattern for the next twenty-one months, when card playing became our escape from the dreariness, tension and danger under the Russian occupation. That first game lasted until late in the evening. My wife and parents were looking for me frantically all over town. They could only shake their heads in bemusement when I sheepishly owned up to where I had been and what we had been doing.

* * *

Zloczow escaped with just a few scars from this opening episode of the war. The railroad station was bombed and partly burned, but the tracks were serviceable. My mother-in-law's restaurant was untouched but a few dwellings near it were damaged. Russian soldiers rummaged in the rubble. Otherwise, the center of Zloczow was spared

while a few houses on the outskirts were burned out or badly damaged.

Lina was always sure that the first bomb to be dropped on Zloczow would hit the Sokol and then our house, so she decided to shelter our best china in the house of her cousin, who lived on the outskirts. Sure enough, that house was hit and there went our china which had been so prudently transferred to a "safe" place. In panic we do the silliest things! There were a few wounded among the refugees but no one we knew was hurt.

The first days under the new regime were chaotic, since the Polish authorities ceased to function and no one else took over. There was a Russian military commander in the town. Accustomed to the prestige and power of the Polish military, we expected him to run things, but nothing of the kind happened, since he dealt mainly with military matters. He issued an order that all Polish military personnel were to surrender immediately and that the civilian population was to turn in all weapons. The orders were unenforceable since the Polish soldiers had already shed their uniforms and disappeared among the civilian population, and people who had arms either buried them safely or threw them away, no one being foolish enough to appear with weapons in hand.

The military commander did order the stores to open and proclaimed that the Russian ruble was to be accepted on par with the Polish zloty. The markets were also reopened. Both were immediately invaded by Russisan soldiers whose eyes widened in amazement as they appraised the variety and quality of goods. They were particularly fond of watches. Our jeweler, Mr. Segal, told us that a Russian general came to his store and demanded to see the watches. He was shown several and asked which was his choice. The general made a wide motion with his arms and replied, "*Wsie*"(all of them). He became quite abusive when the jeweler tried to explain that he couldn't sell him the entire stock. After much pleading by the jeweler, the Russian finally left content with the purchase of "only" half a dozen watches. Other storekeepers told similar stories.

The Russians paid with rubles which the officers carried in bagfuls. The enlisted men had more modest amounts. There was no bargaining. Cloth, shoes, shirts, ties, razors and razor blades, cameras, radios, fountain pens, writing paper, pencils, candy, chocolate, groceries—everything was snapped up. The store owners doubled, tripled, quadrupled their prices, charged tenfold prewar prices, but no matter. The Russians bought everything in sight and kept buying things for

sale and not for sale. In one store they bought the light fixtures taken down from walls and ceilings. Lonek, our partner's son, told us that he had sold a watch with a faulty movement and without hands for a hundred rubles. People unloaded things ready to be discarded, at fantastic prices. It was unbelievable, it was hilarious, and it was frightening.

Locusts, said my mother, and so they were. There was no need for them to pillage; they were just buying.

When a Russian was asked, "Why all this buying, aren't these goods available in Russia?" The answer was always, "Yes." They had more and in much superior quality, but these were souvenirs. A relative of mine, Mr. Pundyk, told me that upon selling some oranges to a soldier, he had asked him whether there were oranges in Russia. The reply was "Yes, they were manufactured in factories in the Donbas" (a huge industrial region on the river Don where much of Russia's heavy industry is concentrated). This story, perhaps apocryphal, circulated in many versions.

In a few days the store shelves were empty and nothing could be bought except on the flourishing black market. Prices were now sky-high. Late-arriving Russians were very disappointed and some became rowdy and threatening.

Similar stories soon came from Lwow, Tarnopol, and other cities and villages. We spoke Polish at home, but when my father wanted to express something succinctly, he said it in Yiddish. He summed up the situation in one word, "*kaptzunim*" (paupers).

We had all read books about Soviet Russia which were either extremely favorable or condemnatory. People see what they want to see and write what they think, rather than what is. We had heard more reliable stories from Austrian POWs who were repatriated from Russia in the twenties. But we were not prepared for what we were witnessing.

10

This developing picture did not seem to hamper the enthusiasm of our domestic Communists, who were determined to have their day. Some of them were known to us; others who revealed themselves as Communists took us by surprise, among the latter a colleague of ours, Mundek Werfel, son of a prominent Zionist. Some came out of the hideouts in which they were confined in the closing days of the war; others were released from prison; still others who had escaped east in anticipation of a German occupation now came back. The locals, particularly the "intellectuals," decided not to wait for the arrival of Soviet civilian authorities, and forged ahead with the nationalization of the larger businesses in town. As the second largest employer in town, our factory was a prime target. The very next day after the Russian army marched in, Jasio Hessel, the son of a lawyer and the brother of one of my best friends, accompanied by his cousin, Felo Rosenbaum, strutted in to our apartment, handguns dangling from their belts. "In the name of the people," they rudely demanded the keys to the factory, mumbling something about putting an end to the exploitation of the workers. They looked more ridiculous than menacing. Perhaps they felt it too. After getting the keys, they left without a goodbye just as they had come in without a good morning.

Other businesses in town were nationalized by the same or similar gangs within the first couple of days.

The rule of these self-appointed officials was very short-lived. A few days later the Russian civil authorities arrived. Nominally civilians, all were dressed in army uniforms and all were armed. Soon another local Communist, a carpenter who used to do some work for us, came to our house and gave back the keys to the factory, explaining lamely that it had been a "mistake." A couple of days later we received a visit from a Russian, who asked for my father and declared that the factory was

forthwith nationalized by the Communist Party. He demanded a complete inventory of machinery, equipment, and raw materials, with special emphasis on the latest items. My father and I showed him through the plant. He was amazed to find modern German-made machinery in such a relatively small town. He asked where and how we had got the licenses to import the machinery and was incredulous that no permits had been necessary. He left, forgetting about the keys. In contrast to the locals, this Russian Communist's behavior was courteous although cool, throughout his visit.

Another few days passed when a car pulled up in front of the house and two Russian officers and a woman got out. My father recognized the woman, Miss Czyzowicz, a pharmacist and an ardent Ukrainian nationalist. She introduced the two Russians as fellow pharmacists from Kiev. The elder of the two looked distinguished in his colonel's uniform and was obviously Jewish. His name was Leibkind. He said that he had been appointed head of the Pharmaceutical Trust for the Lwow Oblast District, with jurisdiction over pharmacies, drug wholesalers, supply houses and other establishments handling pharmacy-related articles; our factory falling into this last group. Miss Czyzowicz was to be his chief assistant. The other Russian, also Jewish, the *glavbuch* (head bookkeeper of the trust), said very little.

Miss Czyzowicz was effusive in her praise of my father before Colonel Leibkind. Leibkind next presented my father with a Russian document stamped with a round seal affirming the act of nationalization. We soon learned that no document in Russia had any validity unless stamped with this round seal. However, this often led to conflicts and comical situations, as some round seals were more important than others and agencies frequently canceled each other's markers.

And so we were nationalized for the third time.

Mother invited everyone to dinner. Soon it was apparent that Leibkind had taken a liking to Father. Cautiously, very, very cautiously, he began to drop hints that he remembered the old times, meaning before the Revolution. During dinner Miss Czyzowicz whispered into my father's ear not to worry, everything would turn out all right. It was apparently a warning that at the time we did not understand. To us it had seemed quite reasonable that we should be part of the Pharmaceutical Trust, as most of our business during the last years had been with pharmacies. We did tell them that we had been previously nationalized—twice—the second time by a representative of the Party. Leibkind advised us to ignore this. He, representing the Oblast,

outranked the locals. He added that should any other agency try to muscle in (he did not mince words), we should refer the matter to him in Lwow. We soon learned that this was easier said than done. They departed.

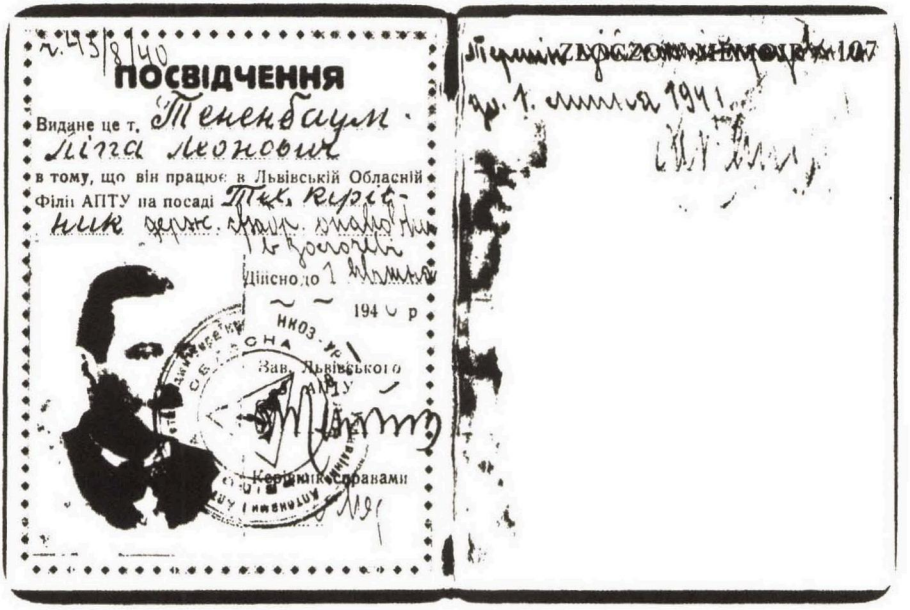
The very next day a local party dignitary returned, bringing with him a printer from the firm of Zuckerkandel. All printers in Zloczow were now to be under the jurisdiction of the Printers' Trust for the Tarnopol Oblast. All machinery and newsprint, paper, etc., were to be concentrated on Zuckerkandel's premises and all printers were to work on their presses. We discovered later that printing was under strict supervision of the NKVD in Russia, as it still is (words being as dangerous as bombs), but then we were still naïve. We explained that our shop was a component in a complex operation and could not be removed without destroying the whole. We showed him the document left by Leibkind and repeated his order to refer all matters of jurisdiction to Lwow. The official became furious. He shouted that the nationalization by the Pharmaceutical Trust was null and void. He accused us of sabotage and stormed out.

We were now caught in the middle of a tug of war between the trusts and the oblasts, and while we did not understand all the implications we recognized that we might be crushed in the process.

Another day passed and the local party man came again to present us with *his* forms, sealed with *his* seal, which declared that our factory was being nationalized by the Printers' Trust and that all previous nationalizations were invalid. We were forbidden to deal with the Pharmaceutical Trust without permission from the local Communist Party. This time this man did take our keys. His visit coincided with the first wave of widespread arrests of officials of the starostwo, policemen, and random civilians, Poles and Jews, and we dared not refuse.

Now we were nationalized for the fourth time!

Next, the party man called a meeting of the factory workers. He delivered a long harangue in Russian that few understood, extolling the benefits of ownership by the people and telling them how happy and free they were going to be from now on. He explained that all this good fortune was a credit to the Soviet Union's great leader, Stalin. He mentioned Stalin's name in every sentence, coupling it with reverent adjectives. Not only would all the workers be retained, he said, but many more would be hired. The factory would be enlarged because under the leadership of the great Stalin there was plenty of work for



Card indicating my appointment as technical director of our factory during the Soviet occupation, signed by Leibkind, 1940.

everybody in Russia. After announcing that all workers except the owners would keep their jobs, he was asked about my status by one of the foremen, Hela Oraniuk. The exclusion would not apply to me, he replied; I would be allowed to stay. He concluded by calling on the assembled workers to elect a director, advising them to choose the best man. They responded by unanimously choosing me. Taken aback, he nullified the election and called for a second vote. This time the workers elected our chief mechanic, Dziunek, a first-rate craftsman who spoke some Russian and was at the same time a Pole and a Baptist, a most unusual affiliation in Catholic Poland.

I managed to send a courier to Lwow. Leibkind, Miss Czyzowicz, supported by another Russian Oblast party member, arrived from Lwow and the three went promptly to a meeting with the local party. They returned after a few hours with news of a compromise: the locals had agreed to leave the factory under the jurisdiction of the pharmaceutical trust, but all printing equipment, type, and most of the paper would be removed and turned over to the printing trust. Back to square one. This was not a compromise at all, since the printing shop was the heart of the business and its removal would make the factory useless. Also, I guessed that paper was a sought-after commodity in Russia and that, once lost, would be difficult to replace.

Miss Czyzowicz was not a Communist; nominally a subordinate, she dominated the Russians. She was short, with heavy, slightly bowed

legs; but she was very smart, articulate, and attractive. She sided with me and won the Russians over. Leibkind declared that he would go all the way to Kiev, if necessary, to fight. Presently he went back to reopen the question with the local party. He persuaded them to accept a temporary solution that left us part of the Pharmaceutical Trust until the final decision came from Kiev. I was pleased but also apprehensive about the effect on the locals. The issue was not decided until months later, when Leibkind won.

We were nationalized for the fifth time—this time for good.

Our victory did not endear me to the Zloczow party bosses, the animosity lasting until the outbreak of the Russo-German war.

Miss Czyzowicz confirmed Dziunek as director and made me technical director. However, Dziunek was given a clear directive to leave the running of the business to me. I was thus in charge of our factory and remained so for the next four years under two occupations and several directors.

As it turned out, my position in the factory saved our lives many times.

11

Meanwhile Russian civilians were arriving in a steady stream, both men and women, party members and nonparty members—an important distinction, since the former were the policy makers while the latter were hangers-on looking for jobs. Dusty, dirty, smelly, they descended in droves from military trucks, carrying *chamadans* (cardboard suitcases) tied with rope. Many wore military tunics. Others were unbelievably shabby in threadbare suits, torn boots or rubber-soled sneakers.

When the Russian army first entered Zloczow there was a definite feeling of relief and gratitude among all of us, Poles, Jews, Ukrainians. The Poles, whose forces had been defeated and humiliated by the Germans, either in ignorance of Russia's strategy or else pretending, greeted the Russians as allies. The Ukrainians had hope (false, as it turned out) that their day had come. Anyhow, they would have been willing to make a pact with the devil himself to rid themselves of the Poles, and they greeted the Russians with national flags and flowers and were embraced by them in return. We Jews were grateful to have been saved from the Germans, and with bitter recent memories of the rule of the colonels had little reason to mourn the demise of Poland. And the small Communist troop was, of course, in a state of euphoria.

Indeed, very early in the occupation, before the arrival of the civilians, all seemed promising. We did not anticipate then that soon the friendly feelings would dissipate and that mutual distrust and hatred would deepen with every day of the occupation.

At first we pitied the Russian wretches, but the feeling soon changed to anger and fear, for they were an ugly lot. They resented us and openly showed their envy. They hated us because we lived comfortable lives, ironically, in one of the poorest countries of Europe. They were

here to stay for good—and made no bones about it. When someone dared to inquire about their appearance, they snapped back: "But we have the tanks."

From the first moment, the Russians were distrustful of us. A sergeant visited our factory to deliver a political speech to our workers. When Mother offered him a cup of tea, he accused her of trying to poison him.

The Russians could not understand the friendly relations between employers and employees, between landowners and peasants. They had evidently expected that the "downtrodden" would attack their superiors with pitchfork and torch as had happened in Russia during the Revolution. They were sorely disappointed. With very few exceptions our relations with our employees not only did not deteriorate but improved with every day of Russian rule.

The peasantry never shared in the initial good feelings toward the invaders. Deeply religious, influenced by their clergy, they distrusted and feared the Russians from the outset. I was aware of these sentiments because many of our workers came from nearby villages and would confide in me.

Zloczow, already crowded with refugees from the west, soon swelled to twice its prewar size. Soldiers were already quartered in many households on orders of the military commander. Now, in addition, all apartments had to be shared with Russian civilians. Some people were evicted altogether and their places taken by the invaders. The better apartments were inevitably occupied by party members or high officers; Our poor remained poor and were confined to their usual quarters. An average prewar five-room apartment was now shared by two or more families. A bitter joke soon made the rounds: "A Russian knocks at the door and pleads: 'Please, let me stay here with you for a while, until *you* find yourself a place to live.'"

The new arrivals were also seeking to buy goods, but they had a much harder time finding anything. The soldiers had cleaned out the shelves. Storekeepers who had managed to salvage some of their merchandise realized belatedly that rubles were worthless and refused to accept them. The Russian authorities overnight outlawed Polish zloty and permitted the exchange of only small amounts of currency.

It was preferable to share living quarters with army officers, particularly bachelors. Having officers in residence was a sort of security, because they would keep out civilians, especially the least desirable ones with families.

Russian women cooked in their rooms on kerosene burners bought from officers or soldiers. Some civilian women demanded to share the kitchen—an unattractive alternative, but that's how we had to live.

The Russian tide seemingly never ended and the city grew shabbier and shabbier. Half of Main Street was barricaded by the military authorities as protection for their midtown headquarters in the Court Building. Court records were thrown into a heap in the yard and burned in Zloczow. But as I learned from a refugee, this did not seem to be a general policy, for in other towns the records were preserved. Sentries armed with machine guns prevented traffic and pedestrians from coming near the building. The city seemed under siege, as indeed it was.

The average Russian seemed half barbarian and half petit bourgeois. They were crude. They didn't disguise their dislike of us. However, they, the women especially, soon showed a taste for Western clothing. They bought everything in sight, having learned how to strike a hard bargain. Perhaps the taste was always there, dormant, waiting to be satisfied. Plenty of new and secondhand clothing was available. Also, we parted with our better clothing because we were afraid to look conspicuous. But even in our everyday clothing we looked opulent to the Russian eye. A newspaper photograph showing some of our people greeting the liberating army was captioned, "Dressed in their holiday best."

As for us, we sold our furniture because we had been evicted from our apartment into a tiny two-room flat that could not hold all our possessions, and besides, we needed money for food, which was becoming scarce and very expensive.

Our ejection from the apartment was effected in stages. We had a five-room apartment on the second floor of our house. The Brandes family occupied the other four rooms on the same floor. The factory took up the entire first floor, the basement, and two adjacent buildings.

The Brandes family was evicted first by the local Communists during the first month of the nationalization. We were permitted to stay, perhaps because I was still working. About a month after the Young Communist League was founded, Chana Letzter, its representative, who hated me and my family, demanded that we give up two rooms for the use of Krasnyj Kutok, a cultural center. She chose the two largest and best rooms. We were left with two smaller rooms and the kitchen. It was still bearable, especially after my parents moved to Lwow. At the beginning of spring 1940, we were forced to give up the rest of the

apartment and were lucky enough to find a small two-room apartment on Glinianska Street, in the same house as our friends the Zwerdlings.

We sold our dining room furniture to an air force colonel for two thousand rubles, enough money for several weeks' food. One item we managed to hold on to was our radio, our sole link to the outside world. One day, before we finally moved, Rose Dacko, one of our foremen, came to warn me that our enemy, Chana Letzter, had an eye on our radio. We wrapped it up in a blanket and Rose kept it hidden for us until we were settled in the new apartment.

The peasants, as usual in such a situation, got rich; they either sold their precious food at exorbitant prices or else bartered it for expensive clothing or utensils.

* * *

Months into the Russian occupation, unemployment in Zloczow rose. Russian propagandists proclaimed that there was no unemployment in Russia—on the contrary, there were labor shortages and people were needed to work the coal mines in the Donbas in the Ukraine. There were promises of high wages and excellent living conditions. Some people volunteered. A few, not too many, were enticed by the rosy promises; others obeyed the call of adventure, still others went because they wanted to see with their own eyes how things looked within the mysterious neighboring country. A country still an enigma to us, as the border could only be crossed by means of a special pass, hard to come by.

One volunteer was Abromko, a young worker from our factory, a poor orphan who lived with his old aunt. My mother used to give him supper every night after work. Another was the adventurous son of our partner Lonek, who had no intention of working anywhere, but who took along a handful of watches that he hoped to peddle in Russia at a great profit.

Weeks passed. One evening the door to our kitchen opened and a young man appeared. We did not recognize him at first. He was emaciated, grimy with coal dust, his coat in tatters. He dropped to his knees and started to kiss my mother's hands and feet. "Mrs. Tennenbaum," he cried, "please forgive me." My mother, stunned, recognized Abromko. "What am I to forgive you for?" she asked. Abromko could not compose himself for several moments. Finally, he stammered that he had not eaten for several days.

Mother helped him wash and served him some food which he wolfed

down. Little by little his story came out. He said that he did not realize how well-off he had been and that he was a gullible fool to have volunteered for the coal mines. The work had been unbearably hard; workers were being driven to exhaustion. Food was scarce and bad, and the living quarters assigned to the volunteers were not fit for a dog. He had been hungry all the time. He begged me to let him come back to the factory, which I did.

His experience did not deter him, however, from joining the Komsomol, the Young Communist League, when a chapter was formed in the factory. When I asked him why, he replied that members of the Komsomol got better jobs. Still, he remained loyal to me and let me know whenever anyone from the Komsomol plotted against me.

Lonek, too, returned. He had sold his watches and made an even greater profit than expected. He also told horror stories of the poverty that reigned in the Ukraine. Before long, one by one, all the volunteers had trickled back.

A young physician, Dr. Maiblum, was taken on a tour of hospitals in Kiev. Such tours of carefully screened workers were organized by the party. Similar tours were made up for peasants to induce them to join *kolkhozes*. The doctor was shown clean rooms, with old and obsolete equipment, but patients praised the treatment and general conditions in the hospital. Most of the doctors were women. Dr. Maiblum noted, however, that many did not have a medical degree but were feldshers, medical assistants of a sort. In search of a washroom, he left the group and found himself in an entirely different setting, an unbelievably crowded room with dirty floors, beds without sheets, patients unkempt and unwashed. An angry and terrified tour guide whisked him back to his group and watched him like a hawk for the rest of the tour.

* * *

The Polish police had been disbanded soon after the occupation and those policemen who remained had been arrested. In their place a militia of local peasant youth was formed. (The word "police" is avoided in Russia, although the police function remains.) At first a Ukrainian nationalist, a well-known anti-Semite, was appointed as its commander. He, however, double-crossed the Russians and ran away to the German-occupied part of Poland. In general the Russians favored Ukrainians in civil appointments, and many of them later served the Germans, often in the same jobs. We used to say in bitter jest that the Ukrainians had caps with double visors—one with a five-

pointed star and the other with a swastika, so that to serve the changing masters all that they had to do was to turn the cap around.

Before the war, Zloczow's police force consisted of a commander, a noncommissioned officer, and about a dozen policemen. The chief of police before the war was Karol Skrzeszewski, who was later to play a big part in our lives. Now we had a force of several hundred of the "people's militia," with a number of Russian captains, lieutenants, and noncommissioned officers. In addition there was the dreaded NKVD, some in uniforms, others in plain clothes, watching over our well-being. Informers also infiltrated into each factory and establishment. More militiamen were posted in adjacent villages and hamlets. In short, there were literally thousands watching our every move and listening to our every word.

The first wave of mass arrests came. Always at night. The starosta, the mayor, the judges, the police (except for those smart enough to have shed their uniforms and disappear). Many civil officials, prominent Zionists and, what scared us most, many people at random, whose arrests were a puzzle to us, were herded into cattle cars and deported deep inside Russia, to Siberia, to Kazakhstan and to other distant places. Families were broken up, man and wife separated from each other and from their children. The deportations lasted a few days and then ceased as suddenly as they had begun. Several months passed before we received our first news from the deportees, since the mail was very slow. No one arrested by the NKVD ever returned home, and no public trial was ever held in Zloczow.

After that first wave of deportations, the appearance of empty cattle cars at the railroad station would create a panic, cause people to go into hiding. We had our suitcases packed just in case. Many prominent citizens disappeared from Zloczow to go to Lwow or other big cities, hoping they would not be hunted down.

Most of these deportees as well as victims of later roundups escaped Hitler's gas chambers and survived, although some died in exile. This offered the basis to the myth promulgated by Soviet sympathizers in America that Russia tried to help the Jews to escape the Germans, but that they refused. Therefore it was their own fault that they perished.

* * *

After the deportations we considered it best to leave Zloczow, so I decided to go to Lwow to look around. The railroad was still closed to

civilian traffic, but one means of transportation was a dilapidated bus still operated by its original owner. It ran infrequently and without a set schedule. Alternately, one could hitch a ride on a military truck and pay the fare with a few rubles, a bottle of vodka or a handful of cigarettes.

I looked first for the bus, but it had already left. I then flagged down a military truck already loaded with a score of passengers. There was room enough for me because the trucks rarely carried cargo on their return eastward. They were instead loaded with furniture and all the other booty being shipped back to Russia. The passengers sat on crates nailed to the floorboards of the vehicle.

On our way we passed a number of military convoys. The road, poorly maintained even before the war, was being repaired by army personnel, but they merely filled the huge craters left by heavy bombs, leaving open the potholes made by smaller bombs or artillery shells. Many times the truck had to leave the road to avoid the holes. The driver, a happy-go-lucky fellow, tipsy from the liquid fares he had collected, paid little attention to the holes and drove merrily over them. Frequently we soared with all four wheels aloft. I was sure that the truck was either going to flip over or else come apart at any moment. Surely we would all get killed. We held on to one another for dear life, and some of us prayed. Finally we did arrive in Lwow, the driver grinning broadly as he drove off. It was several minutes before I could walk.

The trams weren't running; I started to walk slowly toward midtown. Bedlam seemed to have struck the town as in Zloczow, only on a magnified scale. A few stores were open and crowded with soldiers. I stopped at a couple of pharmacies to rest and to say hello to old friends. Everyone was very busy. Soldiers were buying all kinds of medications, with and without prescriptions. My pharmacist friends reported that Leibkind had come to see them and that he seemed to be a decent man. The general situation was similar to that in Zloczow. Deportations had taken place and now ceased; a number of pharmacists had been deported.

I proceeded on my way. The city had suffered only minor damage from a few scattered hits in the midtown area, but friends told me that the beautiful main railroad station, as well as the suburban stations, had been bombed repeatedly and were severely damaged.

The charming city of Lwow was looking as shabby and as gray as Zloczow. The streets were overflowing with soldiers, Russian civilians

and local residents, the latter seemingly wandering aimlessly. I stepped into one of my favorite restaurants. It was crowded with Russian soldiers and civilians. That once elegant place was dirty and smelled of sweat and tar. The tables had no tablecloths. I had to pay in advance for my meal. After an hour's wait, a dirty, disheveled waiter brought me a piece of sausage, the only food available. Both plate and food looked so filthy that I could not eat; still hungry, I left the restaurant.

I felt very weak. I thought I was weak from the torture of the truck ride and from hunger. I stopped at a public toilet and there I fainted. When I regained consciousness, I was lying on the floor. Nobody paid me any attention; perhaps, they thought I was drunk. I managed to get up slowly, but I had to sit down because I felt very dizzy. It took a while before I gained strength to stand up and try to walk. I felt that I would die unless I got home soon.

I decided to walk to the bus stop, only about half a mile away, in the hope of getting a ride home. It took me almost an hour to reach it. To my delight and relief the bus was there when I arrived. The driver knew me well. When I told him how bad I felt, he gave me a seat next to him and promised to drive me home rather than leave me at the station.

Back home in Zloczow, I sat down on the sidewalk in front of the door while the driver went upstairs to fetch help. My wife and parents came running. I was carried to bed, where I lay semi-conscious. Soon several doctors were gathered around me; they said I had suffered a severe internal hemorrhage. Later, I was told that I had developed a high fever. I lost consciousness, and was given blood and glucose infusions to keep me alive.

I remember my mother crying. After two days, I was out of danger. The doctors said it was a miracle that I survived and credited my wife's energy and devotion, since she was by my side for the entire forty-eight hours, nursing me without stop. My uncle, who was my physician, slept in my room and gave me injections (of cardiac stimulants, I suppose) whenever my pulse weakened.

A few days passed and I was finally able to resume running the factory from my bed. Miss Czyzowicz made a special trip from Lwow to visit me. After three weeks I was up and around. During my illness, Zloczow had become a Russian city.

12

The Soviet government issued a communiqué, in reply to a "demand" from the people of the Western Ukraine, announcing that a plebiscite would be held on the incorporation of the liberated part of the Ukraine into the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. (The Soviet Union is officially composed of a number of "independent" republics and "autonomous" regions, a fiction that the American government accepted when it agreed to give the Russians three seats in the United Nations.)

The ballot was naturally open and the result predictable. Over 99 percent voted "Yes." I sometimes wonder why the elections in the Soviet Union and its satellites are not claimed to be unanimous. I suppose that this other fiction of a handful of "Nos" is supposed to make the officially announced results more plausible.

Three Russians came to my bedside to receive my vote, because even the infirm had to be counted. After I put my ballot, marked "Yes," of course, in the box, they asked me what was the matter with me. When I told them, one of them said: "Oh yes, you have cancer, but don't worry, in Russia we have a cure for cancer and you will be healed in no time." Fortunately, I did not have to put his statement to the test.

After the vote, by which we had so enthusiastically and unanimously sealed our fate, the government declared that we would now be issued passports—a great privilege that would make us the envy of all the world which was still awaiting liberation. The Bolsheviks slightly changed the old czarist proverb that a Russian consisted of a body, a soul, and a passport. The soul was eliminated and the passport put ahead of the body.

We were duly photographed and fingerprinted. We then learned that passports of manufacturers, landowners and other "enemies of the people" were to be marked with the infamous and dreaded Paragraph

14 of the Russian code which made them second-class citizens. Bearers of such passports were restricted in their movements, could not live in Oblast cities, could not live in cities 100 kilometers or less from any border, and were not allowed to travel. However, travel was restricted for all; in order to travel, a citizen had to obtain a permit from his place of work.

We were very worried about my parents, obvious candidates for that distinction. But a miracle happened. By a quirk of Russian bureaucracy, although their passports stated their profession as manufacturer, the loathsome paragraph was missing. On the other hand, the passport of my father's bankrupt partner did contain it, and ironically my wife and I also had the paragraph on our passports even though we were registered as clerks. I've always assumed, but naturally could not prove, that my election by the workers as director had something to do with my receiving this dubious honor. Anyhow, I was branded and stranded.

Another outrage was the listing of our nationality as Yevrey (Jew). Even in anti-Semitic Poland we could choose to list ourselves on our identity cards as Jewish or Polish. Though there was no Jewish republic, that listing did set us apart from other nationalities. (There was a so-called Jewish autonomous region, Birobidjan, which the Soviets often discussed with the West, but we never heard of it.)

* * *

We held a family council and decided that it would be wise for my parents to take advantage of the bureaucratic error and move to Lwow. My father was restless, anyway, with nothing to do. As I have mentioned, the Russian, Leibkind, had taken a liking to him and the partiality was reinforced by a couple of expensive gifts, a gold watch and some bolts of cloth.

He appointed Father manager of pharmaceutical packaging. The gifts were only partly responsible for my father's promotion. Leibkind once casually remarked to Father that he preferred to have former *khazains* (bosses) in managerial positions as they were more reliable and competent than those promoted from the ranks of workers.

My parents moved to a tiny room and kitchen in Lwow, hoping that they had slipped away from watchful eyes of the NKVD. With the benefit of hindsight, I wish that my parents had been less "lucky" and had been deported to Siberia, since that way they might have survived the war.

We moved too, as I described previously, to a small apartment on Glinianska Street. Factory workers helped with the final move, and many had tears in their eyes. In order to have the whole apartment for ourselves, we registered three families in it; the four of us, my mother-in-law, and our cook, Hanka, who had refused to leave us. I gave her a nominal job in the factory, since no one was allowed to have servants.

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Now that we had enthusiastically chosen Russian citizenship, the authorities set in motion a crash program to integrate us into their system both politically and economically. This proved much more difficult than securing a nearly unanimous vote. We were deluged with propaganda, and also threatened. Every Russian was a propagandist, and there were Russians everywhere, in official and unofficial positions.

In pre-war Poland a staff of no more than fifty had administered both the county and city of Zloczow. This now was reorganized into two levels of authority, one administrative and the other representing the Communist Party. The party held the real power.

The city and the rest of the county were separated into two districts, each two-tiered and each employing several hundred people. Thus there were four administrative entities—a bureaucratic nightmare. Each of the four entities frequently collided and interfered with the affairs of the others.

The party was headed by three secretaries, numbered one, two and three—number one being the chief; there were also secretaries with special functions, most important being the "agit-prop," responsible for agitation and propaganda.

The work of agit-props was supported by newspapers and radio. Soon loudspeakers were installed on squares and street corners, blaring propaganda day and night. I still feel discomfort when exposed to loudspeakers in stores and shopping centers. Even though it is mostly music, I consider it an invasion of privacy, a coercion, reminiscent of the Russians.

At the time few Russians had private radios. We, however, were fortunate to have managed to conceal our precious radio, and even though the foreign stations were mercilessly jammed, we were able to get some news from the West. Listening to foreign stations was strictly forbidden.

In Zloczow, the most visible official was the third secretary, a man

named Nazimov. He was short and squat (most Russians seemed to be short and squat), and lame, allegedly from a wound suffered during the Bolshevik Revolution. He confiscated one of the most luxurious apartments in Zloczow from its owner, whom he deported to Siberia. He sported an expensive gold wristwatch and a leather coat, the latter a status symbol of the Russian elite. Three small tanneries in Zloczow were producting box-calf, a kind of shoe leather too stiff for coats. But in response to demand, it was used for coats and the Russians just loved them.

Nazimov's wife worked for agit-prop, and as bad luck would have it, was attached to our factory. She was a pest, ugly and vicious.

Comrade Nazimova first appeared dressed in a military tunic and wearing a babushka, the headdress of the Russian peasant. She soon acquired Western clothing, but never discarded her babushka, one of the few Russian women to remain faithful to that style.

She also lectured incessantly. She raved at us for lack of spittoons which she said was *"nekulturno"* (uncultured). Why did we knock at a door before entering? "You got business, you walk in, you don't, stay out."

She called meetings after work, first ordering the gate closed so that nobody could escape. She harangued us for hours in a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian that few could understand. She mentioned J.V. Stalin with every phrase; I expected her to genuflect whenever she pronounced the holy name. She warned against spies and saboteurs. She hated me; after every meeting she sought me out to say: "We are watching you! Don't forget it! Ever!" Until she was superseded by a Russian director of the factory, she was in complete charge of us and our lives. The workers hated her more than any of the other Russians.

Other Russians dropped in. We had created another status symbol, notebooks with owners' names printed on them, which were soon much sought after. The Russians were strictly forbidden to demand things from us, and we were also forbidden to comply, but we all disobeyed the rules. It could have meant jail for me, but it bought peace in the short run, so I took the chance.

However, no bribe was large enough to prevent them from lecturing. Comrade Nazimova was not the only one to visit and lecture us. How the Russians loved to deliver speeches! They never tired of it. They lectured us on everything from manners to political conscience, from economics to how to make paper boxes. All one had to do was evoke the teachings of the great comrade, J. V. Stalin, and the problems were

instantly solved. It was always J. V. Stalin, not the name Stalin by itself.

Father, in his usual dry and succinct style, nicknamed the Russian officials *untraibers* (slave drivers, in Yiddish). The term suited them, and that's what we called them among ourselves.

Much has been written about the Russians since the end of World War II. The Americans in particular have an almost insatiable curiosity about them, are eager to believe the good, and are skeptical about the bad. Vladimir Voinovich in *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin* gives an accurate account of Soviet reality, which supports our experiences.

The Russian newspapers gave little news. The front pages carried pronouncements or edicts of the party and government, and exhortative articles, for example: "Let's fight for a larger output of milk from our cows," or "More heroic efforts in breeding pigs." If these are not exact quotations, they are close approximations.

The two major national newspapers, *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* carried an occasional bit of slanted foreign news. Reading between the lines, however, we began to get at least the Russian view of the truth. One unusual Russian told us a joke: "There is no truth in *Pravda* (truth) and no news in *Izvestia* (news)." In addition, there were regional, oblast, county and city publications which reprinted items from the official press and dealt with local issues, often attacking individuals or institutions. Each factory had to display a bulletin board, also a means of attack or criticism. I wrote most of the items for our bulletin board, thus trying to make sure that all was praise and nothing adverse was ever said. However, I did not always succeed. I was occasionally attacked through unsigned pieces and suspected Goral, the second mechanic, or Letzter. Subscription to the local paper was mandatory, but *Pravda* and *Izvestia* were available only to party members. All the papers were in great demand, not necessarily for reading but because they were usefhl as cigarette wrappers and toilet paper. Russian radio merely repeated the newspapers and we rarely listened to it voluntarily.

13

To keep the print shop in his jurisdiction, Leibkind was forced to make several concessions. We had to melt all Latin type and convert it into Cyrillic. (I managed to keep some Latin type, although it was strictly forbidden and defiance might have cost me my life.) We had to turn over a substantial part of our paper stock to the Printing Trust. We had to put bars on all windows in the factory. And the NKVD placed an armed guard, around the clock, at our gate. Furthermore, the local party was to supervise our political purity and appoint the director of the factory.

Dziunek, the first director elected by the workers, soon lost his job, which was given temporarily to our second mechanic, a shrewd, conniving Ukrainian named Grzegorz Goral, who we suspected was a party spy. He was universally disliked; Miss Czyzowicz especially detested him, even though he always kissed her hand. He lasted only a short time. (Goral survived the war and came to America; he looked me up when an article about one of my daughters appeared in the *New York Times*. He had become a Baptist preacher in his own church in Avoca, Pennsylvania.)

Ultimately we were given a Russian party member as director.

Czyzowicz brought large production orders for the factory and in Leibkind's name promised large shipments of paper, cardboard, glue, ink, and whatever we might need from Russia. I prepared a list but was skeptical, given the Russians' performance in supplying or rather in failing to supply the city with necessities. We waited for months; what finally arrived was short in quantity and worthless in quality.

Czyzowicz told me that we were the only printing shop in Russia outside the jurisdiction of the NKVD. I didn't know if that was accurate, but it was true that all the duplicating machines in Zloczow were confiscated and that a special permit was required for owning a

typewriter. Any tool that facilitated the distribution of information was considered as dangerous as dynamite.

* * *

It did not take long for the Russians to acquire a taste for our ways. Soon, while the Soviet hierarchy preached communism, the Russians we met in private never even mentioned the word. They were interested in material goods, clothing, food, furniture, and—oh yes—watches and leather coats. They were crazy about gold. They would buy anything made of gold—watches, jewelry, but especially gold coins in which a lively black market developed. The most popular were five- and ten-ruble pieces from czarist times called *swinki* (piglets), possibly because the czar's face on these coins resembled a pig's. There was also a great demand for Austrian, German, and French currency and American dollars. Many Russians were unable to determine whether the gold they bought was genuine; indeed, a lot of junk was sold to them by unscrupulous dealers.

The majority of the black marketeers were refugees from western Poland. In their hasty escape, they could carry very little baggage and so naturally concentrated on valuables, mostly gold, a currency accepted by all, everywhere. As with other black-market activities, the fear of prison or even death was no deterrent.

In spite of claims to the contrary, like all societies Russia is divided into many classes. The highest class, the Russian Brahmins, are the party secretaries and, in war time, the top military figures. Next come the secret police—the NKVD, the managers and higher military officers. The rank and file of the party, workers and clerks, follow in descending order to the very bottom, occupied by the pariahs, the *Kolkhoznicka*, or members of the communal farms, who were highly touted in propaganda but held in contempt by other Russians. "*Eto kolkhoznik*," was used as a derisive description.

One advantage in being a Russian Brahmin was that it gave access to stores selling scarce consumer goods. The Russian upper classes avidly bought goods not available at home and soon became more bourgeois than we. The women acquired servants for their new flats and insisted on being called *pani* (madam). Our cook once addressed a Russian woman as *tovarishka* (comrade), to be reprimanded: "*Kakay ya tebia tovarishka*" (What kind of a comrade am I to you?).

However, as they could not change us, the Russians could not

change themselves. They did learn to dress better but still we could always tell a Russian a mile away.

Some Russians did not fit into the mold. A colonel named Spiridoff, who bought our dining room furniture, was immaculately dressed and well-mannered. Another impeccable major came to look at the machinery at the factory, claiming that his father had owned a printing shop in Moscow. There was also a woman engineer from Leningrad, Sapuchina, the head *normirovchik* (person in charge of setting production norms), in Zloczow. She was very pleasant, well-dressed and, best of all, she approved everything we did. She also detested the Russian managers, argued with some of them, and told me: "Please do not judge us by these types." When I asked her why she had come from Leningrad to Zloczow, she replied: "Because life here is so much better."

The Russians did not like manual work and maneuvered to get jobs in the vast party and government apparatus, or edged themselves into managerial and office jobs. However, what they liked best was to order us, the conquered people, around. Father commented: "Before we were slapped around by the *Potockis* (an aristocratic Polish family name), but now it is the *Ivans* (simpletons, in Polish).

* * *

One day a Russian appeared and introduced himself as our new director. Comrade L. V. Narayevski was an ethnic Ukrainian, a party member in his late thirties, who looked ten years older. He was an appointee of the local party. I had expected the worst, but it turned out for the best. Narayevski was barely literate, but he was intelligent and his peasant cunning made up for what he lacked in educatiion and managerial experience. His previous job had been running a *kolkhos*. On his first day with us he told me: "I know all about you, but have no fear. You keep running the factory as if it were your own and I will protect you." He kept his word, never interfered, and supported me against party officials. He was a welcome change from Goral, who had deferred strictly to party rules, reported trivia, and had become dangerous.

Leibkind, and particularly Miss Czyzowicz, who detested Goral, accepted Narayevski with relief. It was easier for them to deal with someone who had some clout against the local party. I told Miss Czyzowicz in confidence about my conversation with Narayevski. In

time, the new director and I became friends. Goral was returned to his previous position of second mechanic, where he became sickeningly obsequious.

* * *

We had been able to manage the factory almost in the old way, before nationalization, but at one point we were ordered to convert our organization and operations to their system. First and foremost, we had to submit a *Plan*. We also had to establish production norms for each machine and each worker. The Plan was all-important; everyone and everything had to defer to it. I thought it nonsense but did not dare to question orders, so I worked out a Plan and norms. The workers cooperated beautifully and precisely met the quotas assigned—with one exception. I had given a job to a former maid from our household, Hanka (not to be confused with "blind" Hanka, our cook). This Hanka was not too bright, so I gave her the simplest possible assignment, pushing the pedal of a punching press. I calculated a norm for her for this operation, but she fooled me. In a short time, working without a moment's rest, she managed to double the output, thus becoming the first and only Stakhanovetz in our factory. The other workers cursed her, afraid that now they would come under increased pressure and have their own norms increased. For me this was a disaster, since the machine used a special grade of paper left over from the old days and unavailable in Russia. Narayevski and I conferred and decided to announce that in recognition of her feat Hanka was being promoted to a job requiring greater skill. There, she could not exceed the norm and caused no further problems.

However, Hanka did have her moment of glory—a picture of her working at the machine and a story about her appeared in our local paper. Since she was the first *Stakhanovetz* in the entire city, some of her glory rubbed off on us as well, enhancing our already excellent standing.

In order to implement the Plan, we of course needed a larger staff. The number of employees had decreased to eighty-six from the prewar high of one hundred, as many of the peasant women stayed home rather than work for the meager wages. Also, our output was less than half the prewar level. The output per worker also declined, as some of the best workers were promoted to foremen and relegated to paperwork. We had had foremen before the war, but they did the manual

work as well. Before the war, we had run the office informally; it was a family operation with my father, his partner, myself, a bookkeeper, a girl-Friday and a part-time typist. Now we acquired a manager, a technical manager (me), a *normirovchik*, a *planowyk* a purchasing agent, four foremen, a head bookkeeper, two assistant bookkeepers, as well as two clerks with rather hazy duties. The *normirowchik* and *planowyk* were party appointees, but I was able to make Wilek Hessel the purchasing agent and Edzio Reichard, a cousin, one of the clerks. We hired a Russian youngster, Wassily, as our driver, although our car was inoperative. The new staff kept busy filling out daily, weekly, and monthly reports and answering a deluge of questionnaires from the party and other organs of bureaucracy. Still, we were relatively understaffed compared to other businesses in Zloczow where the percentage of clerical workers rose to between one-third and one-half of the labor force. Well, that was one way of solving the unemployment problem!

While I was quick to learn the ways of the Soviet bureaucracy, our prewar bookkeeper, Jakub (Kuba) Henis, could not adjust. He was terrified of being jailed any day, because, being unable to grasp the Russian way, he was in constant trouble with the bank. Although we had a large bank account, we could not touch our money without submitting all kinds of reports and statistics, and Henis simply could not master the routine. One day, fortunately for Henis, Narayevski introduced a gaunt Russian, dressed in military slacks and a worn civilian jacket, saying this was our new head bookkeeper. Henis became his assistant and could now enjoy some peace.

The newcomer's name was Khokhlov; he was not a party member. I suspected that he had lost his membership in one of the many *czystkas* (repeated rituals of cleansing the Communist Party). Furthermore, his sallow complexion hinted at time spent in jail. We learned little about his past except that he had once worked as a bookkeeper in the Ukraine. He too was a godsend who knew his way around the bureaucracy; from the day of his arrival we had no further trouble with the bank. Soon, he was joined by his wife. Henis told me that Khokhlov's operating methods made his hair stand on end. Khokhlov pulled figures out of his sleeve and made up statistics out of his head. Now, whenever I read in the *New York Times* the solemn renderings of Soviet production figures, I think of Khokhlov.

* * *

To me, the organization of the Russian Communist Party resembles

the Catholic hierarchy, while its philosophy has a Judaic tint. There is a Holy Trinity: Marx, Engels, and Lenin. The first secretary of the party (J.V. Stalin in our time), is the pope, i.e., infallible. He is chosen by the Politburo, the college of cardinals, who are themselves papal appointees. The works of Karl Marx are analogous to the Bible, while the interpretations by Lenin and Stalin resemble the Talmud. There is even an analogue of the Shulkhan Arukh, the abridged interpretation of Jewish laws, in the short history of the Communist Party, whose language is definitely *pilpul* (hair-splitting). Apostates' names are never mentioned except in derision; deviations are punished by banishment to Siberia and, during Stalin's reign of terror, the Stienka (execution wall).

The indocrination to communism starts early when children are organized into Pioneers, analogous to boy scouts in the West. Then comes the Komsomol, the Young Communist League. The Communist Party is the next level. The factory had only a single member, Narayevski, who was also the secretary of the cell. To launch the Komsomol, the organizers brought the first members from outside the factory, who were appointed also the *normirovszczyk* and the *planowyk*. It was Nazimova who recruited two additional members from the factory, Chana Letzter and Milek Krumstick, a printer's apprentice. The two came from very poor Jewish families and held their jobs because we pitied them, not because they deserved it. They were poor workers. They were disliked by the other workers and returned the sentiment with interest. Milek was simply nasty, but Chana was dangerous. She also hated me particularly, and while Goral was still director, repeatedly demanded that he fire me. He wouldn't have minded, but his hands were tied by Lwow. When she tried the same suggestion with Narayevski he told her that this was none of her business, but he warned me to be careful. She was the darling of Nazimova and, we suspected, an informer for the party and the NKVD.

For some months the new Komsomol group remained limited to four members, despite great pressure on the workers. Even Hanka, the Stakhanovetz, did not join. Finally, after much soul-searching, Abromko did join; having escaped the coal mines, he was always afraid of being sent back, and belonging to the Komsomol offered protection. A few others, all Jews, followed him to protect their jobs, since of the twelve workers fired, ten were Jews. A year later, the party enlisted its first Catholic, Miecio, a simple peasant boy with strong muscles and pigeon-sized brain. I do not know what he was promised or what he expected by joining, but he was obviously disappointed when he was

made to stay in his low-level job at the same salary. Henryk Sienkiewicz, in *In the Desert and Wilderness*, describes an African native who, having converted to Christianity, is bitterly disappointed at remaining black since she had expected to turn white; that must have been also poor Miecio's feeling. But that was not the end of his troubles.

Next, the other Catholic workers in the factory offered a Mass for Miecio's soul. This naturally got back to Comrade Nazimova and to the NKVD with some repercussions, which I shall describe later when I deal with my encounters with this illustrious institution.

However, the Mass incident halted further attempts to recruit more youngsters into the Komsomol. The Catholics would not join, and obviously the party felt that the Jewish quota was more than filled—an unsatisfactory situation from their point of view.

To Chana's great chagrin, one of the newcomers, a young Jewish woman from a middle-class family, a *gimnazjum* graduate, became the secretary of the Komsomol. She was the only Jewish person I knew who married a Russian, an army lieutenant.

Paralleling the Communist Party substructures, the factory, like all other work places, had a union, the *profspilka*, which represented all workers in the plant, from the director to the floor sweeper. Its power was nil; its function was to help the management. There was no right to strike. Since the workers owned the factory, how could they strike against themselves? It had authority in trivial matters such as vacations and other privileges, organizing civil defense (taken very seriously), selection of assistant judges, pressuring the workers to volunteer for overtime duty without pay.

The volunteer work, called *sobotnik*, was highly unpopular among our people; at first, very few cooperated. The extra work was organized for Sundays with the dual purpose of interfering with church attendance and leaving the people as little free time as possible lest they use it for such dangerous activity as thinking. But soon pressure and threats made the volunteer work universal.

Membership in the unions was not automatic. Those with nonproletarian background or who for some reason displeased the party were barred. An applicant had to appear before the full membership to give an account of his background and to repent for true or imaginary offenses. I was rejected several times. The meetings were supervised by a Russian or a local Communist who invariably spoke up against me, finding this or that fault. The workers were too intimidated to vote for a black sheep. I was not admitted until Narayevski became director and sponsored me.

Beyond reviewing applications for membership, the meetings were devoted to exhortations to work harder. Members were challenged to step forward and pledge to meet and exceed their norms. It was just like a gospel meeting.

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Schools were reopened and reorganized. The official language in the schools was Ukrainian, except for special schools for Russian children where Russian was the official language. To our great surprise, there was also a school for Polish children, with Polish the official language. This was where we sent our children, as did most Jewish parents in Zloczow. Our explanation was that our children neither spoke nor understood Ukrainian, but it was a tacit sign from us that we did not recognize the permanency of the Russian occupation of Poland. There is no doubt that the authorities understood the meaning of that gesture. Perhaps that was why, in 1944, Stalin allowed us to leave Russia.

Russian was the mandatory second language in all the schools. And so was the indoctrination into the Communist faith. Imagine our feelings when our own daughters came home one day and displayed red scarves, telling us proudly that they had been accepted into the Pioneers. Soon they too were praising the great J.V. Stalin. We realized that they were only children and that we would have to be careful about what we said in their presence.

The two privately owned lending libraries and bookstores were shut down, and all books were transferred to a central library which was established in the Sokol Building, renamed the Red Center, where all cultural activities were concentrated. The library was closed for several months to allow the censor to review its contents. When it reopened, practically all books by Polish and Western authors were missing. There was still a sprinkling of Russian classics and a few books by Western writers, notably Jack London. There were rows and rows of books on communism, complete editions of Lenin and Stalin, Marx, and many copies of a book called *The Short History of the All-Union Communist Party*, written in deadly boring language. This was mandatory reading, but few, including Russians, actually read it. It was a panegyric to Stalin who was credited with all political, military, and economic victories of the Soviet regime. Even Lenin's successes, it was hinted, were due to his listening to the advice of his comrade-in-arms, the wisest man on earth, J.V. Stalin. Dissidents like Trotzky were either ignored or denounced as traitors.

When the librarian, a woman from agit-prop, noticed that the only books in circulation were those by the few Western authors or Russian classics, she removed them from the shelves. Thereafter we stopped frequenting the library and the official books remained untouched, collecting dust.

Our reading consisted of privately owned books that were passed from reader to reader and were highly treasured. One of the most popular was Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind.* Also highly cherished were copies of Polish and Western newspapers and magazines, particularly the excellent Polish literary magazine *Wiadomosci Literackie* (Literary News). These old books and bound magazines, as well as the radio, were our remaining link with the West.

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The fall of 1939 saw other momentous changes in Eastern Europe. After having whetted their appetite by swallowing half of Poland, the Russians turned their attention to the three Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which were overrun—or as the Russians preferred to say—liberated and incorporated into the Soviet Union, their populations having also voted unanimously in favor. The standard of living in these countries, particularly in Estonia, was higher than in Poland, so one can imagine how that must have struck the Russian invaders.

Rumania was a watershed; only a slice of it went to Russia. The Germans, having concluded a friendship pact with that country, warned the Russians that "enough is enough."

We were able to hear German radio broadcasts that were jammed less that the British and French, and we could judge that the Russians had overstepped the terms of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, that the Germans were increasingly unhappy with the change in boundaries, and that contrary to the official Russian claims, all was not well between the two partners.

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At the onset of the winter of 1939-40, the Russians turned their attention to Finland, demanding that the Finns cede to them the peninsula and port of Vyborg, which they insisted were essential to the defense of Leningrad. To the consternation of the Russians and the

admiration to the entire world, this tiny, heroic nation refused. The Russians attacked and initially suffered a series of humiliating defeats. We cheered and prayed with all our hearts for the Finns—and the Russians knew it.

There were rumors that American and other Western countries were planning to aid Finland. However, the Finns, like the Czechs, were ultimately abandoned to their own resources. Unlike Czechoslovakia, the Finns fought for three months against overwhelming forces. They succumbed only after the Russians threw in their best, battle-tested Siberian army. The Finns were forced to accept "generous" terms and had to surrender Vyborg to the Russians, but at least they were able to maintain some autonomy. Our hopes, which had been lifted during this short war, sank to a new low.

It is an ironic, tragic twist of history that Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is the site of the diplomatic surrender of the West to the Russians thirty-five years later.

Russian armies passed through Zloczow on the way to other posts and some detachments became our factory's best customers, even though this was illegal. They paid cash without haggling and were delighted with the quality of our products. Later Khokhlov handled the transactions and never deposited the cash in the bank; he used the money to buy on the black market necessary items needed for production. That was a typical transaction; "*Na levo*," as the Russians call it, forbidden but necessary.

It was in such a deal that I had my first frightening experience with a Russian officer who was also a Jew. Unlike the Polish army, there were many Jewish officers in the Soviet army, some of whom admitted they were Jewish and others who did not. Cautious as we were, we were inclined to trust the Jews, our brothers. One of these Jewish officers, a captain Grynboim, and his wife were quartered with our friends, the Schotzes. We became acquainted with them; the couple freely acknowledged that they were Jews. They seemed to be cultured people and were very pleasant. The woman played the piano well and entertained on a few occasions. Grynboim was the paymaster of his unit.

One day he ordered some forms from us and was pleased with the results. He continued to place orders. When the war with Finland broke out, his unit was suddenly sent to the front. The materials we were printing were not ready when needed. He came to the factory himself, asked for me, and without acknowledging me, drew his gun, pressed it against my stomach, accused me of sabotage, and threatened

to shoot me. I was more stunned than frightened. I called the foreman and told him to work all night on the captain's order. Grynboim then calmed down, holstered his gun and departed, but left a sentry behind. Next morning he appeared again, picked up his forms, paid, and departed without an explanation, apology or good-bye. I warned my friends the Schotzes, who were as shocked as I had been. We were all very suspicious of the wife and were much relieved when she, too, left soon after. We never saw either of them again.

14

Once the Russo-Finnish war was over the Russians again turned their attention to us. In Zloczow, only the major factories and businesses had so far been nationalized, while the small shopkeepers and artisans had been left alone. Now however, all private enterprise was ordered to shut down. Private stores were closed and a handful of government stores opened, separate ones for the military and the NKVD, and the public. Some food and goods were available in the better shops, but the general public had to settle mainly for *spichki, soly* (matches, salt), which soon became our ironic name for these places. Long lines formed to buy whatever was being sold. Bread was usually available, but of the coarse, dark Russian variety. Meat of the poorest quality only rarely appeared. White or rye bread, flour, sugar, fabrics, leather, and other necessities vanished.

The artisans were forced into *artels* (government-owned cooperatives), where they did minimum work in return for their meager salaries. Many tailors and shoemakers moonlighted, filling orders for the Russians who happily paid high prices for better goods. Often work was done by barter, the Russians exchanging primarily naphtha which we used for cooking and heating and which they stolen from government stocks.

Empty stores were converted into apartments for more Russians who were continuing to come into the "promised land."

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Of the Russian merchandise that appeared in stores, the vodka was very good quality. To our surprise, soap and perfume were also sold; however, the aroma of these toiletries were, let us say, interesting, and none of us would use them. Also, the soap did not lather.

Portraits of officials were in ample supply. Larger-than-life pictures of Stalin and smaller ones of the twelve apostles, members of the Politbureau, hung in rigid hierarchical order of importance with Molotov ranked second and Khrushchev, then the first secretary for the Ukraine, last. There was one Jew—Kaganovitch. We looked at the portraits to see who wore a wristwatch, and joked that such individuals had already visited the conquered territories.

The winter of 1939-40 was one of the most severe in memory, the bitter cold aggravated by inadequate food, fuel and clothing. (We still had our furs but were afraid to wear them.) Firewood was scarce and there was no coal, which we used to get from Silesia, now cut off by the new frontier. We were told not to expect any coal from the Donbas, because every region was expected to develop its own resources. There were deposits of low-grade lignite near Zloczow, considered uneconomical to mine during the Polish times. Now we were ordered to mine the stuff; the first deliveries were hailed as a triumph for the Soviet system achieved through the leadership of the great J. V. Stalin. The lignite offered little warmth and gave off a terrible stench. People suffered from severe headaches. Since we kept the windows open to let out the fumes, the net gain of warmth was nil. However, the mine was kept operative, employing some unhappy miners and a large contented bureaucracy.

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We received our first allotment of paper from Russia. It was coarse, sandy, and came in rolls, each weighing over a ton. By old Polish standards we would perhaps have used it for making low-grade paper bags. Our presses were set up to print sheets, so we had to rig a special device to cut the rolls, and after a few runs we saw that the paper ruined our type. We had to continue printing, however, so every few weeks we melted and recast the type. This slowed us down, so to help us reach our production goals I mixed in the dwindling stock of prewar paper which I had tried to hold in reserve. Another allotment we received was glue, which smelled bad and caused headaches and nausea among the workers.

We soon ran out of sheet metal for boxes and were advised to reprocess discarded cans from the meat-packing factory. In order to obtain usable sheets, we had to tear apart the cans, flatten them, and remove the rust. The salvaged metal was twice the gauge of our tools, and again our presses and other tools broke down rapidly from the

unusual stress. Looking back after all these years, I wonder how we managed to keep things going.

The *bekoniarnia* (the meat-packing plant) in Zloczow had been a model of efficiency and cleanliness before the war, and was often displayed to foreign visitors to prove that a Polish factory could make high-class products. Its fine quality hams were exported all the way to America where the plant maintained a sales office. It was also the largest employer in Zloczow with about three hundred employees. When I went there to select the cans, I was shocked and disgusted by the mess the Russians had made of it. The dirt on the machinery was inches deep. In the yard where the cans were piled up, snow mercifully covered the garbage.

The director of the *bekoniarnia*, a man named Dranow, soon became an enemy of mine. At the meetings of the city planning commission presided over by my Leningrad friend, Cunrade Sapuchina, Dranow was always criticized for failure to meet his goals and for the poor quality of his products. Even the Russians refused to eat his sausage. On the other hand, our factory was often singled out (my name was never mentioned, however,) and articles about us appeared in the local newspaper. Dranow used to say derisively: "They make one paper box and immediately there are several laudatory articles in the press." He never guessed that I had ghost-written many of these articles.

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Of all the invidious acts of the Soviets, none was more indicative to us of the true face of the regime than the action taken against the refugees from the West.

One winter day the militia ordered the immediate registration of refugees. They were ordered to give their names and addresses and to declare whether they wanted to stay in Russia or to return home. For the latter, trains were promised which would ferry both people and their belongings. The order affected Jews almost exclusively since most Poles (less afraid of the Germans) had taken advantage of the fluidity of the Russo-German lines in the first days of occupation and had gone home.

The refugees still remaining in Zloczow spent days debating their choices. Many had wives and children in the German zone. Most of their possessions were on the other side. There is in human nature this urge to return home. I recalled that my parents had gone back to Zloczow twice during World War I although we were quite well-off in

our place of refuge. As the Polish saying goes: *"Jak umrzec to na wlasnych smieciach"* (If you must die, better in your own place).

We heard these discussions often. Since the turbulent closing days of the war, when my mother served the refugees their first meals, many of them continued to congregate in our house. They asked for our advice. How can one advise in a situation like this? Ultimately the great majority of the refugees chose repatriation.

On a cold winter night several weeks after the decree, we heard a knock at our gate. We were sure that it was the NKVD coming for us. We looked through the darkened windows and saw, instead, a refugee family group motioning frantically for us to open the gate. We recognized Dr. Stein, a dentist from Krakow, his wife and two daughters. (Lovely children who had visited us often and played with our youngsters.) Once inside, they told us that the militia, reinforced by units of border police, a subdivision of the NKVD, were rounding up refugees and bringing them to the railroad station, where they were being herded into cattle cars for deportation, none knew where, but it was thought Siberia. The refugee family spent the night in our house. In the morning, my wife and the other women went to the station with food which they were permitted to distribute.

The rumor persisted that the trains were bound for Russia. Reports were that it made no difference what destination individuals preferred; everyone who was caught was shipped out in the same way. The roundup lasted only one day; those who escaped it were not bothered further. We learned that there was seldom logic in the moves of the NKVD. By then we harbored few illusions about the Soviets; yet the perfidy, the cruelty and the disregard for people shocked us.

Soon after I arrived in America in 1947 I was lectured by an American fellow traveler that those who perished through German hands had only themselves to blame. Why had they refused the generous offer of the Soviets and declined free transportation to Russia? What could I say? It is true that many more survived Siberia than survived under the Nazis. But at the time the deportations took place the manner in which they were carried out seemed hardly benign.

* * *

The court in Zloczow was presided over by a single Russian judge, a peasant, not a party member, which indicated how little the position

meant. He sternly upheld the law, which meant that he did what the district attorney told him. Russian law was applied retroactively to offenses committed during the Polish regime when such actions were legal. In addition to this "professional" judge, there were associate judges drawn from the workers elected by the union. No education was required for that office, and our factory representative had the unassailable credentials of having been born out of wedlock, of coming from the proletariat, and of being barely able to sign her name.

In contrast to the insignificant position of the judge, the *prokuror* (district attorney) was a powerful and feared personage. He was a party member who, we suspected, carried out NKVD orders and thus held the power of life and death over all. Both judge and prosecutor were frequent lecturers at the factory. The prosecutor engaged our workers in innocent-sounding discussions, asking them particularly if they had any complaints. With few exceptions, the workers were wary of him and made sure to seem grateful for conditions in the factory and their way of life.

The Zloczow court held several trials. The first one involved a tragic accident in the meat-processing plant, where a worker fell into a kettle of boiling water and was scalded to death. The accident resulted from the removal, by order of Comrade Dranow, of a protective device because it slowed down production. But Dranow was not prosecuted. Instead, a foreman who had actually objected to the removal of the device was made the scapegoat and sentenced to ten years in jail for sabotage.

Absenteeism and lateness for work were endemic. The Soviet government promulgated a law imposing jail sentences for such crimes. One of our workers, Golda Goldenberg, a devoted Communist and a member of the Komsomol, was a half hour late. The prosecutor decided to make an example of her. A trial was held in the Sokol. She was found guilty and sentenced to six months hard labor. However, since she was a member of the Komsomol, she was permitted to serve out her sentence by working in the factory at half pay.

The young woman's misfortune gave much pleasure to the other workers because her brother was a dyed-in-the-wool local Communist who had served time in the Polish concentration camp Bereza Kartuska. He was the only local official to obtain a high position in the bureaucracy as a manager of the combined leather factories. He wore the mark of distinction, a leather coat, and was thus a kind of minor quisling.

We had known the family well, since Golda's older sister had worked

for us as a housemaid. When the news of the Russians coming to Zloczow broke, Golda had tried to assure me that all would be well once the Communists took over. Unlike my nemesis, Hana, Golda always took my side at union meetings. Now, after her trial, chastened by her experience, she whispered in my ear, "I know now what a fool I was. I only hope that you do not learn from them how to treat workers, when times are back to normal and we get rid of them." End of a true believer.

* * *

Even Goldenberg, the most highly placed homegrown Communist, was not admitted to the Soviet Communist Party. In general, local party members did not fare well. They were relegated to obscure positions in minor agencies. Hessel and Rosenbaum, for example, the first nationalizers of our factory, were given mere clerical positions in the court. The lawyer, Punio Imber, my former antagonist though friend, a Communist and a man of high ideals for which he suffered, joined the lawyers' union, which had little authority or influence. Punio lived with his parents a few doors away from us, but in those days we seldom met. A few months after the Soviet takeover, he cornered me on the street and, looking around furtively, confided, *"Dos zenen nicht di richtige"* (this is not the genuine brand), signaling the end of another true believer. A handful of our homegrown Communists caught on to the Russian system and were successful, but first they had to shed their ideals. They became corrupt and unscrupulous like their Soviet mentors, and became informers. To our great surprise several former Communists were jailed or deported. The Russians clearly preferred new converts in their own mold to naive, indigenous idealists.

In their initial exuberation some local members tried to preach the communist gospel in the villages among the peasants but were met with bats and stones and beat a hasty retreat. In the end, most prewar Jewish Communists were as dispirited as the rest of us.

* * *

During the times that I describe, some people in Zloczow, though not necessarily content, managed to do quite well for themselves. Many of the black marketeers became ruble millionaires. A physician did parti-

cularly well, since the Russians distrusted their own doctors, mainly women, whose professional skills were very poor. Some of them, although called doctors, were *feldshers* (paramedics), trained to dispense only rudimentary treatment.

There was a high incidence of veneral disease among the Russians that reached epidemic proportions. Many of our doctors, including my uncle Dr. Reichard, dropped their specialties and took on the lucrative field of VD.

Private practice was outlawed and medical care was free, with all doctors supposedly attached to government clinics. But while our doctors served perfunctorily in the clinics, they also conducted lucrative private practices. The Russians finally had something in common with us; we both believed that only private doctors could assure us of correct treatment. Doctors were paid in cash or barter.

Russians also distrusted their own drugs; our sulfa drugs were the biggest item on the black market.

Peasants also enjoyed good times. To lure landless peasants into kolkhozes, the government at first distributed land confiscated from the large landowners. Voluntary collectivization was to be the next step. However, the new landowners kept the land but said "no thanks" when approached to join the kolkhozes, so that only a handful were established. By 1941, after almost two years of trying the carrot, the Russians produced the stick and tried to force collectivization. But the German invasion intervened.

* * *

The relationship between the government, the party and the Catholic Church was tenuous, each side recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of the other. Although religious freedom is assured in the Russian constitution, the government preached against religion. Yet churches and priests were left more or less alone. A few priests who were outspoken were arrested and deported, but the majority stayed with their churches. I have mentioned the influence that the clergy exerted over their flocks before the war. This hold was strengthened now. The government's antireligious propaganda seemed to backfire, since the churches overflowed with worshipers and not only on Sundays and holy days.

At the lunch break in our factory all the Catholics began to go to church, and this was also true elsewhere. I once passed in front of a

church with Narayevski, who said: "Do you know what they are praying for?" Without waiting for an answer, he said: "They pray that we go to the devil." No illusions there.

The church propaganda against the Bolshevik regime was very subtle. It did not invite, God forbid, resistance, but the sermons did not exactly encourage cooperation either. I can't be sure about what went on in the confessionals, but I have my suspicions that antigovernment activities must have taken place. Many of our workers went to confession three times a week and they could not possibly have sinned so much in such a short time.

Occasionally the government was forced to admit defeat openly. During the first weeks of the Russian occupation a six-day work week was introduced—five days of work and the sixth day off—with the result that the day off did not always fall on Sunday. However, regardless of penalties, absenteeism on Sundays was so high among Catholics that the seven-day week with Sunday off was soon restored. Since the seven-day week was prevalent in all of Russia, I assume that resistance to the six-day week was not unique in the conquered territories. Jews were compelled to work on the Sabbath, and only a handful of the very orthodox stayed home. The government tolerated this defiance.

* * *

One day a visitor came from Kiev, a Jew in his forties, manager of a Kiev box factory, a unit of the Kiev pharmaceutical trust. I showed him around the factory. He praised everything. He even kissed the prewar paper, exclaiming that he had not seen anything comparable since the Revolution. I invited him to our house for dinner. He gloried in his Jewish background, professing that he still prayed on the Sabbath. He proudly displayed an old-fashioned pocket watch that he claimed to have inherited from his father. He departed full of praise for the way I managed the factory and kissed me on both cheeks.

Within a few days I was urgently summoned to Lwow by Miss Czyzowicz, who showed me the Kiev manager's report. He described me as a waster of valuable government assets; the factory, he said, was badly managed, profligate of labor and material on unnecessarily costly products. The report concluded with the recommendation that I be removed from office. When I expressed my surprise and described the official's behavior as my guest, Miss Czyzowicz could only shake her head and mutter, "When are you going to learn, Mr. Tennenbaum?"

Fortunately, neither she nor Leibkind followed the recommendations of the report.

Samples from the Kiev factory had been included with the report, presumably in support of the visitor's conclusions. I showed them to some of our workers and made some critical remarks, which went straight back to the party, resulting in an official reprimand and another warning from Czyzowicz about my inability to keep my mouth shut. I tried to downgrade our production to Kiev's standards but it proved impossible, and in spite of everything our products still maintained their elegant look.

As I have mentioned before, after a long struggle, we were permitted to retain our printing shop and issued labels and prescription forms with menacing wording such as:"For Internal Use Only," or "Shake Well Before Using." For such labels a censor's permit was required; even more ridiculous, a new permit was required each time the same label was reprinted, i.e., every few days. Whenever a new permit was needed, we had to submit data, describe the size of the label, the inscription, and the quantity. Our local censor was a semiliterate woman, a party member, who worked very slowly but whose decisions could not be bypassed nor overruled. One time I made a cursory remark about the stupidity of the system that made me stop the press while I waited for the permit. It almost cost me my job. As usual, my remarks were reported to the party, perhaps with some embellishment, and I was upbraided by the secretary of the agit-prop and warned that my remarks verged on sabotage, a most dangerous accusation. The matter reached Lwow, and I was again officially reprimanded. Unofficially, Miss Czyzowicz told me that she had just thrown up her hands in desperation at my stupidity. "Mr. Tennenbaum, you never will learn!"

15

While we were surviving our first winter with the Russians, the war in the West was going on in desultory fashion; this period later became known as the "phony" war. On my birthday, April 9, 1940, Hitler's army invaded neutral Denmark and Norway. The Danes surrendered immediately. The Norwegians fought back briefly with their small army, but succumbed to the overwhelming German onslaught. The British sent a small expeditionary force to Narvik, but it soon withdrew. Our hopes were dashed. The fall of Narvik was as great a blow as the fall of Warsaw and the surrender of the Finns.

* * *

As we anxiously awaited the developments in the West, the Soviets treated us to their version of *panem et circenses* (bread and circuses), our first May Day celebration. A few days earlier generous supplies of vodka, some sweets, canned goods, and even bolts of cotton appeared in the government stores.

On the day before the holiday a political officer appeared in the factory and ordered paper bags for candy to be given to the children of the military personnel. The inscriptions on the bags read: "Thank you, Comrade Stalin, for our happy youth."

We were given bolts of red cloth and a selection of about a hundred slogans and were to choose some of them for the banners, but we were strictly forbidden to change as much as a comma in the wording. The slogans hailed the Soviet Union, the great J. V. Stalin, the Red Army, the reunification of the Ukraine, the heroism of the Soviet workers and so on. Huge new portraits of Stalin and members of the Politburo were distributed, with instructions to mount them on posters and carry them in the forthcoming parade. All the factory personnel were ordered to march in the parade, along with other groups. The school children marched. All official institutions joined in the celebration. Everything was tightly organized; no improvisation was tolerated. In

Poland, the third of May was a national holiday celebrating the anniversary of the Polish constitution, among the oldest in the world. But that parade had been informal, the celebration brief with few speeches, the whole affair lasting usually no more than an hour.

This parade lasted half a day. Leading it was a detachment of the Red Army, goosestepping, followed by rank upon rank of marchers shouting slogans. On the reviewers' stand were the party secretaries and a few important generals in splendid uniforms. The main event was the unveiling of a huge plaster-of-Paris statue of Lenin followed by an hour-long speech by one of the generals. The festivities ended with an army band and a choral concert in the Sokol. (We still called it Sokol, though the hall had been renamed Lenin Hall.)

One day after the holiday, the shelves in the stores were empty again. We were left with only a *sobotnik* to clean up the debris left by the marchers.

* * *

Soon Hitler struck again, violating the neutrality of Holland and Belgium, as the Kaiser had done twenty-five years earlier. We had become familiar with the Blitzkrieg, but the swiftness with which France was overrun shocked us severely. France had offered even less resistance than had Poland in 1939.

The Russians, while they officially maintained their neutrality, were obviously alarmed. That Germany and the West would exhaust one another in a bloody struggle and that Germany would then become easy prey for the Russians was a calculation that came to naught. Their press continued to insist that all was well between them and Germany, but there was a distinct undercurrent of apprehension. In the talks by the agit-prop people there were increased references to the invincibility of the Red Army and its preparedness to fight *any* enemy daring to attack the Russian Fatherland. A few Russian officers did not conceal their apprehension, and a customer of ours even asked me what had I heard on the foreign broadcasts. I naturally denied listening to anything but Russian stations. The Soviet press gave an unusually lengthy coverage to the rescue of the British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk, and even more unusual, the story was reported in the regional and *oblast* papers which rarely carried foreign news. There was a sizable increase of movements of soldiers, artillery and tanks toward the German frontier.

Our spirits sank to a new low. The only ray of hope was England, which finally had a real leader. The free world had lost France but it had gained Winston Churchill. We listened to his speeches; the phrase, "blood, sweat, and tears," was repeated again and again. It was not until after the war that we learned how weak England really had been.

* * *

About the only bright spot in my otherwise miserable existence was my relationship with Narayevski. He never interfered with the way I ran the factory, and tried to protect me from harassment by Nazimova and others.

As secretary of the factory party committee, Narayevski periodically reported to its plenum on the progress of the annual plan which I had worked out and which was approved by Lwow, by the city central planning board, and by our headquarters in Kiev. At first he merely used my figures in his reports, but one day he told me that there was to be an important meeting and asked me to write the report for him. Afterward, having received high praise for his report, he thanked me. An article in the local newspaper *Serp Y Molot* (Hammer and Sickle) cited him and the factory for outstanding work. And so I gained an additional job as Narayevski's speechwriter, which suited me fine. Not only did I get to write reports on the factory but also articles for the factory newsletter and the city newspapers, and even secret reports about party matters. We got so much publicity that other managers became envious. We made more enemies.

As director and party secretary, Narayevski was supposed to educate us in the teachings of Marx and Lenin. However, apart from a few well-known slogans, his knowledge of Communist writings was very limited. He confided to me that he had difficulty in understanding even the prescribed *Short History* and encouraged me to read it and prepare his lecture material. I was eager to help him, but this was a task I would have preferred to avoid. No use; I had to do it. I suspect that he would not have minded making me the lecturer in his stead. In gratitude for my efforts, he excused me from attending most of the factory meetings, explaining it on the grounds of my precarious health; but he was being considerate, knowing that this stuff bored me to death.

An NKVD man asked where we had kept our confidential records; when I told him that we had none he looked at me in disbelief and insisted that we had to have a safe. So a safe was sequestered from one

of the banks in Zloczow. The round factory seal, correspondence with the party, and minutes of the meetings of the Komsomol were kept in the safe.

Every Russian dreams of owning a *mashynu* (car) and Narayevski was no exception. His eyes glistened when he saw our Buick in the garage; he became disconsolate when I explained the extent of the damage. With a straight face I suggested that we order a part from America. He gave me a sidelong glance as if to say, "What a fool you are!"

We had a driver, Wassily, a young Russian, a capable young man. A large pool of wrecked cars and trucks had been abandoned by the retreating Polish army. Narayevski and Wassily went scavenging for Buick parts, but their efforts proved fruitless. They did find a truck that they managed to get started after weeks of scrounging around for parts among army units, using *blat* (payments under the table).

The truck broke down repeatedly but our own machine shop fixed it each time. Since we had not obtained the truck through official channels, we could not get an allotment of gas, but Khokhlov took care of that. He went out saying that he was going to shop for gas, and after a couple of hours we heard the roar of an engine and the clanking of chains in the yard. We ran out to see what was going on, and there was Khokhlov, triumphantly leading the way on foot for a huge tank which inched its way into the yard, trying to squeeze through the gate without demolishing the brick wall surrounding the factory. Soon gasoline was being siphoned from the tank into a drum we had waiting, and presently the tank retreated. Further gas supplies were secured in less dramatic ways, but always from the military, some for cash, others in exchange for our precious writing paper, or leather that Narayevski obtained from the tannery.

Such *na lewo* (black market dealings) are common in Russia, although they are strictly forbidden and subject to severe sanctions, including the death penalty. But people were fatalistic. "*Piy umresh, ne piy umresh*" (You die if you drink, and you die if you don't). This old Ukrainian saying was quoted frequently. If you did not meet your quota you went to jail, but in order to meet it you had to operate "*na lewo.*" Catch 22 is old hat in the Soviet Union. For "*na lewo*" operations Khokhlov proved to be invaluable. Narayevski, though much less adept, was no slouch.

Thanks to our teamwork, we had become the pride of the town. Prominent party dignitaries were brought by the local party

secretaries to show off the town's best-run enterprise. But there was a backlash; we made enemies both inside and outside the factory.

My family's relationship with our workers had always been warm and friendly. My father had been consulted about their personal affairs, and we were invited to weddings and funerals just like family. In a way, we *were* a family. My personal relations with most of the workers was becoming even closer than before the war. As we had shared common interests in the past, so we now shared common hopes and hatreds. There were exceptions, however.

Out of the blue sky a couple of vicious attacks appeared in the local newspaper and in one of the *oblast* papers. Since Narayevski was difficult to attack, I became the target. The articles were obviously written by one author and unsigned. I was accused of underutilizing the machinery in the factory, a major crime in the Soviet Union, implying indifference if not sabotage. In truth, two presses were idle—machines for making expensive engraved labels on special foil that came from Austria, using cuts imported from Austria or Germany. Even in the best of times the market for these labels was limited. Now there was none. The writer demanded that we put these machines immediately into operation—an impossibility. In Russia one takes such accusations, true or false, very seriously. Narayevski became apprehensive, even though I was the one being accused, since failure reflected also on him. We rushed to Lwow to consult Leibkind and Czyzowicz, but to our surprise neither of them seemed upset. Czyzowicz shrugged her shoulders, saying that she too had been attacked. She advised me to get used to such things, which usually blew over. Narayevski was satisfied, but I was worried. After all, I was in a very precarious position, being first the son of the previous owner, and second, endowed with a passport marking me as a citizen under a cloud.

A rather bizarre event took place during this visit to Lwow. The head bookkeeper of the trust ordered me to revise the inventory taken during the nationalization of the factory. The total figure, based on prewar prices and accepting the zloty and ruble at par, amounted to about two million rubles. The figure was to be reduced to 500,000 rubles. The bookkeeper came to Zloczow expressly to alter the books. By listing the machinery at half its value, and the inventory of the raw materials at a fraction of their cost, we reached a figure that satisfied Kiev. I was and still am at a loss to understand what it was all about. Perhaps the Russians expected to have to compensate us for the confiscated properties in some distant future. (Indeed, upon arriving in

America, I did register my properties with the State Department, but there were never any reparations.)

On this trip to Lwow, I mailed a letter to my friend Sig Schotz, in America, in which I described our lives as a continuous Yom Kippur for which we dressed as for Purim. I signed the letter "*Moishe Zikhmakh*" (Moishe Find Me), and gave a fictitious address. Sig never received the letter. For me, writing it served to let off some steam.

16

Life in Zloczow settled into a dull, grim routine. We had to get used to continual shortages of necessities, to the black market, to the overcrowded homes, to the deadening bureaucracy, to the ever-present fear of arrest and deportation. We were constantly looking over our shoulders, fearful that someone might be listening to what we were saying; we were careful with every word even when nobody was about. We stood for harangues by Nazimova and her ilk. The workers, who had never been receptive to the Communist gospel, grumbled, a few openly, undaunted by the eyes and ears of the spies who were known to all. Surprisingly, apart from some warnings and threats, no serious action was taken against the disgruntled.

I was depressed, harassed by the attacks in the local press. The sinister paragraph in our passports hung over my head like the sword of Damocles. I missed the books and newspapers that had been such a pleasure and necessity before the war. Russian movies were dreadful, featuring boys in love with tractors, girls devotedly milking cows, all for the love of J. V. Stalin. Some old Chaplin films and Deanna Durbin in *100 Men and a Girl* provided a welcome respite in the early days of the occupation, but the authorities withdrew them when they saw that we preferred them to the Russian. Lina coaxed me to go walking, but I hated the sight of the streets thronged with Russians.

We were careful not to show any sign of gaiety in public because the Russians believed that we were laughing at them. Occasionally they were right. On the other hand, we found their behavior repelling. No Western-style clothing could disguise a Russian from us, which was useful in enabling us to spot their spies. We could recognize them by the shaved necks of the men and excessive rouge on the lips of the women. Particularly obnoxious was the behavior of the Russian adolescents, sons and daughters of the Russian "aristocracy," higher

party members or senior military officers, who strutted about drunk, using loud and obscene language, taunting people who spoke Polish.

We had enough clothing to last us for a long time; our surplus found a ready market among the Russians and the peasants. Food was a greater problem, little except bread and vodka was to be had in the government stores, the rest had to be bought on the open market from the peasants, who charged whatever they could get away with.

My salary of 700 rubles a month was relatively generous by Russian standards, much better than that of the average factory worker. However, there were deductions: taxes, union dues and money for civil defense, subscriptions to newspapers, mandatory savings, all of which came to twelve to fifteen percent of the gross and left just enough to sustain us for about a week. The rest had to be obtained by bartering or selling our clothing, jewelry, and furniture. Since there was no public assistance, the poor became poorer. Unable to compete on the open market, they lined up at government stores in the hope that something worth buying would appear. These long queues in front of the stores became a permanent feature of life in Zloczow.

My parents continued to live in Lwow, where the official stores were better stocked than in Zloczow. But it was difficult for my mother to stand in lines for hours, and the open market was far from where they lived.

We helped as much as we could. Each time the factory truck went to Lwow, we slipped in a food parcel for my parents. Lina visited them a few times, illegally, since our passports barred us from Lwow. One trip was nearly disastrous. Lina crossed a street against a stop sign. Traffic regulations were enforced very strictly, and a militiaman immediately stopped her and asked for her passport. My mother had the presence of mind to rush forward with her own passport and to apologize for Lina's offense. He let them go with a warning and did not ask again for my wife's passport.

Friends whose business took them to Lwow also helped. Our neighbor, Mr. Zwerdling, was a purchasing agent for an army unit, traveled often to Lwow, and always took along a parcel. One morning he came over to advise us that he had been suddenly summoned to Lwow. We put together whatever was in the house, packed it in a small suitcase, and gave it to him for delivery to our parents. He left in a hurry. At the railroad station he was seized by two NKVD men and taken away in a car.

A few days later the NKVD sealed off the house and searched his

apartment. They took away letters and photos from the family album, God knows why. His wife was not arrested, which was unusual, since in the past everyone living in the house of an arrested man was also taken away.

For the next weeks we lived in fear. After all, Mr. Zwerdling had carried *our* suitcase. I combed through my papers and photos and burned everything that was even remotely connected with my prewar political activities. I burned my writings, my fraternity photos, and destroyed my fraternity pin and ring.

To this day our neighbor's arrest remains a tragic mystery—one of many.

* * *

The threatening letters in the press, my wife's brush with the militia in Lwow, the arrest of our next-door neighbor were taking their toll. I was determined to try to leave Zloczow. I was acutely aware of the threat of Paragraph 14 on our passports and decided to appeal on the grounds that it had been given to us by mistake.

I had become acquainted with the commander of our local militia, a Russian lieutenant, and told him about my problems. "*Nitchevo*" (easily done), he said. If I would teach him German, he would take care of my passport. I tried to teach him—without success. I let him have several expensive gifts, but he kept stalling. Finally, after he extracted as much as he could from me, he admitted that the matter was outside of his jurisdiction. He advised me to go to Lwow to the *oblast* office of the NKVD. However, my passport forbade me to travel to Lwow—Catch 22. (I had gone to Lwow several times before and always returned the same day to avoid the mandatory registration with the local militia.)

I asked Leibkind for help. He too kept promising to do something, but I believe that he never even lifted a finger on my behalf. I can't say that I blamed him. Although he held a high position, he was not anxious to attract the attention of the NKVD.

Finally I decided that, come what may, I would make an overnight trip to Lwow and appeal in person to the NKVD there. I spent the night in my parents' home and rose early in the morning to go to the headquarters. By the time I arrived, a line at least a mile long stretched across several streets. Some people claimed foreign citizenship and asked for permits to leave Russia; others had problems like mine. But the majority were trying to learn about the whereabouts of relatives

arrested by the NKVD. I was about halfway down the line when a noncommissioned officer appeared and declared that the office was closed for the day. Several people remained in place to await the reopening of the office the next day. Drawing on past experiences, they had come prepared with blankets and food. I decided to return to my parents' apartment, get some sleep, and try again later. At midnight I returned to the line, which even at that time extended along several blocks. This time I entered the building barely in time to escape being shut out again.

I was shown into the office of an officer seated at a desk under the ever-present portrait of Stalin. I handed him my petition. He glanced at it briefly and gave me an eight-page questionnaire. I had filled out questionnaires before: for my place of employment, for the local party, for the union, for the local militia and even for the civil defense unit. But this questionnaire was incredible. Besides personal data about myself and my wife, there were questions about my parents, my wife's parents, our relatives abroad—my wife's and mine. Had we corresponded with them? If so, I was to present the letters received. Had we traveled in Poland and abroad? If so, to what cities and countries and for what purpose? How many languages did I speak? Had I spent time in prison? If so, for what crimes? Had I belonged to the Polish Communist Party? Had I been subjected to *chystka* (purge), and for what reason? I had to list names and addresses of all my friends . . . and on and on and on. The officer warned me to complete the questionnaire carefully and truthfully, after which I could come back. Then he dismissed me.

I returned to my parents and told them about the results of my visit at the headquarters of the NKVD. I then went to take another look at Lwow. The city looked much cleaner than on any of my previous visits. Obviously a great effort had been made. There were long lines in front of government stores, which seemed better stocked than similar stores in Zloczow. Also Gastronom, a luxury store, offered goods, usually unavailable. I heard that similar stores existed in Moscow and Leningrad but not in Kiev. I splurged and spent all my money on some cans of Bytchky herring in tomato sauce and chocolate for the children, who had not tasted any since the outbreak of the war.

I visited the headquarters of the Pharmaceutical Trust and told both Leibkind and Czyzowicz of my efforts to delete the paragraph in my passport. They wished me luck but were skeptical. I did not reveal my intention to leave Zloczow if I were successful.

I spent another night in my parents' apartment. We had never

before been separated for such a long time and we had greatly missed each other. We reminisced about the times gone—forever? We spoke mostly about the children since they could not hear enough about them. We worried about the children. What influence would their schooling have on them in the future? Would they be able to return to a normal life? We spoke about the war, about the onslaught of the German air armada against England, about Coventry and the destruction of the English cities. Father felt that Germany had lost that phase of the war and that it would lose eventually. In that respect he was an optimist; but in the short run he shared my immediate concern about what direction Hitler would strike next. In Lwow, there were many more listeners to foreign radio stations than in Zloczow, and what was heard was shared among people one could trust. According to my father, the BBC predicted that Hitler would soon attack Russia. This news was logical and frightening.

I worked at the questionnaire and, after another night spent in the waiting line, I handed it to the officer who had seen me originally. He accepted it without comment. That was the end of that. My efforts were never even acknowledged.

17

The NKVD, a venerable institution, now known in the West as KGB, is very little known: it has undergone several name changes without losing its terrorist image. Founded by Lenin to protect the fledgling Bolshevik regime, it proved deadly not only to its victims but also to its chiefs. With the exception of its first head, Felix Dzierzynski, a Pole, the rest were executed by Stalin, except for Beria, who was executed by Stalin's successors. It ranks with the Gestapo as the most hated and feared police organization in the world, responsible for the death and torture of millions of innocent people both inside Russia and in the lands acquired after the Second World War.

We were into our second winter with the Russians. One morning Narayevski came to my office and told me that he had received a telephone call advising him that *They* wanted to see me. He did not have to elaborate; we both knew that *They* meant. I was to leave immediately without telling anybody, and to report to the local headquarters of the NKVD. I returned home to tell my wife and we speculated that the summons might be the result of my visit to Lwow. We were hoping that I might not be arrested, since I had been merely summoned, not picked up. Still, we packed some clothing and food in a suitcase which she was to hold and try to deliver to me in the event of my arrest.

The NKVD occupied a private house from which the owners and tenants had been evicted. It was about a hundred yards from our second house on Podwojcie. Steel doors had been installed, with windows protected by heavy bars and mesh. Over the windows cement canopies prevented inmates from looking out and outsiders from looking in. We guessed that some of the officers of the secret police also lived there. There was a rumor that the cellar was a jail, but we never knew because nobody ever came back to tell. The main prison was in

the Zamek, a well-preserved castle from the time of John III, Sobieski, which also had been a prison during the regimes of Austria and Poland. It was also the site of executions. Until the Russians came, executions had been very rare. In my memory only one public execution was staged in Zloczow, when an alleged Russian spy was hanged by the Austrians in the marketplace during World War I.

At present there was no sentry in front of the building, still all Zloczow avoided walking in front of it; in fact, the entire street had ceased being the favorite promenade it had been before the war. The nearby swimming pool, which in winter was converted into a skating rink, was permanently closed.

My wife had insisted on accompanying me, and while she waited outside, I entered the building. A uniformed man armed with a rifle was sitting on a stool inside the gate. He asked my name and motioned me to a small room to the right of the entrance. That room was bare except for a plain wooden bench alongside the wall. On the other wall was the inevitable picture of Stalin. A single bulb hanging from a wire shed little light. Opposite the entrance was another heavily padded door from which not a sound came. It was early afternoon when I entered the building and sat down on the bench to wait. Time slowly ticked away. Darkness fell. Nobody came. It must have been about eleven o'clock when I decided not to wait any longer. I got up and started to leave. The sentry did not stop me nor did he ask me any questions.

My wife was still waiting outside. We went home wondering whether the call had been a mistake. I went to work the next day and told Narayevski what had occurred. He nodded his head without comment.

A few weeks later I received a second summons. Again it came by phone through Narayevski, but this time he had more specific instructions. I was *not* to go to the NKVD building but to wait at nine p.m. in front of a house located some distance from the building. I was to face the street, not to turn or look around. It was absolutely forbidden to tell anyone about the summons, but again I told my wife and she went with me, disregarding the warning. But this time she waited farther off. In a feeble attempt to cheer us, she said: "*Ubi Caius ibi Caia*" (Where goes Caius, there goes Caia), the oath taken by the woman at a Roman wedding.

I followed instructions and waited in front of the designated house. After a while, somebody tapped me on the shoulder and whispered in

my ear to follow him. It was dark, but I could see that the man was in uniform. He led me around some back streets, changing directions several times until finally we entered a building.

Viewed from a safe distance, years later, this cloak-and-dagger treatment appears silly, childish and hard to believe. After all, who was I? What deep secrets could I possible harbor to warrant this clandestine appointment? Things like that only happen in spy stories, in books, in movies, but in real life—never. Well, what was happening to me *was* real! If it was meant to scare me like the first no-show summons, it was unnecessary, I was already scared enough.

The man showed me into the same room where I had waited during my first visit. This time my wait was brief. A man in the uniform of a captain of the NKVD opened the padded door and motioned for me to follow him. We climbed one flight of stairs into his office. He sat behind an elegant desk, undoubtedly confiscated from some fine establishment. There were cabinets along the walls and a single larger-than-life portrait of J. V. Stalin on the wall behind the desk. On another wall was a white strip of cloth with red letters that said: "Mercilessly expose and crush the enemies of the great Soviet Union." The officer showed me to a chair in front of the desk. He was tall for a Russian, and, contrary to the sloppy appearance of most Russian officers, he was smartly dressed in a well-fitting, freshly pressed tunic. The room was dimly lit except for a strong light directed on my face. The Russian's face remained in shadow. He did not wear a side arm, but he kept the drawer of his desk open wide enough for me to see a long-barreled revolver inside.

He opened a file which I assumed contained my dossier. I was surprised by its thickness. He offered me a cigarette. I declined, explaining that I did not smoke. He himself was a chain smoker and throughout the interview a cigarette never left his lips. He started by asking my name, age, my wife's name and age, our children's names, as well as those of my parents and of my widowed mother-in-law. My answers were acknowledged by nods, as if confirming that the information was already in the file. After the preliminaries, he surprised me by stating that he was aware I was doing a good job in the factory. It flashed through my mind that evidently the interview was not connected with the scurrilous articles in the papers.

We spoke in Russian, a language I have never really mastered, but I was able to read it, and at that time could make myself understood. I did speak fluent Ukrainian, which although it was the "official"

language, was seldom used by the party establishment. Up to this point the conversation had been polite, but now suddenly the officer's tone became stern: "It was reported that you have made unfriendly remarks about our government." I felt a chill. I denied this. He smiled: "Never mind, but aside from your work at the factory, what are you *doing* for us?" The word "doing" was stressed. I pretended that I did not understand what he meant and repeated that I was working very diligently to fulfill the plan. He nodded impatiently. I went on to say that the work took all my time, and besides that I was a very sick man with stomach ulcers. I told him that I suffered from recurrent hemorrhages. I made it seem that I was a dying man, but he showed no sympathy.

He persisted: What did I do after work in my free time?

I answered that because of my illness, I went early to bed and I read.

"What was I reading?"

"Newspapers and the *Short History,*" I replied.

"Oh, that's good, very good."

"What did I do on my days off?"

"I go for walks with my wife and children."

"But it is winter now, too cold for walks." He was quick.

"Occasionally," I said, "I play cards with friends."

I knew now that he was informed about people coming to our house. I knew also that cards were frowned upon in the Soviet system, but I had a purpose in what I said. I was aware that the gatherings could be misinterpreted, that we could be accused of meeting to conspire or to listen to foreign broadcasts. The lawyer in me advised me to plead to a minor offense, to take his mind off probing for a major one.

To my surprise, he became interested. "Oh, you play *otchko* (black jack)?"

"No, we play bridge."

He had never heard of it. I tried to explain, but he lost interest.

With whom did I play?

I was sure that he knew exactly who was coming to my house, so I named a few friends. He knew of them; he made reference to the wife of one of them, saying "She is a whore."

This was not true, of course, the woman mentioned was merely known to do a little flirting and teasing.

He changed the subject and became stern again. He knew, he said, of counterrevolutionary elements in the factory. Former members of Strzelec, a paramilitary prewar organization linked with Pilsudski,

were threatening the Komsomol people; they had even collected money for a funeral when a certain worker joined the organization. When I tried to say something, he cut me off sharply, "Do not pretend that you knew nothing about this. Perhaps you contributed money yourself."

At this point, as if by a signal, a major entered the room. My interrogator rose, snapped to attention, and said: "Comrade Major, I wish to report that this is Citizen Tennenbaum. My orders are to arrest him for counterrevolutionary activities." He had called me "Citizen," not "Comrade," an ominous distinction. The major looked at me and, after a pause, said loudly: "Give him a chance to prove himself a good citizen."

I recognized the "good guy–bad guy" routine. The major nodded and left the room.

As if thinking it over, the captain remained quiet for a while. Then he said: *"Khorosho"* (Okay). He ordered me to prepare a report of all the counterrevolutionary activities that I observed in the factory and discharged me. I was not ever to call him; he would call me. I had no intention of calling him; I did not even know his name. Before I left, I signed a paper stating that I would not divulge to anyone that I had been interrogated by the NKVD.

I left through the front door. It was after midnight. My wife was waiting for me. We embraced. The streets were empty. We returned home in silence.

I prepared my report. I wrote that everybody in the factory was happy to live in the glorious Soviet Union, under the guidance and leadership of our beloved J. V. Stalin. That the workers were vying with one another in their zeal to fill and surpass their norms. That they studied diligently the writings of Lenin and Stalin and the *Short History* from which they took their inspiration. I spread this garbage over several typewritten pages without mentioning a single name. I had learned the lingo well from writing the articles and reports for Comrade Narayevski.

Weeks passed before I again heard from my interrogator. It was spring of 1941 when he called me. He wanted my report. When I told him that it was ready, he ordered me to come to see him that night. My wife did not come along this time. The silly procedure of my previous visit was discarded and I was shown directly to his office. I handed him my report. He greeted me cordially, but his mood changed rapidly as he started to read. He became livid. After he finished, he literally

jumped in his seat and yelled, "Son of a bitch! Are you taking me for a fool? What is this! Everything fine and dandy!" He continued in this vein, using choice Russian obscenities. Did I realize with whom I was dealing? He had handled smarter guys in this life. He was going to arrest me and my father. He read from his file the address of my parents in Lwow. Did I or my father believe that by moving out of Zloczow they could avoid NKVD's watchful eye? He kept shouting and derisively pushed my report aside. I had better go back and write a legitimate report of what was going on in that nest of spies and saboteurs passing as a Soviet factory.

I started to say something, but he interrupted me with the order, *"Pashol!"* (Get out!) and a few choice curses. Again I had to sign the paper swearing me to secrecy. The parting threat was: "You will hear from me!"

I left and I never saw or heard from him again. A few weeks later Hitler had invaded Russia and he was gone with all the other Russians.

I had not been beaten, nor tortured, nor jailed. My experience pales when compared with what I have read about the sufferings of others. Still, it is hard to forget the mental torture, the senselessness of it all.

When I returned home, my wife and I spent the rest of the night talking about what had happened during this last interrogation. We decided to warn Father. As I did not dare to use the phone, next morning I left for Lwow and related my experience to Father, who was of course worried but stoical. There was nothing he could do, no place where he could go, he said. Instead, he worried about me and the stress and dangers I lived with.

I often wonder whether my parents would have survived, had they been deported.

18

While I was preoccupied with my personal problems, the world and the war did not stand still. Upon returning home from work, I usually found my house full of friends, many of whom had no jobs, who had come to play cards and to talk. We played cards to distract ourselves but invariably talk won out as we speculated about Hilter's plans. The indications were that his next move would be against Russia. It was a terrifying prospect, but for some people it held also a gleam of hope. They reasoned that Hitler's defeat was inevitable, and that if his demise also brought down the Soviet regime, so much the better. Russia would not be able to withstand a German assault, but the Germans would bleed to death in the process and then America would come in to deliver the *coup de grace*. Most of us were afraid of the Germans but no one foresaw the fate that awaited us.

In the second winter of the Russian occupation we followed the developments in North Africa and were cheered by the first victories of the British, albeit only against Mussolini's armies. Hitler was forced to come to his rescue there and also in the Balkans where the Greeks, who fought valiantly against the Italians, were finally conquered by the overwhelming German military might. Later in the spring of 1941 Hitler invaded Yugoslavia, after an uprising in that country brought into power a regime friendly to England.

The Germans looked invincible. We were awed by the efficiency of their military operations. We waited. The question was no longer whether Hitler would attack Russia, but when. The BBC warned that the Germans were massing armies on the line dividing their zone from the Russians and that an attack was imminent, but official Soviet communiqués branded these warnings as lies. A few days before the German attack a most curious statement was read over the Moscow radio; it was so unbelievable that I quote it verbatim:

> "Germany is observing the conditions of the Soviet-German Non-aggression Pact just as steadfastly as the Soviet Union is. In view of this, Soviet circles believe that rumors about German intentions of violating the pact and launching an attack on the Soviet Union are completely without ground . . . "

Since the statement was not prefaced by the usual Russian propaganda phrase, "It is common knowledge" (which to us presaged a blatant lie), we conjectured that the statement was a prayerful wish rather than a conviction. Nobody took this seriously anyway. Instead we stayed riveted to the radio. The BBC predicted that June was to be the month of the German attack and June was here.

* * *

On June 21 after the usual card game, one of our guests, Otek Roth, remarked as he was leaving that "June is coming to an end and the Germans haven't attacked yet."

After the friends left, I listened to a BBC broadcast in Polish that warned that the German attack was to be expected any hour now. We went to bed. At dawn the next day I was awakened by the noise of a plane cruising at low altitude over the city. I recognized an old-time small biplane still in use by the Soviet army, which they called Kukuruznik, which flew occasionally over the city. Anyway, since the sound was familiar, I decided to go back to sleep. But it persisted, and suddenly I connected it with the radio news of last night. Without awakening my wife, I dressed quickly and went outside to see whether anything was going on. The streets were deserted, but the loudspeakers on the square were blaring martial music. I waited for several minutes and returned home. I tried to get some news on the radio, but Moscow was silent and I was unable to reach any foreign station. By that time my wife was also wide awake and asked me what had happened. I told her that I did not know, but that whatever it was I did not like it. I went outside again. This time the streets were crowded with Russian soldiers in helmets and full battle gear. Some of the officers were loading their families on military trucks. The women were crying. There was a truck in front of our house. The lieutenant who lived in an apartment on the ground floor was loading his wife, children and their belongings on it. The lieutenant's wife, who had been friendly with us, came over to say goodbye with tears in her eyes.

On every street corner, soldiers were directing traffic. Our people were standing in clusters, discussing the events, but they were soon dispersed by soldiers and uniformed members of the NKVD. The local militiamen were conspicuously absent. We guessed that most of them had shed their uniforms and were in hiding among the civilian population.

I went to the factory, where only a few men and women were present. Narayevski showed up at midday with our driver, both in army uniforms and carrying side arms. Narayevski told me that he had been drafted "temporarily" for some other work, and that from now on I was in full charge. He said that he expected to be around and to see me from time to time. He took the truck with him. I did not expect to see him again, but I did—three years later. Khokhlov came about an hour after Narayevski left and was furious that the truck had gone. He left without a goodbye. The head of the Komsomol came weeping. Her husband had already left with his unit for the front, she said, and added that she would try to get to Kiev. She kissed the girls and said goodbye to the rest of us. In spite of her position, she had been well-liked, since we did not think she was one of the spies. We never saw Khokhlov again, but this woman did show up a few days later.

It was déjà vu, September 1939 all over again. A few more workers came in. The Jews huddled in one room quietly discussing the events. Fear was in their eyes and faces. The Ukrainians were talking loudly, hardly disguising their glee. The Poles, although quieter, seemed content too. For them throughout their history, there was always this choice between these two neighbors, two evils, if you will; between hatred of the Russians and fear of the Germans. Evidently at this moment they hated the Russians more than they feared the Germans. When Pilsudski was alive, he had vacillated between the two, concluding nonaggression pacts with both—neither, as I have said, worth the paper it was written on. Until 1939 Pilsudski's successors, the colonels, had leaned strongly toward the Germans.

Occasionally a worker came over to ask my opinion. I called Father in Lwow; it took several hours, but I finally got through. Mother was with him at the base. Lwow had already been bombed repeatedly. We said goodbye to each other. Father cried, but Mother was calm.

Someone came with a rumor that the NKVD was rounding up prominent citizens, primarily Ukrainians, but also Poles and Jews, and taking them to the Zamek. My wife sent Hanka over, warning me to stay at the factory. One by one, people left. I stayed until darkness

with a few others. We left when Hanka returned with news that a curfew had been imposed and a blackout ordered.

Through our neighbor's windows we were able to see the streets, empty now except for an occasional military vehicle racing with its lights dimmed. I could hear the loudspeakers repeating a speech by Molotov denouncing the Germans for their treacherous attack and vowing a fight to the end; the speech was preceded by and followed with more martial music. I tuned in to German stations. There were speeches there too, accusing the Russians of treachery. I heard a communiqué announcing the capture of Przemysl, the Russian stronghold on the dividing line. I could not get the BBC. The first night of the new war set in. We went to bed, but were unable to sleep.

* * *

Next morning I got out of bed at dawn and I tuned in to the BBC. I heard a speech by Churchill announcing that an all-out effort would be made to help Russia, even though he did not retract one word of his past comments about the Soviet regime. But victory over the now common enemy, Germany, had to come first. I also listened to a speech by Stalin in which he appealed to Russian patriotism to fight the War for the Fatherland (*Otchestvennaya Voyna*). I was also able to hear German broadcasts of heavy fighting along the entire front.

My radio vigil was interrupted by a thunder of planes indicating a large formation, followed by the barking of anti-aircraft guns. Unlike 1939, there was a heavy concentration of fire by the Russian defense. We heard the distant thump of falling bombs. We dressed quickly and went to the cellar where, soon, all the inhabitants of our house gathered. All clear was sounded after about half an hour. I went out to look at the street, now filled with Russians, soldiers and a few civilians including women and children. Only a few local people were visible. It was reported that the railroad station had been bombed and that the rumors about arrests were true. Door-to-door searches were being conducted. Wilek Hessel came over stealthily to warn me to stay home or go to the factory. The Fifth Column was at work again, he said. The NKVD was arresting all the prominent Ukrainians still remaining in Zloczow. (Most had slipped over to the Germans long ago.) Innocent people were caught in the dragnet, among them Dr. Wanio, a lawyer and former minister in the short-lived Ukrainian government of 1939.

I decided to stay home with my family. The windows of our apart-

ment looked into a courtyard that divided our house from the adjacent one. Both buildings had balconies. At about noon I heard screams from the balcony across from our apartment. The wife of a Russian officer who lived across the courtyard was pointing toward our windows and screaming, trying to get the attention of the search party in the yard. She was telling the officer leading the search that strange people gathered nightly in our apartment, listening to foreign broadcasts—a grave accusation, a capital offense. The search party consisted of several armed soldiers led by a young lieutenant. With guns ready, they crowded into our apartment. I vividly remember the baby face of the officer, the trembling of his hand, the fright in his blue eyes when he pointed his gun at me. The women started to cry. The Russian woman kept up her verbal assault. Somehow I kept calm; perhaps it helped that it was the second time that a gun had been pointed at me. I explained to the officer that I was a Jew and therefore an enemy of the Germans. I showed him my working card that listed me as the technical director of the factory and advised him that just yesterday I was appointed general manager. I also showed him my identification cards issued by the Profspilka Civil Defense and lecture group. True, I said, we listened to the radio, but only to Soviet broadcasts, just now, to a speech by our great leader, J.V. Stalin, from which I quoted some excerpts. Meanwhile I was careful not to offer to show him my passport. Slowly the lieutenant calmed down. He withdrew his gun, muttered an apology and left with the party. The screams of the Russian woman soon dissolved into sobs. In the past she had tried to become friendly with our women, but they had kept her at arm's length because she was very nosy and unable to conceal her envy of our "riches." She left with her family the same afternoon on a military truck.

I went to the factory, and found that about half of the staff had showed up but no work was being done. The Komsomol woman returned to say that she had been turned back at the frontier. It had not helped that she was member of the Komsomol and married to a Soviet officer. Some others who tried to escape to Russia had the same experience. That much for the myth propagated by Communists and left-wingers that the Soviet government had put at our disposal special trains to take us to Russia but that we had refused to go. However, in the later stages of the German advance, Soviet control of the border disintegrated and a number of people did manage to escape to Russia and to avoid the rapidly advancing German forces. This woman soon left, and I never saw or heard from her again. I heard that she had been

killed by some peasants while trying to find a hiding place in an adjacent village.

Next, the Russians started mass inductions into the army. Rozia, our partner's daughter, came over crying because her husband, Kuba, our bookkeeper, was among those inducted. She thought that I might use my influence to have him freed, but it was hopeless. He barely had time to say goodbye to his wife and daughter. He had never had any military training. He was simply given a uniform and rifle and sent off to the front. We never saw him again. After the war I was told that Kuba had been a POW caught in the Kiev cauldron. Probably he was killed there.

Panic was setting in. I was spending most of my time at the factory, where fewer and fewer of the workers showed up. On the third day we were only a few men, among them Pawel Fedyszyn, who was to play a vital role a few days later. Before curfew, we all went home.

* * *

Another bombing raid. This time the explosions came much closer. Several road junctions were attacked. People hid in cellars. Stories were circulating during intervals that entire families were buried under the rubble—stories later proved to be exaggerations. Nevertheless I was scared of being entombed, because our cellar had only a single narrow entrance. I decided to keep my family on the ground level hidden behind a solidly built staircase. This hiding place, I hoped, would give us adequate protection in case of a near miss and would permit us to get out if a bomb hit the upper floor. A direct hit would kill us no matter where we were.

I ventured a look at the street. The Russians were now in full retreat. Infantry on foot and on trucks, artillery pieces, tanks, kept up a steady stream eastward. Not only the main highway, but all the side streets were clogged with traffic. In front of our house a huge tank broke down. Many disabled tanks and other vehicles were strewn around the town. It was a scene of utter chaos.

Zloczow was bombed daily. At first it was the railroad station and the road junctions, but now it was an indiscriminate assault on streets, houses and anything that moved, military or civilian. The Russians fought back harder. Unlike the Poles, they had an adequate air defense, heavy-caliber guns as well as machine guns, and the ack-ack of them combined with the swish and explosions of bombs created an

inferno. The defense did not, however, prevent the German planes from coming over low and almost, it seemed, hugging the rooftops. We saw no Russian fighter planes. During one particularly intensive attack, bombs were falling all around us. The noise of explosions and the rat-a-tat of machine guns were deafening. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion and a stream of hot air hit me in the face and neck. It felt like being scorched with a hot poker. I ran outside, recklessly, to survey the damage. A small bomb had hit a doorway of the house next door, demolishing a store and smashing windows. Our house was pitted with fragments. A big chunk of metal lay a few feet from the entrance of our house. It was a close call.

The next day was relatively peaceful. Except for a few overflights by single German planes, it was quiet. The Russian retreat slowed to a trickle. We went upstairs to listen to the radio. The German radio announced the fall of Lwow and the advance of their armies on a wide front. My parents were already under German rule. What was going to happen to them and to us?

Taking advantage of the lull in the bombing, we led the children upstairs and allowed them to sleep in their beds. As I mentioned before, they behaved remarkably well. They did not cry, not even when the bombs were falling around us. In the intervals between bombings, they huddled on the cement floor and played games in the corner of the corridor. If they realized the danger, they did not show it.

We had worn the same clothing since the beginning of the bombardments, and only on the day of the pause did we change and also eat our first hot food.

After the meal, I again went into the street. Many people were about, looking at the bomb craters, smashed windows and stricken houses. It was clear from the limited extent of the damage that only small-caliber bombs had been used. There was talk of casualties, but nobody was sure of the number. I saw few Russian soldiers milling about.

I went to the factory. In spite of the nationalization, I still retained the proprietary feeling, because somehow I believed that one day it would be ours again. The sentry was gone. The building had suffered no damage. I let myself in with my own set of keys. Inside, nothing was touched. I was soon joined by a few workers. The calm caused some to think that the German advance was halted. I did not believe it. I kept to myself what I heard on the radio, since the NKVD might still be around.

As we were talking, suddenly the sound of nearby artillery fire was heard. We all scattered and everyone ran home. The fire intensified and came closer. Back at our apartment house, we hurried to our shelter underneath the staircase. The artillery fire was now mixed with the puck-puck of tank fire. In the late afternoon there was a brief but vicious air raid. The anti-aircraft fire this time was only sporadic and came from small-caliber guns and machine guns. The heavy-caliber guns had been either withdrawn or silenced by the German attacks.

At nightfall, firing stopped. I ventured upstairs into our neighbor's apartment, since their windows looked out to the main market and offered a good view of the highway. I saw Russian tanks retreating east at full speed. Suddenly there was a burst of machine-gun fire. I left my observation spot in a hurry and returned to our hiding place. Tank and machine-gun fire resumed and intensified. It lasted a couple of hours, became intermittent and then stopped altogether. We could hear only the noise of the engines and the clanking of chains on the pavement. This too stopped after midnight.

* * *

There was complete silence for about half an hour, perhaps longer. Then the noise of moving tanks resumed. But it was a different sort of noise, softer and less metallic. There was no clanking of chains—it was rather the sound of rubber wheels. I said to the people in the shelter: "These are German tanks." I went upstairs to my lookout. Tanks were rapidly moving eastwards. They carried the German cross familiar to us from newspaper photographs and films. The turrets were open and German helmets were visible. The German army had arrived in Zloczow.

I looked at my watch. It was two o'clock on the morning of July 1, 1941.

19

July 1944

I approach this chapter with sadness. So many writers have tried to describe Germany's crimes against the Jews but have failed. Some have tried to rationalize, or otherwise explain, when no rationalization or explanation is possible. Others have trivialized the crimes, still other universalized them, linking them with other horrors, depriving the Jews of the lamentable distinction of having alone been the only people singled out for total annihilation.

The irreconcilable Jew-haters still deny that the crimes occurred at all. And unfortunately the tragedy has been and still is being shamelessly exploited.

So few writers have found the words to render the horror, the despair, the utter helplessness of a people plunged into a sea of hatred, bigotry, or at best, indifference, and Jewish writers have been no more successful than others.

I shall try to describe only what I saw take place in the small Polish town of Zloczow, a microcosm of the crimes that took place in the center of Europe in the twentieth century.

This is what happened to me, my family, and to the Jews of Zloczow during the German occupation that lasted from July 1, 1941 to July 17, 1944.

Day One

Early in the morning I went to my lookout at the neighbor's window. I saw a motley mob, perhaps a hundred people, rushing in and out of the government stores across the street. These were looters. There was a bearded Jew in the crowd, and a young, pretty peasant girl who was

carrying a large bolt of flowered material, that unraveled and fluttered like a huge flag.

A German military vehicle drove up; two noncommissioned officers jumped out, and without a word of warning one of them pulled out a revolver and started shooting at the crowd. Several people, among them the Jew and the girl, fell to the pavement. I kept my eyes on the Jew, who whirled around like a dancing dervish until he collapsed like an emptying sack of flour. The girl was covered with the material she had been carrying.

A pool of crimson formed around them while the crowd fled in panic in all directions.

The two Germans went into the store and drove out the other looters.

I remained at the window, frozen in fascination and horror. I had never seen anything like this—human beings shot, before my very eyes.

After the Germans left, people gathered around the bodies. Two Jews carried away the body of the slain Jew, but the bodies of the girl and two other victims remained on the pavement. More German soldiers appeared, but they paid no attention to the bodies. Soon they were joined by a crowd of young Ukrainians who were carrying Nazi and Ukrainian flags, shouting slogans and singing.

Hanka, our Ukrainian maid, came in at that time and reported that peasant mobs were looting government stores everywhere, that streets were full of soldiers, and that roads were crowded with tanks and other vehicles. She left, presumably in search of more news, or perhaps to join the looters.

I returned to my window and saw from there that the road leading east, toward Tarnopol, was a steady stream of military vehicles, artillery, tanks, motorcycles, soldiers in trucks and—surprise—a large detachment of soldiers on bicycles. The German tanks looked smaller and slicker and were quieter than the Russian. I became aware of rifle and pistol shots and outbursts of machine-gun fire. I looked toward the marketplace and saw that the stores were torn open and heaped with refuse. Above were apartments where not a single window was open. Jews lived in these. Several Ukrainian boys ran about in great excitement and in pantomime tried to get the attention of German soldiers, two of whom finally followed. These boys pointed toward the Jewish apartments. This seemed ominous, so I left my post and rejoined the family in our apartment where we stayed unmolested throughout the early part of the day.

* * *

At about noon several German soldiers burst through the unlocked door to the apartment. We froze, but they paid us no attention. Indeed, they behaved as if they were in their own homes. They walked casually through the rooms, opened closets and exchanged remarks.

"Na, hier sind aber schoene sachen," remarked one, a youngster looking no more than eighteen. He took out several of my suits: *"Dies wird mir aber passen."* (Look, what beautiful things. These will certainly fit me.)

The other one, a few years older, took both of my cameras: *"Schau mal, eine Leica und ein Voigtlaender"* (two well-known German cameras). He was both surprised and approving. He also took my wife's Japanese silk raincoat, one that I had brought her from my last trip to Warsaw just before the Russian invasion and which she had never worn because it was too elegant to display during the Russian period.

The soldiers lingered for about half an hour, until my mother-in-law summoned her courage and offered them tea. Without responding to her, they finally left with their booty.

We were still shaken by this first encounter with the Germans, when Hanka came running back breathless. "Something terrible is going on," she cried. "Germans are shooting Jewish men in the streets and in their houses. Jewish men are being rounded up and taken," she went on, "people say—to the Zamek!"

She urged me to leave immediately and seek shelter in the factory. She said that on her way here she had stopped at the homes of some of our Ukrainian employees and had asked them to come and fetch me.

Soon three of them, Fedyszyn, Lis, and Soltowski, arrived and I went with them. The first two posted themselves on each side of me and Soltowski walked behind me.

Bands of Ukrainian youths displaying yellow-and-blue armbands led clusters of Jewish men toward the main street. I saw several Jewish men lying on the pavement, bleeding.

Hanka's information appeared to be correct. Only Jewish men had been singled out and were being arrested and beaten. I saw no women in any of the crowds.

One roving group accosted us. From close by I could see that the youths appeared drunk, perhaps with vodka or newly gained power, or both. The group began to argue with my escorts. They wanted to take me away. Pawel Fedyszyn, who had an imposing set of whiskers and the commanding voice of the Austrian corporal that he had been during the First World War, held his ground. He thundered that he had

orders to clean up the factory and that I was indispensable to the work, and reluctantly the young thugs yielded. We came across a single Ukrainian youngster dragging a severely beaten Jew and I pleaded with Pawel to help rescue the man. We managed to get him to away.

I did not know this at the time, but these employees had saved my life. Several days later the wife of the man we had rescued found us at home and kissed my wife's hands in gratitude.

We reached the factory. I asked Pawel to go out again and gather as many of our Jewish employees as he could find and to bring them to the factory. He agreed and soon we were about ten men. We exchanged stories of killings and lootings. A few Ukrainian workers soon joined us.

A worker, Rose Dacko and her husband, John, appeared. She informed us that a Ukrainian Free Republic had been declared. There was a committee to run the city, of which she was a member, and it was in the name and authority of that committee that she was put in charge of the factory. She wanted me to stay on as I had under the Russians. Having made this statement, she left with her husband.

Behind her back, the other Ukrainian employees ridiculed her and expressed their skepticism and resentment. Goral, who had been outmaneuvered, was particularly angry. But I was entirely satisfied; I thought that I could work with Rose.

* * *

Rose had been an employee at the factory for a great many years. She was illegitimate, barely literate but very capable, and could handle practically any job required, since what she lacked in education she more than made up in ambition and shrewdness. Soon she had become the top woman in the factory.

Her husband, John, was unusually well-educated for a workman, having attended a few years of *gimnazjum*. At first he had been our chief mechanic, but later as we expanded and more sophisticated skills were required, his position was taken over by Dziunek, who became the chief mechanic, and by the wily Goral, the short-lived director under the Russians. Thus John was the third man in the machine shop. He was capable, but he needed supervision. We used to say about him that you had to take the file away from him before he made his last move, because with that last move he would spoil all the good work he had done up to that point.

Both Rose and John had been with us several years before they married. She was several years younger than he. When they married she was envied because he was a "catch," although crippled by arthritis. However, people laughed at him for, in addition to her husband, Rose had a steady boyfriend, Wolyniec, a clerk in the city government before the war and also during the Russian period. Rose also had a daughter whom she adored.

Two years before the war, Rose had received a letter from a man in America who wrote that he was her father. At her request I wrote back to the man, informing him that he had a daughter and a granddaughter and sent along photographs. His next letter contained an enormous sum of money—five hundred dollars.

The American father kept in touch and continued to send money. Soon Rose was able to open a store selling fabrics, although she maintained her factory job. From then on Rose dominated John completely.

During the Russian occupation she lost her store, but she ran for chairman of *Profspilka,* to be defeated by Pawel Fedyszyn.

This unusual woman who was destined to play a vital role in our survival was attractive, dressed well, and was a favorite of out-of-town salesmen with whom she slept, according to gossip. Since she was both envied and disliked by the other employees, it is hard to evaluate the accuracy of these tales. Anyhow, my parents and I liked her, and during the Soviet period she had been one of the most loyal workers and often had warned me against schemes of some of the Komsomoltzes.

* * *

More employees showed up at the factory, each new arrival bringing more and more ominous news. The Ukrainian mob supported by the Germans was running amok. We could hear intermittent sounds of shooting. I wanted to go home to see what was happening to my family, but I was reassured that women and children were not molested, and warned that once outside the factory I would be in danger.

I begged Pawel to bring my family to the factory, which he was reluctant to do. I persisted and finally he went. He was not accosted and soon returned with them.

My wife brought along her aunt and her three cousins and also our partner's daughter and her child. After I had left the house, Lina said, more German soldiers had returned, led by a Ukrainian youth who

recognized my mother-in-law and evidently steered the Germans out, on her account.

I had the workers post large signs in German and Ukrainian at the front and rear gates, saying that the building was under the protection of the Ukrainian National Committee. Up to this moment I had been apprehensive and worried but not really frightened. I had expected looting, yes, perhaps isolated instances of murder, such as I had witnessed that morning, but I had no inkling of anything worse. At this time few Jews lived on Sokola Street, which was usually quiet except in the evening if there was a performance or meeting in the Sokol Hall. I saw German soldiers surrounded by Ukrainian youths coming down the street looking up at windows. I advised Jewish friends and workers to keep out of sight and led them to an inner room where they huddled on the floor surrounded by the machinery. I myself stayed in the front rooms and continued to watch through the window.

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A group of Germans came toward the factory, and for the first time I saw the SS insignia at close range. Disregarding the posted signs, they marched straight through the factory, avoiding the side rooms even though the doors were ajar. They took one of the spiral staircases that led into the yard and left the building through the back door. Pawel, who accompanied them, came back shaking like a leaf. Fortunately, he could not speak or understand a word of German and could not answer their questions, or else he might have inadvertently betrayed our presence. They had asked him, "*Juden*?" he said, and he had shaken his head in the negative.

I thought of a possible hiding place in the attic and I made all the Jewish workers come there with me. I reminded them to refrain from talking or making any other sounds, and returned to my lookout at the window. All the Ukrainians and Poles left the factory. As darkness fell, I joined the others in the attic. We heard people running, screaming, cursing, and we heard shooting, but were unable to see what was going on. We had no more visitors, although there was some faint knocking at the front gate.

Day Two

Early next day the shooting and noise stopped. We came down from our hiding place. A few gentile workers came. We asked them what had happened yesterday, but they kept saying, "Terrible, terrible," and refused to give us any details.

Rose Dacko came with her boyfriend, Wolyniec, angry with me for providing shelter to people in the factory. A portent of things to come. She forced all the strangers out but did not dare to remove my family and my partner's. Wolyniec tried to calm her down with some success.

He told me privately that the NKVD had executed every prisoner on the Zamek before leaving town and that all the bodies had been left unburied. Some Ukrainian youths incited the SS to round up Communists and take their revenge. He refused to go into details, but admitted that there had been "excesses" and that innocent people had been murdered and injured. After a while Rose and Wolyniec left, but John remained with us.

My cousin Edzio, who worked at the factory, appeared with his girlfriend Stefa. He was blond, i.e., he did not look Jewish, and hadn't been harassed; furthermore, Stefa, who was Ukrainian, had shielded him when necessary. They told us that the city was now relatively calm. I decided to wait at least another day before venturing out. Pawel did not come, probably still quaking from yesterday's experience. Goral joined John and both spent the rest of that day with us.

It was a sunny day, and I was looking on while John and Goral were sitting on crates in the yard playing chess. The front gate was wide open. Two SS men walked in and headed straight toward me. "*Juden da?*" (Any Jews here?), they asked. I answered instinctively. "*Aber nein.*" They walked past me and looked at the chess player, "*Juden da?*" Again I answered with a smile, "*Nein, Ukrainer.*" They scouted the yard without going into the factory and finally left. I went to my family and friends and told them to hide again in the attic. I gave them some bread and milk that Stefa had brought.

In the afternoon there was shouting and more shooting. Again, all the gentiles left. I locked the front door and joined the people in the attic. During the night the screams and shooting continued intermittently, then finally ceased.

Day Three

We went home early on the morning of the third day. On our way, we did not encounter any Jews. There were notices plastered on the walls ordering all Jews to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David and the word "*Jude*" printed on them. The order applied to all, including children six years and older. The penalty for noncompliance was death. A chill seized us. Does this mean that a child of six caught without an armband would be shot?

All Jews were to appear next morning at seven a.m. at the Market Square, again under penalty of death.

We saw Ukrainian youths with armbands and a few German

soldiers. This time nobody bothered us. Hanka was at home and said that nobody had molested her.

Later that day I was summoned to the factory where I found Rose Dacko sitting in the director's office. She told me to assemble as many workers as possible. We were to print a declaration by the Ukrainian Committee creating an independent Ukrainian state. The borders of this state were not given. We were also to print *Tryzubs* (the symbol of the Ukrainian nationalists) on cardboard and slogans to be carried in a citywide demonstration scheduled for the following day. We were able to gather a few workers and proceeded with the printing of the declarations, *Tryzubs* and slogans at a feverish pace. The work lasted until sundown, when Pawel, who had reappeared, took me home.

At home all was quiet. On my way again, I had not seen a single Jew. Previously the few Jewish workers who had come to work told me that thousands of Jews had been killed on the first day. They had to be exaggerating, I thought. There must have been a number of victims—but thousands?

Day Four

We got up early in the morning. This was the day when all Jews were to assemble at the Market Square. We feared that a pogrom was planned and wondered whether to comply. My wife was sure that no harm had been done to women during the preceding days, since only the women should go and the men should keep away. We discussed this with our neighbors; most of them agreed with my wife's proposal. Only the women and a few older men went to the square. I went to my lookout at the window to watch what was happening. A German officer appeared and addressed the crowd. He spoke through a loudspeaker. I could hear him plainly. He repeated the orders printed on the posters regarding armbands. He also announced a curfew for Jews. Any Jew who did not conform to the edicts would be shot. Finally he announced that a Judenrat would preside over the welfare of the Jews. At the end of the speech he ordered the crowd to disperse.

We felt better. We believed that the worst was over. We assured each other that the Germans were, after all, civilized people, the nation of Kant, Goethe and Schiller, whose books were still on our shelves. The pogroms that took place during the first two days, so we reasoned, must have been incited by the Ukrainians and were in retaliation to the atrocities of the NKVD.

I returned to the factory. I met a few Jews on my way, none that I knew. Those whom I saw walked rapidly, trying to keep in the shadows of the houses. Finally I saw an acquaintance, Mr. Pundyk. I approached him. He told me several hundred Jews had been killed, among them his brother. He rushed away. Was it possible that the pogroms had taken more lives than I thought?

I entered the factory. A few Jewish employees were there and Pawel. I was worried about my friend Wilek Hessel, who had been living in our house on Podwojcie. I asked Pawel to fetch him . He returned a half hour later alone. Wilek had disappeared, he said. A neighbor had seen Wilek on the first day being led away by a group of youths.

Goral showed up to tell me that the Ukrainian Committee was summoned by the German military commander to appear at his headquarters that morning. About an hour later Rose Dacko and Wolyniec came. They were subdued and showed none of the exuberance of the preceding day. Rose told me to destroy all printed material referring to a Ukrainian state and to burn all the posters immediately. She did not say why, but Wolyniec did. He was a decent fellow but not very smart.

From what he told me and from what other participants at the meeting said, we were able to piece together the complete story. The German officer had spoken to the Ukrainians. He had been rude and had advised the committee to dissolve at once and to forget all notions of an independent Ukraine. The eastern part of Poland was to be called by its previous name, Galizien, and become a province in the so-called Protektorat, a part of Poland not directly incorporated into the Reich, yet part of the greater German Reich. The most ardent nationalists were keenly disappointed, but the majority quickly adjusted themselves to the idea of becoming German citizens. The realization that they would be merely second-class citizens did not dawn on them until much later. The injury to their pride was to a large degree softened by the fact that they had gotten rid of the despised Russians. Ironically, they had the same sentiment when the hated Poles had been replaced by the Russians.

* * *

For Jews to move around town was still dangerous, since they were confronted by German soldiers and Ukrainian youths who demanded watches, jewelry and money. They were beaten if they did not comply

and a few were even shot on the spot. However, after a week or so a measure of order was restored. The SS and the frontline soldiers moved out and were replaced by older men. A new military commander took over, also an older man, an Austrian, and according to some Jews who met him, quite decent. (Our later experiences with Austrians were bad, for they turned out to be ruthless anti-Semites and murderers.)

A Judenrat was organized. We considered this a positive development, believing that the Germans would let us run our own affairs. We were tragically mistaken.

The Judenrat in Zloczow consisted of some who honestly believed that they would be able to serve their fellow Jews, many opportunists, and a few rascals and downright criminals. Unfortunately, it was the opportunists and rascals who were soon running the organization.

The composition of the Judenrat was affected by the pogrom of the first few days.

The extent of the slaughter slowly began to emerge. There was hardly a family in Zloczow that had not lost a member. In some families all the men had been killed. The Ukrainians who helped the SS gather the victims and bring them to the Zamek were viciously selective. Most of the Jewish lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, and engineers had died in the massacre. The intelligentsia had been virtually wiped out. We lost, among others, our dear friend Wilek Hessel. Many young boys were killed, among them the son of my wife's legal mentor, Dr. Schwager, who was shot in front of his mother, and two sons of my mother's friend, Mrs. Kleid. These were barely teenagers! The Germans were killing children!

Both these women went mad. For months they wandered around town looking for their children, until the Germans killed them too.

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From eyewitness accounts we were able to reconstruct the details of the last days of the Russians. Before their departure the NKVD had executed all the inmates of the Zamek, leaving the bodies unburied in the cellars and yard of the prison. Although most of those executed by the NKVD were Ukrainians, there were also Jews among them. The body of Mr. Zwerdling, the neighbor who had been taken away by the NKVD, was found at the Zamek and was positively identified by Wilo Freiman.

Jews were brought in by the Germans to collect the bodies and to bury them. Then the burial groups were also lined up and machine-gunned, this time by the SS. Their bodies in turn were left exposed. Miraculously there were three survivors of the execution—Dr. Sternschuss, Kuba Schnap, and Wilo Freiman, who lay bleeding and motionless beneath the bodies of the dead. They told us that the Germans stomped over the heaps of corpses, shooting at close range those who showed signs of life. When darkness fell and the SS and the Ukrainians had left, these three survivors managed to crawl away to safety.

The number of Jews killed during the first two days of the German assault exceeded our worst fears. A census of the Jewish population disclosed that at least three thousand people were missing, probably more, since the Jews from the West had not been registered, and we knew that many of them were missing and in all probability had perished.

At first we believed that what had happened in Zloczow was a local affair, an isolated case, but soon news came that similar pogroms had taken place in other cities. In Lwow, the number of Jews killed was many times greater than in Zloczow. Everywhere the intelligentsia were singled out for death. Lutek Roth, a dear friend of ours in Lwow, the man with whom I had planned the aborted escape in 1939,

perished. His widow moved in with my parents, who came to love her as their own daughter. Later she too disappeared without a trace as the Germans continued their liquidation of the Jews.

For months, in spite of all the signs to the contrary, we tended to blame the Ukrainians rather than the Germans for the pogroms. That was because we remembered the pogroms in the Russian Ukraine in the years 1918-20 during the brief period of the independent Ukraine under Petlura. (Petlura escaped to France where he was later assassinated by a Jew, Szwarcbart.) Also, we had heard no reports of pogroms in the western part of Poland occupied by the Germans since 1939. Many prominent members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia tried to disassociate themselves from the atrocities, blaming them on the Germans and drunken peasants. I have told of the arrest of Dr. Wanio; his body had also been identified at the Zamek. His daughter, with whom we had been friendly before the war, spoke to my wife about the horrors, and later, during one of the German Akzions, (roundup of Jews to be sent to extermination camps), she offered to shelter our children.

* * *

Civilian traffic was restored to some extent, and I prevailed on Rose Dacko to go to Lwow and find out what had happened to my parents. She did so, and returned with the news that my parents were safe. The other good news was that a German authority had taken over the Pharmaceutical Trust and retained Miss Czyzowicz in the same post she had held under the Russians. She was planning to come to Zloczow shortly.

The appointment of Miss Czyzowicz did not really surprise us. Many of our Zloczow Ukrainians who had served the Russians now were given similar jobs with the Germans and served them undoubtedly with greater eagerness. We called it "turning the visors of the caps around." A number of Ukrainians who had run away from the Russians came back and took the more important jobs in the new administration that were open to the "natives".

One of these returnees was Genek Olesnicki, a bridge partner of mine and a frequent visitor to our house. He came from a prominent Ukrainian family, his father having been the ambassador to England during the short-lived Petlyura government and a member of the Polish Sejm (parliament) during the Polish Republic.

One day Lina came home in tears and said, "Guess who I met in the street; Genek Olesnicki. He pretended not to recognize me, just gave me a contemptuous smile and rushed away. The same man who used to kiss Mother's hand and mine whenever he came to dinner."

Genek's brother, Roman, had emigrated to America before the war as the representative of the Jewish-owned meat-processing plant. (He later wrote us a warm letter when he learned about our arrival in the United States from articles about Edith that appeared in the American press.)

Some days later, Miss Czyzowicz arrived in a German military car, accompanied by a German in the yellow uniform of the Storm Troops. The German, a Dr. Walter, was chairman of the pharmaceutical division of the trust. They came to my home and brought me to the factory. The Dackos were already there. Miss Czyzowicz told me that all Jewish property, as well as the major non-Jewish enterprises and communal farms, had been taken over by Treuhandverwaltung, a German trust, and were to be held for the duration of the war. She whispered in my ear that in all probability the property would become spoils for deserving German war veterans after the war, but, she added, this was immaterial now. She said that Rose Dacko was being named temporary manager, but that I was to remain as the actual, though unofficial, manager. As a Jew I would be classified as a common worker, but I would be issued a pass as an indispensable *Facharbeiter* (skilled worker), which would protect me from deportation for other work. Her best news was that my father had received similar treatment. A document was handed to me confirming the transaction.

It transpired that Rose Dacko had been recommended to Miss Czyzowicz by my father. I was very happy with her appointment, since she had been very loyal to me and had behaved very decently toward my parents during the Russian period. It was also obvious that Mrs. Dacko, shrewd woman that she was, had managed on her own to secure the good graces of Miss Czyzowicz.

Miss Czyzowicz confided to me that Dr. Walter was a decent man despite his uniform and that he retained many Jews in his department. When we were introduced, he complimented me on my command of German. After a brief inspection, they left me with instructions to take inventory of the machinery and stock.

Father's factory served us directly and indirectly as a refuge during the Russian occupation. Would it continue to serve us during the dark days that lay ahead? Would it keep us afloat? I decided to cling to it, using all the means at my disposal.

* * *

Wall posters announced the incorporation of our territory in the province of Galizien and in the General Government, a political entity created by the Germans. It comprised the pre-World War I portion of Poland, in addition to some Polish provinces that were part of czarist Russia. The headquarters of this colonial setup was the ancient Polish capital Krakow, preferred to Warsaw by the Germans because of its German style. Herman Frank, who was destined to be hanged as a war criminal after the Allied victory, was the governor general. An SS general named Wachter headed the District Galizien which had a seat in Lwow. The Polish zloty was reintroduced as the official currency. German marks were also in circulation but only for Germans; the local population was forbidden to trade in marks, with the warning that any Jew caught in possession of marks would be shot.

The Kreishauptmannschaft, a civilian county government, replaced the military. It was run by a handful of Germans assisted by Volksdeutsche from Silesia and by a few Ukrainians and Poles who were handicapped by their skimpy knowledge of German and soon relegated to minor clerical duties. The speed and efficiency with which the Germans organized the government was very different from the Russian efforts when they took over.

A Gestapo unit consisting of a commandant and his deputy came to Zloczow. The regional kommandantura was in Tarnopol, and its head was a man named Miller who became notorious for his cruelty. I was later to meet him face to face and live to tell about it.

An auxiliary police unit, Hilfspolizei, was organized. This was an assortment of thugs who soon acquired a reputation for corruption and cruelty matched only, I was told, by units composed of Lithuanians.

* * *

All of these German offices, particularly the Kreishauptmannschaft, needed many printed forms. There was only one other printing shop in Zloczow where, during the Russian regime, the newspaper *Serp y Molot* had been printed. However, they had melted their type into Cyrillic fonts during the Russian occupation. Fortunately, I had preserved some of ours because I doubted the permanency of Russian rule. Furthermore, as the Jewish workers had been killed, no one on their staff spoke German, except one man who asked to work with us. I gave him a job. In addition, we still had two of our own Jewish printers who

had survived the massacre of the first few days. Anyhow, apparently our shop was the only one capable of doing the work, and that is how a Ukrainian, Krawchuk, who was working for the Kreishauptmannschaft, entered our lives.

Before the war Krawchuk had been a court clerk. We had known each other from the court and also from the ball park where he had been a popular soccer referee. During the Russian occupation, he had held the fairly high position of chairman of the consumer goods agency. Thanks to his work in court, he spoke some German.

In spite of his political gyrations, Krawchuk was a decent fellow who never harmed anybody. I had had no contact with him during the Russian period.

He summoned us and Rose and I rushed to the Kreishauptmannschaft where Krawchuk introduced us to his boss, a German in civilian dress with a pin in his lapel identifying him as a member of the Nazi Party. The German handed me a typewritten text in German and asked me to typeset it in German, Ukrainian, and Polish. It was a mandatory price list for produce. He had no one on his staff, he said, who could do the translation. Could we do it? I assured him that we could! Thus began an association which helped to save our lives. Krawchuk was very friendly to me throughout the whole of the German occupation. My lifeboat was afloat again.

After this first job, I was called almost daily to the Kreishauptmannschaft, which now occupied two buildings, one a short distance from our factory, the other farther away, which required that I cross the main street. These trips were still dangerous, as roving Ukrainian gangs were stopping Jews, beating them, and dragging them away for compulsory labor, frequently in their own backyards or homes; German soldiers did the same.

Rose did not always have the time to come with me, so she tried to have Wolyniec go; however, he was endowed with "Semitic" features, dark complexion and a prominent "Jewish" nose and looked like a living caricature in *Der Stuermer,* the newspaper belonging to the infamous Julius Streicher, later hanged as a war criminal in Munich. Nowadays similar caricatures appear in Moscow's magazine *Krokodil.* Wolyniec was frequently accosted in the street despite his yellow-and-blue armband and the huge cross around his neck, repeatedly forced to show his identification papers, and once deeply humiliated when he was ordered to unbutton his trousers to show that he was uncircumcised. It was an occasion for a rare moment of merriment among

the Jews in the factory. But in consequence he became very reluctant to venture into the streets, which forced me to make the trips alone.

One happy event took place. Telephone communication with Lwow was restored and I was able to talk to my father when he was at work. He and Mother were safe. They had been permitted to keep their tiny apartment. My friend Lutek's widow, Ada, lived with them and was a great comfort to them. From our careful conversation I understood that things were even more dangerous in Lwow than in Zloczow and that the number of victims had been enormous.

Father became worried about my safety when I told him that I had to walk the streets and advised me that a few Jews in Lwow were wearing a green armband issued by the German army. The armband had the letters WWJ, *Wirtschaft Wertfolle Juden* (Jew needed for industry) and was supposed to protect the wearer from being molested.

By then I had made some friends in the Kreishauptmannschaft, among them a *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic German) who showed a lot of sympathy towards Jews. I asked him whether it would be possible for him to issue me a permit to wear such an armband. He admitted that he knew nothing about it and doubted whether he had the needed authority, but without much hesitation he had his secretary type a permit, which he signed. He warned me that he could not guarantee its usefulness. Nonetheless he soon issued three more such permits to other Jews in Zloczow. The armband became another of these miraculous quirks that helped me in my fight for survival, since the Ukrainians and the Germans respected it, not knowing what to make of it. I wore it over my blue-and-white Jewish armband, although that was forbidden.

Once when I was in the Kreishauptmannschaft, two SS men came in, looked me over, and one asked the other: *"Was ist dieses Armband?"* (What is that armband?). The other replied: *"Keine Ahnung; muss was bedeuten"* (No idea; must mean something). Fortunately it did not occur to them to ask me.

The green armband was a fake that worked—for a while. Two of the four wearers in Zloczow were eventually caught and shot; I and one other man escaped, but of that later. The man who originally issued our permits also came to a tragic end. As it turned out, he was a Jew with false identification papers. When this was discovered he was shot by the Gestapo. Krawchuk told me about this.

* * *

As I mentioned before, the Judenrat came into being. Judenrats throughout Europe have been accused of collaboration, but the issue was more complex. Most members in Zloczow volunteered to serve because they thought the job offered security. A few were talked into serving to enhance its prestige and perhaps help their fellow Jews. Dr. Maiblum, a former vice-mayor, a Zionist, was elected chairman; it was soon apparent that he was but a figurehead without any influence, but no one could doubt his integrity. Others accepted the job because of a sense of social obligation and did, or at least tried to do, some good under the most tragic circumstances, among them Dr. Henryk Teichman and the dentist Jakier. Their memories remain untarnished. For most of the rest, the less said the better. Their security, so ardently sought, was a mirage. Some were caught in the web, others were corrupted by the illusion of power that the Germans bestowed on them, and a few were out-and-out scoundrels. All are dead. Let their names be forgotten.

A Jewish militia was also organized, supposedly to keep order among the Jewish population, but it soon became clear that its function was much more sinister—collaboration with the German destruction of the Jewish community. With few exceptions, the job attracted the dregs of society. The few decent policemen tried to help whenever they could by warning us about imminent or anticipated Akzions, but there was not much they could do once the pogroms were in progress. Others used their positions to exact bribes from the unfortunates caught in the Nazi dragnets. The chief of the militia, Landesberg, owner of a printing shop, was a Zloczower; his deputy, Steinwurzel, was from Stryj. He was married to Nusia, a lawyer colleague of ours, who soon escaped from Zloczow and lived in Lwow under an assumed name. She survived the war but was killed by a German bomb during the bombardment of the already liberated city.

Like the members of the Judenrat, the militiamen treasured the illusion that they would be spared, but the Nazis killed them as they killed all Jews, including those who tried to work with them—even those who were outright traitors and collaborators.

22

Finally a Jewish *Arbeitsant* (employment office) was organized, headed by Dr. Oskar Glanz, formerly the junior partner of Dr. Hessel, one of the most prestigious lawyers in Zloczow. He had a reputation for meanness even then. In his new position he sank to the lowest rungs of corruption. The Arbeitsant was empowered to issue special work cards for the Jews which, at least in the beginning, offered some safety, protecting the holder from being thrown into one of the new labor camps being formed around Zloczow. Soon the only way to obtain such a card was to bribe this Dr. Glanz. The cards proved to be a chimera, but people were ready to pay anything for them.

In the beginning we believed or hoped that after the first pogrom we would be left in relative peace, albeit isolated from the rest of the population. The establishment of the Judenrat, militia and Arbeitsant reinforced this. In retrospect we know that these agencies were part of Hitler's plan to destroy us by creating the fiction of a Jewish community run by Jews. They successfully lulled our fears and thus reduced the impetus to organize resistance.

No sooner was the Judenrat organized when it announced that a heavy tax of ten million zlotys was imposed by the Kreishauptmannschaft on the Jewish population of Zloczow. The money was to be turned over within twenty-four hours.

A man named Mojsze Zuckerkandel emerged as the power broker of the Judenrat, which meant power over the Jews of Zloczow. He had been a gambler all his life, so much in debt that he never carried money or even a watch, but he did possess the necessary daring for the admittedly dangerous job. He appointed himself sole spokesman and negotiator with the Kreishauptmannschaft. Ir /ariably he exaggerated the already crushing German demands in order to be able to claim that only due to his shrewdness were the demands subsequently reduced. He played his game so well that he was hero to many Jews in Zloczow

including some who believe in him to the present day. That he enriched himself in performing his duties was accepted as normal. Such were the times.

Soon other *machers* (go-betweeners) played his game by securing private relationships with individual Germans. A few of these people probably did temporarily ease the tremendous burden on the Jews in Zloczow, but others did it for personal gain, or for their own survival. In the end, both the good ones and the rotten apples perished together.

It was the Judenrat that assessed the individual Jews in Zloczow. We were still considered wealthy, although we had little cash left. We sold some of our jewelry to cover our share. The blackmarketeers, both Jews and others, had a field day since the jewelry had to be sold quickly for only a fraction of its value. Some of our friends who were also forced to sell jewelry told us that the Judenrat accepted valuables that could not find buyers at even the lowest valuations. Part of that ransom ramained in the hands of a clique within the Judenrat. (By coincidence, we stumbled on the evidence of that sordid story when we were already in hiding. As we shall presently see, greed and stupidity have no limits.)

Edict after edict emerged from the Kreishauptmannschaft directed at the Jews: A strict curfew for Jews which had been ordered earlier was continued; Jews were subject to compulsory labor; Jews were forbidden to own real estate; Jews were forbidden to own or operate any business; Jews were forbidden to travel. Violators were to be shot.

Since I had a German-approved job, I had little trouble securing an employment card which was issued by the Jewish Arbeitsant and validated several times by the Gestapo. I also obtained a work card for my wife, who became a collector of materials to be recycled, such as metal and glass, a job considered important by the Germans. Every week she had to turn in a quota in iron, glass and rags. Soon, enterprising individuals were offering the necessary quotas for sale. Like other women, she bought her quota weekly. It was all a sham. But so was the employment card and repeated validations by the Gestapo, for none of this activity protected anyone from the Akzions.

* * *

Throughout the summer and early fall of 1941 German armies rolled over the Russians, extending Hitler's rule from the Atlantic Ocean to the River Dnieper. The German newspapers predicted that Russia

would collapse momentarily and that its immense resources would be at Germany's disposal. We had no doubt that they would make much better use of them than the Russians ever did.

We, the Jews, lost all hope. The Ukrainians, however, rejoiced in the reflected glory of the German victories. The Dackos, particularly John, and Wolyniec soon considered themselves German patriots. John loved to engage me in discussions about Europe's future under German domination. He foresaw a glowing existence for all but the Jews, for whom, he felt, a place would be found somewhere in Africa, from where, he insisted, we had actually come.

He brushed aside my feeble disagreements that even if Russia were defeated, England would still fight; that behind England stood the might of America. England, he said, would surrender once Russia fell. And John pointed to German papers: isolationism in America was so strong that America would never enter the war but would accept Hilter's rule over Europe. The German press was indeed gleefully reporting the isolationist spirit in America, reprinting statements of the America First Committee, and describing huge antiwar rallies in New York's Madison Square Garden. The antiwar movement was led by its hero, the flier Charles A. Lindbergh, who vowed that he would do everything in his power to prevent America's intervention in European affairs.

I argued feebly, because in my heart I was convinced that John was right. We all felt that. There was no hope anywhere.

The BBC reported a meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt and the proclamation of the Atlantic Charter, but the meaning of this was obscure and only the most ardent optimists attached any value to these reports. The Germans advanced rapidly on all fronts, but from the West came only the speeches of Churchill and Roosevelt.

Just as the Russians did, the Germans soon started enlisting volunteers for work in Germany. A considerable number of Poles and Ukrainians went voluntarily to replace both men and women who had been drafted into the army. A few Jews with false identification papers managed to slip past the Gestapo into Germany. Ironically, that proved the safest place for Jews, since many of those who took that route survived, among them our friends Lucy and Oscar Samuely.

Without the help of the Poles and Ukrainians, who were keen at sniffing out Jews, the Gestapo within Germany failed to discover the impostors. German employers, some of whom suspected their "Poles," were more interested in keeping their farms or businesses going than

exposing Jews. Those who were caught had been exposed by their so-called "compatriots."

In Poland even the children were on the hunt of the hated *"zyd."* They used to brag: "We can smell a Jew a mile away." Many of my friends who tried to hide under an assumed name perished after being recognized, blackmailed, and finally betrayed by Poles. We were told many such stories by survivors.

I got most of my information on what was going on in the world from the German press. Like the Russian press, the German papers were organs of the propaganda machine. However, they were much better edited, much more readable and, unlike the Russian papers, even contained some real news. In spite of the distortions and slanting, a careful reader could obtain a fairly clear picture of what was happening on the fronts and in Germany. As a Jew, I was forbidden to buy German papers, but Wolyniec secured them for me. He and the Dackos were just as anxious as we were to learn what was going on; since they could not read German, they had to depend on me. I took advantage of this and put my own interpretations on the events, making the German victories seem minor and the rare setbacks appear more serious. They were arrogant toward me when the war news was favorable to the German side, more respectful when the news reported German losses.

In addition to the official paper, the *Krakauer Zeitung*, I read *Das Reich*, Goebbels' weekly, with his interpretation of the news. The lead article was always written by Herr Doctor himself. Occasionally a German soldier visiting the factory would leave me a paper from inside Germany. Those I read from cover to cover, including the obituaries from which I was able to gauge German losses. Even with the German advances, the losses extrapolated from these notices which began with the slogan *"Fuer Fuehrer und Vaterland"* seemed very high.

* * *

Conditions in Zloczow continued to stabilize, seemingly. We were encouraged by news that the prominent Jewish lawyer, Dr. Leib Landau, had been appointed counselor to the governor of Galizien. I have mentioned Dr. Landau before; he was perhaps the most respected Jewish lawyer in Poland and the best orator. His fame had reached its peak when, as I described earlier, he defended Steiger, the Jew accused of the alleged assassination attempt of President Wojciechowski. Alas,

this appointment, like other clever deceptions by the Germans, was a ruse designed to lull us into passivity.

News brought by fugitives from other cities was invariably frightening. Mass killings were still going on. The worst bulletin came from the southeastern province of Stanislawow.

In 1939 that part of Poland was first occupied by Hungarian troops. (Hungary, ruled by Admiral Horthy, and Rumania by Marshal Antonescu, had both contributed troops to Hitler's assault on Russia.) At that time the Hungarians had treated the Jewish population humanely. In fact, Jews were serving in the Hungarian army. But then the Hungarians left, the SS took over, and terrible pogroms ensued in Stanislawow, Kolomyja and several smaller cities. Stanislawow became the first city to become "*judenrein*" (devoid of Jews). The SS man responsible for these atrocities was the notorious Miller, soon to be transferred to Tarnopol, when Zloczow would also fall under his jurisdiction. I would meet him eye to eye and survive, as I said previously.

Our Judenrat kept reassuring us that nothing like that would happen in Zloczow because we were a "lucky" city, on good terms with the Kreishauptmannschaft. Some chose to believe this, but I and others did not.

By now we were doing much work for the Kreishauptmannschaft and I got to know some of the German officials better. A few were decent. A German named Meyer, though a party member, saved my cousin Salo Altman's life and was subsequently honored in Israel. The majority either hated Jews or seemed completely indifferent to the atrocities. They all had contempt for "natives," non-Jews and Jews—with Jews perceived by them as objects, not human beings. A few regretted that we were being eliminated because they would then miss our services. The Ukrainian underlings, with few exceptions, were hostile, and the Poles who still remained in Zloczow were in general more friendly. The behavior of the natives changed, as I said, with Germany's vicissitudes on the battlefields.

* * *

Food was our most urgent need. Rations were graded; the Reich Germans were entitled to full rations, the Volksdeutsche to less; still smaller were the rations for the Poles and Ukrainians. Jews got crumbs. Consequenctly hunger and starvation spread. A soup kitchen was organized by the Judenrat but it had nothing to distribute. Some women, including my wife, tried to collect and distribute food

privately. We shared what we had, as did others, and pots of soup were made and delivered to the starving, particularly in the hospitals. A few lives were saved—for a while. Typhus raged. The number of deaths from starvation and disease increased daily.

There was plenty of food on the black market but few could afford the exorbitant prices. The peasants mostly refused to accept money, insisting on clothing, gold, and jewelry. They became very sophisticated in their demands. Gentile black marketeers when caught were sent to Germany for slave labor. Jews were forbidden to buy food under penalty of death, but our women took off their armbands and went to the adjacent villages hoping not to be recognized as Jews. A few were caught and shot.

Our family did better than average. Factory workers and peasants who had known us for years brought flour, potatoes, even some eggs, butter or a chicken. The best of everything was always reserved for the children. We were surprised to discover how little one needed to survive.

A Mrs. Jasinska, owner of a Polish bakery, knew exactly the stock of my wife's dresses and hats and sent word that she needed the "blue dress with the flower design" or the "red hat" for which she was willing to exchange so many loaves of bread. My wife dealt calmly with these demands, but I was furious. However, the bread was tasty, since the bakery's customers were mainly Germans. I supplemented our food supply by giving German lessons to three Ukrainian boys who paid me with potatoes.

Arbeitsamt: Lemberg

Nebenstelle: Zloczow

Meldekarte für Juden

Nr. 90078

Der Jude Feuerstein Samuel
Die. Jüdin
geboren am: 9.12.1909

in Zloczow ledig, verh., gesch., verw.

Wohnort: Zloczow

Sienkiewicza Str. Nr: 4

Berufsgruppe u. Art: 1062

ist auf Grund der Zweiten Durchführungsvorschrift zur Verordnung vom 26. Oktober 1939 über die Einführung des Arbeitszwanges für die jüdische Bevölkerung im Generalgouvernements vom 12. Dezember 1939 erfasst und steht dem Arbeitsamt zum Arbeitseinsatz zur Verfügung. Ein Auffangen auf der Strasse ist nicht statthaft.



(Stempel, d. Arbeitsamts)

(Unterschrift)

Kontrollmeldung am		

jeder Woche, soweit kein Arbeitsverhältnis besteht.

Staatsdruckerei Warschau — Nr. 4779-41.

Arbeitskart (work certificate), issued by the Judenrat, signed by Dr. Maiblum, also bears the stamp of the Gestapo, 1940.

23

Several Jewish stores that were nationalized earlier by the Russians had been turned over to Ukrainians by the Germans. The major enterprises, best stores and restaurants were reserved and restricted to Germans and bore *Nur für Deutsche* (Germans only) signs. The Russians had had special stores for *their* elite classes, but for the Germans *every* German was elite. The Volksdeutsche were admitted to the "German only" places and people started their frantic search for German ancestry in the birth certificate files. In predominantly Catholic Poland, Protestants were a tiny minority; many of them, those with German-sounding surnames especially, claimed German origin. An "Aryan" appearance, i.e., blond hair, blue eyes, straight nose, etc., assumed great importance.

At that time, we still had clothing left to sell, although my best suits had been stolen by the first Germans to enter our house on the first day of occupation. Our bedroom suite, all that was left of our furniture—the rest having been sold to the Russians—was confiscated by the Germans. The radio, our sole link with the world, was also taken. We were left with one couch and the children's beds. A man named Horodylovski, a Ukrainian lawyer in charge of the confiscations, issued us two old iron beds as a special favor. Our former employees brought straw with which we constructed mattresses. Hanka remained with us and the apartment was registered in her name.

A young woman who had worked for us and now served as maid to a German named Kramer recognized our furniture in his apartment. I occasionally encountered Kramer, who was considered one of the "decent" Germans and who always addressed me as "Herr Tennenbaum." I sometimes wondered what his reaction would be if I were to ask him: "How do you like my beds? Are the mattresses comfortable? Is the reception on my radio satisfactory? What does the other side

say?" Considering the mortal danger we lived in, it seems ludicrous now that such silly thoughts entered my mind, but they did.

There is a tragic footnote to the maid story. Jewish Arbeitsant provided such jobs for Jewish women, who had to be young and pretty. Though many of the maids were sexually exploited by their employers, these jobs were sought because they spared the women from labor camps. Some Germans went to considerable lengths to save their mistress's lives, but a girl we knew, beautiful, and from a fine family, was said to have been murdered by her German employer when she became pregnant. Presumably he killed her to save his own skin, since for a German to have a relationship with a Jew was punishable by death.

* * *

The German army continued its advance. We eagerly followed the developments on the various battlefields. I present them as they seemed to us at the time, to show how they affected our lives.

The Germans penetrated deeply on all fronts. Kiev fell, capital of the Ukrainian Republic and its largest city. Entire Russian armies were encircled and routed. The Ukraine was in German hands. In the north, the German troops were at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad; in the south, they captured the vital port city of Rostov-on-the-Don. On October 2, 1941, Hitler declared that the Russian enemy was conquered and that the war was practically at an end.

And then, almost imperceptibly, there was a change. While the Crimean peninsula was overrun, the fortress Sevastopol still held firm. Leningrad, though surrounded, was resisting. There was an admission in the German press that drenching rains had slowed the advance of their tanks. Claims of swift victories were heard no more. In November, the first major German defeat occured, when Rostov was retaken by the Russians. The German newspapers blamed the reversals on General Mud, and soon after on mighty General Winter. Just as the winter of 1939-40 had helped the Finns against the Russians, so did the winter of 1941-42 stem the German advance into Russia. We began to realize that perhaps we had underestimated Russian strength and human resources. Historians have since analyzed the reasons for Hitler's failure in Russia: delays caused by the Yugoslav and Greek campaigns; the overextension of the German supply lines; the Japanese refusal to open a second front; the inadequacy of the German

tanks under winter conditions, and so on. I feel that the Germans made political mistakes which were perhaps even more important. They alienated native populations who might have aided them against Russia. The contempt with which they treated the inhabitants of conquered areas, the bestiality with which they treated prisoners of war, and last but perhaps not least, the persecution and murder of the Jews, which deprived Germany of valuable scientific brain power that proved so helpful to the Allies—all these contributed greatly to the resistance to the Germans in the occupied areas.

The Hungarians and Rumanians, who had some autonomy, cooperated with the German war effort and contributed armed forces. The Poles—while I doubt that they would have fought on the side of Germany given a measure of respect by the Germans, might have resisted less. The Ukrainians had greeted the invading Germans with open arms, but the intelligentsia—the leaders—became disenchanted when they realized that the Germans, contrary to their policy in 1917, had no intention of creating an independent or even an autonomous Ukrainian state. Even the Russian peasant might have been won over had the Germans dissolved the hated *kolkhozes* and distributed the land to the peasants, but they treated the Russian peasant like dirt, and kept the *kolkhozes* in trust for German war veterans after winning the war. They also imposed heavy contributions of grain, cattle, eggs and butter on the hapless native population. Butter was as much an obsession with the Germans as watches were with the Russians.

It was not until the closing days of the war that an SS division, the "Galizien," was raised from Ukrainian volunteers, although it was commanded by German officers and its language was German. A "volunteer" Russian army under a Russian general, Vlasov, was created from POWs and deserters, but it had little stomach for combat and was used mostly to guard concentration camps and build fortifications on the Western Front.

Stalin cleverly took advantage of these mistakes of the German master-race policy. The word "Soviet" all but disappeared from the official announcements; and speeches and exhortations addressed *Russian* patriotism and pride. The Russian peasant began to say to himself: "I got little from the Soviet government but it was my government. Now I am worse off. I am treated like a dog by foreign masters who talk to me in a language that I cannot understand." So they started running away and hiding in the forests and the resultant guerrilla warfare eventually tied up German divisions desperately needed at the front.

The Germans did better in the cities, where they had permitted small shops to open and operate on capitalist principles that had persisted in Russia even after twenty-five years of Bolshevik rule. When the Germans retreated, many of these city dwellers followed. Some were collaborators afraid of reprisals, but others wanted to escape from the strangulation of Soviet rule. In Zloczow, a sizable number of Russian women and children had remained behind when their army retreated. During the German occupation some opened little stores, others took jobs with the Germans and were treated well.

The German reverses had an immediate impact on our Ukrainians, including the Dackos. Their arrogance toward us turned almost to deference with the news of America's entry into the war.

* * *

Suddenly came the news that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and that Hitler had declared war on America. For us this was the most joyous day since the outbreak of the war. The dentist, Jakier, said: "This will be Hitler's *sof*." We spoke in Polish but the last word, *sof* (end, in Yiddish) emphasized his delight and faith in the outcome of the war.

We all shared this belief. Now we knew that Germany's fate was sealed and hoped that Hitler's end was at hand. No one dreamt that in December of 1941 the end was still years away and that, when it finally came, it would be too late for so many of us.

John Dacko and Dziunek had built crude radio receivers and I sometimes ventured to the Dackos to listen. Foreign broadcasts were jammed mercilessly by the Germans and only trickles of information got through. Dziunek lived too far away, and I was prevented by the curfew from visiting him, but he shared the news with me. A few Jews who had contact with gentiles got the news from them and shared it with us. My own contact was Krawchuk, mentioned before. While shaking hands, he would leave in my palm a slip of paper with the important news of the day, the name of a city taken or lost by the Germans; the number of prisoners captured by either side; a city bombed in Germany; or a name—Churchill, Roosevelt, or Stalin—signifying a speech. After reading the slip I would swallow it in his sight. To his credit, he took great risks in sharing information with a Jew. He risked imprisonment in a concentration camp or even death. Occasionally he whispered to me: "Hitler must be crazy!"—for example, when Hitler declared war on America.

Friends pooled these fragments of news and derived a fairly clear picture of the political and military situation. Alas, the Russian counteroffensive of this first winter of the war was of short duration. They regained some territory, including a few major towns, and inflicted severe casualties on the Germans, but they did not yet succeed in breaking the Germans' back. Still, they hoped to repeat the feat of 1812; as the Russians had stopped Napoleon then, they would stop Hitler now. The German papers issued brief reports from the front: "Hard battles," and the concession that "some ground had been given up to straighten the lines."

We, however, felt the German wrath immediately. A decree was promulgated that as punishment for their treachery, Jews must turn in all furs and deliver them to the Judenrat. The penalty for noncompliance was death. Few of us had worn fur coats during the Russian occupation; now we took them out of their hiding places. I turned some in, but also left a few in the care of Stefa, a young Ukrainian employee whom we trusted. They came in handy later when we went into hiding. We also entrusted our most valuable jewelry to Stefa.

Stefa was a pretty young girl from a well-to-do peasant family, educated a few notches above our average factory worker. During the Russian period, she was one of my staunchest friends. She and my cousin Edzio Reichard fell in love and planned to marry.

We gave our remaining property for safekeeping to other workers whom we considered trustworthy. But only Stefa returned every one of our possessions. The others claimed after the war that they had either lost or sold our property, believing that we were no longer alive. Pawel, who had once saved my life, had been given our table silver which he said he had buried. After the liberation he claimed it had been stolen from him!

As soon as the furs were collected, another cash levy was imposed, with particularly bad consequences for us. This demand was so heavy that the money for it could not be raised by selling clothing, so that we had to sell the jewelry. But the black market for jewelry in Zloczow was depressed. There were too many sellers and too few buyers. The latter—butchers and bakers—used their advantage and offered a small fraction of the value. Of course, value is relative; we could not eat jewelry and the jewelry buyers controlled the most vital commodity—food.

The market was better in Lwow where wealthy Poles, Ukrainians, and even Germans bought through Jewish intermediaries. Mother had a gentile contact, and in the past had disposed of some of our valuables

at relatively fair prices. We used Rose Dacko as courier. Our neighbors asked us as a favor to help them in the sale of their valuables. We agreed, albeit very reluctantly; perhaps we had a premonition. Anyhow, when Mother went to her source, she was held up and all the valuables, ours and our neighbors', were seized. Quite possibly the contact did have a hand in the affair. Mother was beaten up but was thankful to escape with her life.

Our rabbi told us that, according to the Talmud, we were not responsible for our neighbors' loss since we had been doing this as a favor rather than engaging in a business deal. Nonetheless, we did not accept his judgment and paid for all the losses. This put another severe drain on our resources.

Mother had managed to save her pearls, because she was not carrying them when she was held up. She sewed them in the collar of a sweater which she sent by way of Rose Dacko to my wife with a note to wear it and be sure to protect the neck. We deciphered the message and found the pearls. (They survived the war and came with us to this country, where my wife divided them into two strands, one for each of our daughters.)

During the winter of 1941-42, several concentration camps were established in the vicinity of Zloczow. The worst of these so-called "labor camps" was located in a village Lackie, eight kilometers from Zloczow, on the main highway between Zloczow and Lwow. It was the headquarters of a Hauptsturmführer, Warzok, who was in overall command of the other camps as well. He was a murderer who not only ordered shootings and hangings, but took pleasure in carrying out the executions himself. People were hanged or shot for the slightest infringement of rules, when they were too weak to work, or for no reason at all. Warzok ran the camp with a few SS men, all but one Austrians, and with a detachment of the Ukrainian police who vied with one another in their cruel treatment of the inmates. (Warzok was apprehended and tried after the war in Germany; my cousin, Salek Altman, testified at his trial. He was sentenced to prison but is probably a free man today, enjoying the fruits of his looting obtained when he was master of life and death in Zloczow.)

The inmates of Lackie were Jewish men and women. Some were permitted to work outside the camp in German civil enterprises, military barracks or as servants in German households. The majority worked at building and reparing roads. The first group of inmates were rounded up unexpectedly one day on the streets by the SS and the Ukrainian police. As the initial crew thinned out due to starvation and

execution, they were replaced by others which the Judenrat was compelled to supply. News came from Lwow that the Judenrat there was refusing to deliver Jews to these camps and had resigned in protest. The Germans responded by hanging the chairman and other members from the balcony of the house where their offices were located. Our Judenrat, hearing about the events in Lwow, complied with the order. Jews were rounded up by the Jewish militia and delivered to meet the quota. This was repeated every few weeks. There were abuses by the militia, who took bribes and released those who paid. In the beginning the fate fell upon the poor, but as the number of those who could pay diminished, most people who were caught ended up in the camp. In the end it did not matter, since we were all doomed.

The inmates in the camps slaved for fourteen hours a day. The food consisted of thin salty gruel ladled out three times a day. People died like flies. Yet, compared with what we know now of Auschwitz, Treblinka and other extermination camps, Lackie seems almost benign.

The liaison between the Judenrat in Zloczow and Warzok was an individual named Zwerdling. Before the war, he had been an insurance agent discharged from his job for fraud and sentenced to a year in prison. Whether he actually served time, I do not remember. Later he held a small job at the meat-packing plant. He was a crook and therefore well-suited for the job that nobody else wanted. Every few days he presented the Judenrat with new demands, allegedly from Warzok. Nobody in the Judenrat dared to question these demands. Aside from the devastating draft of new workers, he insisted on and received expensive gifts which were supposed to lower the quota of humans. A lavishly furnished apartment was set up for Herr Hauptsturmführer where he entertained his women drawn mostly from the secretarial pool in the Kreishauptmannschaft and also partly supplied by the Judenrat. The finest wines and liquors, as well as the best food, was provided, as the price for leaving us alone. Diamonds and precious jewelry were delivered, much of it remaining in Zwerdling's pockets. He soon started to behave like a German. His wife and daughters strutted around in new outfits and high boots, aping the style of the German women. Zwerdling became the most feared Jew in Zloczow, feared almost as much as Warzok himself.

Zuckerkandel, Zwerdling and Glanz were the big three of the Judenrat, but there was no love lost among them. The rest of the Judenrat were merely figureheads relegated to the distribution of food, of which little allotted to the Jews was actually distributed. It dis-

appeared among the members of the Judenrat, and most of it wound up on the black market. With all this, our Judenrat claimed that Zloczow was an oasis of tranquillity.

To a degree, the claim was true for a time. From neighboring towns news came that the Germans were rounding up people for work and resettlement in the East. Ominously, the roundups included women and children as well as the sick and disabled. The Germans called the roundup "Akzions"; a word that became the most feared in the German vocabulary. People were herded in cattle cars that left for an undisclosed destination. The few who managed to escape from the sealed cars told hair-raising stories about conditions inside the cars. People were jammed together, forced to stand without water or food, suffocating in the stench of their own feces and lack of air. Many died before they reached their destination. I heard this from Rozia Lerner, who escaped from such a deportation train. Once she had escaped from a prisoner train, that time a Russian train to Siberia. The second time, when the Germans put her and her son into the cattle car, she threw her son onto the tracks and then jumped herself. By a miracle they escaped this ordeal unharmed and returned to Zloczow. (They survived the war; she died several years ago in Israel.)

Anxiously we wondered about the destination of these deportees. More and more often the name of a small town in eastern Poland was heard—Belzec. News filtered through gentiles that the Jews, allegedly going to camps in Russia, were in fact being executed en masse in a camp in Belzec. The news was disbelieved at first. Our Judenrat firmly denied it and spread the word that letters had been received from the deported families, but nobody ever saw such a letter and no deported person ever came back. More and more of us started to believe the unbelievable—Jews were being murdered by the Germans in ever larger numbers and without discrimination as to men, women and children. Finally, a few decent members of the Judenrat confirmed the terrible truth.

Paradoxically, at the same time, letters were received from the Warsaw ghetto that life there was quite normal. True, Jews were frobidden to leave the ghetto and gentiles were forbidden to enter, but it was all for the good. The Jews in the ghetto were left alone. Schools were established and there were theaters and nightclubs. I myself saw the letter received by my wife's cousin, Clara Kogut. During the Russian occupation she married a man from Warsaw named Spielberg. He was drafted into the Russian army and she was left alone with a small baby. The letter from her mother-in-law urged her to join

the family in Warsaw. Even though traveling was forbidden for Jews under penalty of death, she went with the baby, and a month or so later her mother received a letter from her saying that she had reached her destination and that life in the ghetto was safer and better than in Zloczow. I read this letter myself. However, we never heard from her again. Her husband returned in 1944. We told him what had happened to his wife and child and he went to Warsaw to look for them. We did not hear from him again.

Other people, particularly refugees from the western part of Poland who had been separated from their families, smuggled themselves back home. It was widely and erroneously believed that life with the Poles in the West was easier than with the Ukrainians in the East. We were drowning and grasping for straws. In the end, Jews from East and West all met the same fate. The Poles, unlike the Ukrainians, did not murder the Jews, but delivered them into the hands of the Gestapo. Two of my friends, Otek Roth and his wife, who escaped to Warsaw were discovered, blackmailed, and finally turned over to the Gestapo by Poles. We learned this from Lina Waldner and Nusia Altman, who survived in Warsaw.

24

The spring of 1942 came and went with no help or even hope of help. It was an unusually short spring, normally the most beautiful season in Poland. The Germans conceded a temporary halt in their operations in the East, but claimed victories in the desert of North Africa against the British. Rommel emerged as Germany's new military hero who was winning battles in an environment supposed to be favorable to the British. Tobruk, Benghazi and names of other towns became household words as we rapidly learned the geography of North Africa. The Germans also claimed enormous victories against Allied shipping in the Atlantic. In the Pacific, the Japanese were inflicting defeat after defeat on the Americans and British, and the Philippines fell. The German press made a great deal out of the fall of the islands and the escape of the American commander, General Douglas MacArthur, to Australia. The Germans jeered that the Americans could not fight. We despaired. The final straw was the fall of Singapore, which we knew to be the "pearl" of the British Empire. The Americans were being beaten—like the Poles, the French, the British and all the others who had dared resist the Axis. The German press was not lying, the disasters were confirmed by the BBC.

In anticipation of Akzions, probably every house where Jews lived contained a hiding place; some of these bunkers became very sophisticated. About this time members of my wife's family moved in with us after fleeing from German Akzions in neighboring towns.

Early in June, a train of empty cattle cars made its ominous appearance at the railroad station. Another portent was the sudden disappearance of the families of the Judenrat and the Jewish militia. We felt that finally Zloczow's turn had come and an Akzion was imminent.

Where to hide the children became our main concern, since we felt

protected by our work permits. Some time earlier, I had become acquainted with a Polish employee of the Kreishauptmannschaft who bore an aristocratic-sounding name that I have unfortunately forgotten. This man was always well-dressed in riding breeches with his boots polished to a high gloss. His wife, a quiet, pretty blonde, always displayed a large cross on her breast. Both showed great affection for us, especially for our daughters, whom they invited to their house to play and enjoy a good meal. Their behavior was extraordinary.

I sought them out and told them that we expected an Akzion momentarily and did not know where to hide the children. Without a moment's hesitation, they offered to take the girls and shelter them until the Akzion was over. With gratitude, but also with heavy hearts, we at once brought the children to them. We wondered whether we would ever see them again. We worried about what would become of them were we to perish in the impending Akzion.

I was able to stay with the factory but could not shield anyone else. Rose Dacko, emboldened by the improved German military and political situation, and the deteriorating position of the Jews, could no longer be trusted with the safety of my family. Lina went to a "safe" hiding place that had been built recently beneath a cellar of a house around the corner from the factory, and thus would remain in touch with me. My wife's mother chose to remain hidden in the cellar of our house. We separated, so that at least one of us would look after the children.

Hanka was still with us and remained home to keep watch. Our fears proved to be tragically correct.

In the early morning hours of June 5, the Akzion began. Through the windows of the factory I could see Ukrainian militiamen leading people toward the so-called Green Market, a large square at the back gate of the factory where peasants and Jewish farmers used to sell poultry, vegetables, and dairy products. In peace time, on Sundays, boys gathered there to play kitchka, their favorite game.

But on this day a deadly game was being played on the sqaure that became the Umschlagplatz, a depot for people caught in the roundup. I thought constantly about my wife and children. Fortunately perhaps, I did not know at the time that our older daughter Edith had upset our plans. She had always been a strong-willed child. At the height of the Akzion she had jumped from the window of the apartment where she was hidden and had run to the house where she knew that my wife was hiding. By a miracle she reached the house after it had been searched

by the SS, who had failed to find the hiding place. Another strange circumstance was that a Jewish woman, the daughter of the house, Punio Imber's sister, suffered from asthma and had refused to go into hiding. Inexplicably, the SS left her alone and did not even question her.

At the end of the first day of the Akzion, the Dackos and the workers went home and I remained alone in the factory. I waited a while after they were gone and then crossed the yard where I loosened a few planks in the wooden fence and proceeded to the adjoining house to see Lina. I was astonished to also see my daughter there. I decided then to take my chances with Rose Dacko and bring my family to the factory. I asked the others to come too; a few took my offer, but the rest said that they felt safer where they were, as the house had already been searched and the hiding place had not been discovered. They were lucky this time, but in the next Akzion in November, they were found and deported, among them my relatives, the entire Friedman family.

At the factory, an attic atop a temporary building had been erected by my father when the main building became too crowded. The structure was so low that it appeared to be only one story high. I considered it an excellent hiding place. It was still "early in the game," and the Gestapo and its local henchmen had not yet developed expertise in locating hiding places. Later in their drive against the Jews they used dogs and mine detectors.

I made a small hole between the wall and the roof of our hiding place and obtained a limited view of a corner of the Green Square. I saw Jews, mostly women and children, huddled on the pavement with suitcases and bundles around them. The shouts of the Germans and Ukrainians herding the people were clearly audible; "*Los . . . Los*" we heard repeatedly as more people were being brought in. Some of the victims cried heartbreakingly. There were sporadic bursts of rifle and pistol fire. I heard someone running alongside the factory wall, a vile obscenity in Ukrainian, and a shot. There was the thud of a fallen body and a triumphant yell, *"Ubywyeho!"* (Killed him). Listening, watching, we felt helpless and terrified that our turn would soon come. The children were amazingly well-behaved. I am not sure how much they understood.

Late in the afternoon, all was quiet. At last sight the square was empty. We had had nothing to eat since the preceding morning, so I decided to venture down from the attic to a window from which I could see the street. Before I left, I warned the others to stay where they were and to remain quiet until I returned, no matter what they heard, since

I did not know what to anticipate downstairs. I might be caught; if so, I wanted them to try to save themselves.

Back in the factory, I went cautiously to my lookout at the window. It was twilight, a long interval at that time of year. The street was empty, until suddenly a man wearing the armband of the Judenrat appeared. As he came nearer, I recognized the dentist, Jakier, a trustworthy person. I knocked gently at the window pane to get his attention. He heard me and motioned for me to come out. I hesitated. He motioned again, so I opened the gate for him. He came in and told me that the Akzion was over since six P.M. and that the streets were now safe, adding that the Judenrat had been reassured by the Gestapo that there would be no more Akzions in Zloczow. Jakier was an optimist even in that dark hour. He had heard that the Americans had won a tremendous victory over the Japanese fleet in the Pacific, but that news did not cheer me, since the Pacific was so far away. After he left, I closed the gate behind him and waited perhaps another hour. I saw more and more Jews walking in the street, so I fetched the family and took them home. My mother-in-law was still in the hiding place under our home and chose to remain there with a few other older women for another twenty-four hours. Hanka, who had remained in the apartment, said that no one had come there during the entire Akzion.

There is a sequel to the story of the couple who had sheltered our children. After liberation, in Krakow, I saw my benefactor in a streetcar. He was wearing the uniform of a Polish officer. I approached him and thanked him for what he had done for us. He replied, "I was in the same situation as you were, but I had more chutzpah." He and his wife were also Jewish. We parted and to my regret never met again.

The number of victims of the June Akzion was estimated by the Judenrat at several thousand. Entire families had disappeared. The *Arbeitskarten* (certificates of employment) proved to be of no value whatever since the people who had them were taken away just like those with none. We were told now that Jews were the wards of the Gestapo and that only Arbeitskarten validated by the Gestapo conferred protection. (I managed to save my card and other tokens of the war and have deposited them in the archives of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.)

Rose Dacko did find out about the presence of my family and the other Jews in the factory during the Akzion from a woman who came to thank *her* for what *I* had done. Rose was furious. Also, the woman made the mistake of giving her a diamond ring, which made Rose realize that money could be made by employing or merely keeping Jews in the

GENERALGOUVERNEMENT
DISTRIKT GALIZIEN
DER KREISHAUPTMANN IN ZLOCZOW
- Hauptamt -

Zloczow, den 30. Juni 1942
G/B.

Akt-Zeichen
Bei Antwortschreiben ist obiges Aktenzeichen anzugeben

B e s c h e i n i g u n g .

Der Jude Tennenbaum Samuel ist bei der Apothekenpackungsfabrik in der Druckerei und Buchbinderei als Korrekturenmacher beschäftigt. Die obengenannte Druckerei und Buchbinderei arbeitet fast nur für deutsche Behörden im Kreise Zloczow und benötigt dringend diesen Juden als geschulte Kraft.

Der Jude Tennenbaum Samuel ist deshalb zu keiner anderen Arbeit heranzuziehen.

Diese Bescheinigung ist gültig bis zum 31. August 1942.

In Auftrage:

Certificate of my employment at our factory as "indispensable worker," signed by Quizo, 1942.

factory. She never dared to demand money from me, but from then on she got money and valuables from others.

I was still protected by Miss Czyzowicz and through her by the German management of the Treuhandsverwaltung, so Rose could not get rid of me, but she was losing whatever awe she still held for me, and tried to assert her independence. Shortly after the June Akzion, a summons came for me from the Kreishauptmannschaft and she went, accompanied by Wolyniec, leaving me behind. They soon returned, with Rose in a fury such as I had never seen before. Without any explanation she ordered me to go forthwith to the Kreishauptmannschaft and see the secretary, a certain Mr. Quizo. He was a short, wiry German, an ardent Nazi, or so it seemed, sporting the party symbol in his lapel; he had always been stern but civil in his dealings with me. This time he bawled me out for not coming before and for sending "*diese dumme Ukrainer*" (these stupid Ukrainians) instead. I could not possibly tell him that it was Rose who had prevented me from coming, so I offered some lame excuse. He ordered that from now on I was to drop everything and come immediately whenever he called. He issued me passes which stated that I was indispensable for work for the Kreishauptmannschaft and could not be drafted for other work. Also, I was exempt from the curfew. These documents were invaluable. (I managed to save them.) I was now protected from Rose and also from street raids that were daily conducted by assorted Germans or Ukrainians whenever they needed workers. But these passes were worthless during an Akzion, as the future would show.

As usual, Wolyniec was unable to hold his tongue and told me in

strictest confidence about the visit with Quizo. The German had had some urgent work to be done and had tried to explain it to Rose, but since she spoke no German she obviously could not understand him at all. He next asked for me and ordered her never again to come to see him without me. Lastly he unceremoniously threw her out. She never went again, afraid of another humiliation, but she also never forgave me. Our relationship remained strained throughout the summer of 1942. However, she remained friendly with my parents, either because she was wary of my father's influence with Miss Czyzowicz on whom she depended for her job, or perhaps because she was really fond of my parents. Who is to say?

Generalgouvernement
Distrikt Galizien
Der Kreishauptmann in Zloczow

Zloczow, den 31.Oktober 1942

Bescheinigung

Der Jude Tennenbaum Samuel, wohnhaft in Zloczow Engasse Nr. 4 I, ist als Facharbeiter bei der Druckerei der Apothekerpackungsfabrik in Zloczow beschäftigt erhält hiermit die Genehmigung in Ausübung seines Dienstes die Strassen in der Stadt Zloczow bis 23 Uhr zu betreten.-

Dieser Bescheinigung gilt bis 31. Dezember 1942.-

Im Auftrage:
Quizo

Permit to walk the streets after curfew, signed by Quizo, 1942.

25

The summer of 1942 was warm and beautiful. After the June Akzion it was relatively quiet on our internal front. However, the Germans enjoyed another round of military successes.

The German armies resumed their offensives in Russia and North Africa. In June, Tobruk, the British stronghold, fell, and Rommel was on the doorstep of Egypt. In the east, Sevastopol, the last Russian fortress in the Crimea, fell to the Germans to whom the road to the coal fields of the Donbas and oil fields of the Caucasus was now open. We all became armchair strategists and every evening, before our curfew, friends gathered to discuss the military situation. Even the optimists of last winter were depressed now. The German papers gloated, but predictions of an immediate demise of Russia were conspicuously absent from the pages.

The offensives of the previous summer of 1941 had been directed toward the achievement of political goals—the capture of Moscow and Leningrad, capital and cradle of the Bolshevik Revolution. The 1942 offensives had economic objectives—to deny Russia and eventually obtain for Germany Ukrainian coal and grain, and also oil from the Caucasian fields. The Germans had failed the previous year to achieve the political goals, and were never to achieve the economic ones, but we did not foresee that at the time. The Russian situation looked to us to be desperate, as town after town, province after province, fell to the Blitzkrieg.

In August, we experienced a brief surge of high expectations and elation with the news of an Allied landing at Dieppe, France, only to be disheartened by the failure of the expedition. As our hopes mounted, the Dackos showed great anxiety and behaved with servility. Their exuberance and arrogance returned as we lapsed into despair. The German press had portrayed the event as a full-scale landing which ended in disastrous defeat. I continued to interpret the news to the

Dackos and Wolyniec, minimizing German victories and inventing defeats, and somehow managed to be plausible. It was not easy.

News of deportations were reaching us from all over, and town after town was becoming "*judenrein*" (free of Jews). The Jewish clique running the Judenrat was still assuring us that Zloczow would be spared, thanks to their good relations with the Gestapo, but few, if any, believed them. They also insisted that the deportees were being sent to special work camps in the Ukraine and that letters had been received confirming the information. When pressed to show these letters, they became evasive and shouted the inquirers down. Bitterly we questioned whether the West knew of this wholesale slaughter of Jews; foreign broadcasts gave no hint. The world seemed not to care.

The Germans continued to claim victory after victory; however, we no longer heard reports of large numbers of Russian prisoners. Was this a good sign or bad? Were the Russians scraping the bottom of their manpower barrel, as the Germans insisted, or, as the shortage of prisoners suggested, were the Russians fighting better? We read the newspapers even more eagerly, trying to decipher the truth and predict the future. We held unending discussions: were the Germans being careful after the false prophesies of the previous year, or were they admitting realistically that victory was still not in sight?

These political and military analyses were conducted primarily during card games which, having begun during the Russian occupation, continued as our main escape. Each day, before the curfew, a group gathered in our apartment for a game which went on even if I could not be there. We played mainly poker, and there were always more players than seats. Once a seat was abandoned it was immediately taken by somebody else waiting his turn. Although I was host, I too had to take my turn. The bladders of the players were subjected to severe endurance tests. In addition to the players, there were always kibitzers as well, many of whom came to hear and discuss the news. In spite of the meagerness of our resources, my wife offered soup to the guests, some of whom came mainly for that. *"Nie, dziekuje"* (No, thank you) was the invariable reply, but my wife knowing better, persisted, until the food was accepted. Among others, Judge Dywer and lawyer Dr. Hessel attended these gatherings—all are dead now, victims of later Akzions.

At about that time, as I said before, I developed an important source of income, teaching German to peasant youngsters, nice boys trying to prepare for the future. But learning German was beyond their mental capacity. They persisted and paid me with potatoes, eggs, and an

occasional lump of butter or lard. Occasionally they brought a chicken which loyal Hanka, who was still with us, killed and cooked for us. My religious mother-in-law absolutely refused to share in this rare treat. The German lessons lasted throughout the summer and into the fall.

All that summer there were rumors of impending Akzions, but they proved false. In August, suddenly, in the middle of the day, the Ukrainian militia started to round up Jews from all over town and to bring them to an *Umschlagplatz*, a soccer field within the former Polish military barracks, now occupied by an SS detachment.

I was in the factory at the time, desperate with worry about my family. I begged Wolyniec to try to find out what was going on, but he was afraid to step outside. Pawel volunteered to go, but came back without news. Through the windows of the factory I could see Jews being led by the militiamen. Some of the older men had covered their heads with *talesim* (ritual garments), obviously convinced that they were being led to death.

I knew that my wife was out somewhere, because every day at approximately this time, she brought soup to the Jewish hospital. Suddenly I saw her. She had taken off her armband and was heading for the factory. We were together, but still in ignorance of the fate of our children and my wife's mother. My wife wanted to go and fetch them, but while they were discussing this Hanka appeared to say that the children and their grandmother were safe. Some militiamen had come to the apartment but had left after a cursory inspection. Another tense hour passed. We noticed the Jews slowly coming back from the detention. The militia were nowhere in sight. I went outside and asked the people what had happened. They, too, were puzzled. Warzok had appeared, they said, and had told everyone to go home.

Wild rumors followed this strange event. Churchill and Roosevelt had warned Hitler that they would raze Berlin unless the Akzions were stopped immediately. In another version, it was Hitler himself who had ordered the Akzions stopped. The Judenrat, of course, tried to claim credit, but nobody believed them. We conjectured that that had been some kind of test, or a move undertaken independently by someone on a lower level and countermanded by Warzok.

The optimism was quickly stifled when news came of Akzions in the neighboring towns of Tarnopol and Brody. In Tarnopol, the few who escaped said that the Akzion, conducted by Miller himself, had been wholesale slaughter. People had been shot at random in the streets.

The Akzions were conducted by special units of the SS, the *Einsatzkommando* (assault command). One day as we were sitting in the yard of

our relatives, the Sternschusses, who lived across the street from the military barracks, we saw a detachment of helmeted Germans on trucks marked POL. They were mostly elderly men who looked innocuous. It was only a few days later when we realized that we had seen the murderers of our fellow Jews heading for Brody. Since we were not on their list for that day, they had paid no attention to us. We were skating daily on thin ice. How long?

About this time I had a close brush with death. One day while I was seeing Quizo in the Kreishauptmannschaft, he asked me on whose authority I was wearing a green armband. Someone had asked him for one, and he wanted to look at mine. I showed him the piece of paper. He frowned and said that it was no good. He tore it up and issued a new permit with his signature on it.

Several days later I went to see Kramer, the German who had our furniture. While I sat in the waiting room, his secretary said that he had a visitor—motioning upward with her hand, "from upstairs." While waiting, I happened to look out the window and noticed Rozia, our partner's daughter, motioning frantically for me to come out. Anticipating disaster I went to see what she wanted. Rozia told me my wife had sent her expressly to warn me to get rid of the green armband. She had been told by Weinstok from the Judenrat, himself an armband wearer, that the Gestapo had just arrested two of the four men who had that armband. I took it off at once, put it in my pocket, and went back inside. Moments later I was called into Kramer's office. His visitor was still with him, a tall man in the uniform of a high ranking SS officer. Kramer greeted me: "Ah, here is Tennenbaum, one of the wearers of the green armband." And turning to me: "This is Brigadenführer Miller from Tarnopol." I froze with terror. Miller turned to me: "Where is your armband?" "I took it off." "Why?" I said that I had removed it after I was advised by the Judenrat that armbands other than those prescribed for Jews were forbidden. Miller asked me whether I had a permit for the armband and asked to see it. I handed him the permit given to me only a few days earlier by Quizo. He glanced at it. "May I keep it?" he asked politely. "Naturally," I answered. He then said a few words to Kramer and left.

Kramer then went on with the business for which he had called me, but I could hardly understand him, for I was still shaking from fear. All I could think was that I had looked Miller in the face. I had looked death in the face and had escaped. I wondered whether I would be arrested as soon as I stepped out of Kramer's office, but nothing happened.

I managed to escape death as did the other two green-band wearers who had also been warned in time. The two who had been arrested first were both shot on the Zamek. We conjectured that since the original permit had been signed by the putative Jewish "*Volksdeutsch*," all who associated with him were in immediate mortal danger. Some called escapes like this, fate; others called it a miracle. We needed miracles to survive. Merely walking in the street was extremely dangerous as people were shot at random daily. Army men usually left us alone, but the SS men were trigger-happy, as were the men in blue, the Luftwaffe (air corpsmen). We tried to avoid them but did not always succeed.

On a bitterly cold day I stupidly wore my pair of furlined leather gloves in the street. An airforce sergeant stopped me and ordered me to take them off. He tried them on and asked, touching his side arm: *"Soll ich Ihnen bezahlen?"* (Do you want me to pay you?) I replied: *"Nein."* He said: "*Danke schoen*," and let me go. We were all terminal cases but we craved to survive another day, another hour, another minute. We had no hope . . . yet the urge to survive was strong.

The summer of 1942 was slowly coming to an end. In the fall it became obvious that the German offensive had run its course and that the German armies were again unable to achieve final victory. They had scored several knockdowns, but no knockout. Neither Stalin nor Hitler attached great value to human life, but there were more Russians than Germans and they held out and began to prevail.

In retreat, the Russians had conducted a ruthless scorched-earth policy. Grain was burned, machinery that could not be hauled away was destroyed, and the people either fled voluntarily or were forcibly removed to inner Russia. There was also ever-increasing partisan activity in the rear of the German lines. Surprisingly, the German press reported all this. The partisans were called bandits, Jews or Bolsheviks, and there were frequent announcements of executions of men and women caught by the SS.

26

Fall arrived. Referring to November of 1942, Churchill said that "the tide has turned." But in Zloczow that never happened. Instead it swelled over our heads and swallowed us.

On November 1, the eve of All Saints' Day, we were playing cards as usual and discussing the German military situation. Steinwurzel, one of the players, was the deputy chief of the Jewish militia in Zloczow. A militiaman appeared at the door and called him out. He soon returned, white-faced. He informed us that Miller had arrived in town with a detachment of Einsatzkommando, the special SS unit in charge of Akzions, and he advised us to go into hiding at once. He said that he himself was also going to hide, to avoid being forced to participate. His wife had already left Zloczow and was living in Lwow passing as a Pole. Only my wife and I knew her whereabouts, since people were leery of trusting that kind of information to others.

There was no time to lose. I decided to hide my family in the factory, which I considered the safest place, Rose's threats notwithstanding. The factory was marked a German establishment and had not been entered during the previous Akzion by the SS or by Ukrainian militia.

By the time we arrived, the workers were gone. I let myself in with my own keys and we hid in the attic. We shivered from cold and fear. As in the past, the children did not emit a sound.

In the early morning we heard German voices yelling: "*Raus, raus, los, los*" (Out with you, run, run), and carbine and pistol fire blazed from all directions. Once again people wept and screamed in the Umschlagplatz, which was again at the Green Market, the square behind our factory. Altogether the scene was a heartbreaking déjà vu. The Akzion lasted two days and in all that time we had nothing to eat. Yet we did survive again.

Neither the Dackos nor anyone else came to work during the Akzion. When Rose showed up on the morning of the third day, after it was all over, she did not make a great fuss. She warned me that this was the last time she would permit me to take shelter in the factory. But she passed over the fact that I had not asked her permission. German reverses on the battlefronts obviously were having an effect and resulted in this relatively mild reaction.

By this time we had lost many of our possessions. During the Akzion I divided the remaining jewelry into two packages. I stuffed each into a metal container and pushed them into two separate crevices in the wall of the attic. A few days later I tried to reclaim the packages and found that one was gone. I supected that Pawel, who knew that we were in the attic, or Goral who suspected it, had found the package and stolen it. This was a major blow, considering that we did not have much left and that jewelry was the only currency with which to obtain food.

In spite of the confinement under which we, the Jews, lived, news of Akzions traveled fast from city to city, and Father soon called from Lwow to find out what had happened to us. I told him over the phone that we were safe. He advised me, in a guarded way, that he had taken steps to assure our safety. I guessed that he had acquired documents that would enable us to pass as Poles.

The November Akzion had been bloody and brutal. Many people had been shot on the spot. Some of them had either resisted or refused to leave their homes. Many "safe" hiding places had been discovered, among them one in which my wife had found shelter during the June Akzion. My uncle, the physician Dr. Reichard, his wife and his son Edzio, who worked in the factory, became all the family I had left in Zloczow. Reichard had been assigned to the Jewish hospital run by Warzok to serve the inmates of the neighboring work camps, primarily Lackie. Dr. Reichard had managed to keep his family with him, but all the patients were taken away.

Spared in this Akzion was the hospital staff, the Judenrat, and the Jewish militia which helped the Germans maintain the fiction that the purpose of the Akzions was resettlement. By that time, enough news had trickled through to force all but a few die-hard optimists to admit the terrible truth.

After the November Akzion there were ugly rumors that members of the Judenrat and the Jewish militia had accompanied the SS search parties and Ukrainian militia and had given away a number of hideouts. I have no personal knowledge of this and can neither deny not confirm the truth of these accusations. Yet I can testify to instances

of heroism. En route to the Green Market, Engineer Safran struck an SS officer in the face and was killed instantly in retaliation. (His son won the Nobel Prize in 1983.) It was rumored that Jewish riggers, armed with stones and axes, had killed several SS men and Ukrainian militia.

A couple of days after the November Akzion, I was urgently called to the Kreishauptmannschaft and informed that a Jewish ghetto was to be established in Zloczow as of December 1, 1942. Jews of Zloczow, as well as those still remaining in the surrounding villages and hamlets, were to be confined within the ghetto, and the rest of the county was to become *Judenrein.* Any Jew leaving the ghetto faced the death penalty, as did a Christian harboring a Jew outside the ghetto. I was ordered to print the announcement immediately.

We knew about ghettos in other cities, but our Judenrat had assured us repeatedly that that would never happen in Zloczow. Shaken by the news, I rushed to the office of the Judenrat to tell them. Usually I tried to avoid the Judenrat office, although I did trust a couple of members, like Jakier and Dr. Teichman. However, the news that I carried that day could not wait. I mounted the stairs of the loft to the office.

There I saw a table covered with dollar bills and gold coins. A few members of the Judenrat were engaged in a poker game. They stopped playing, obviously annoyed at my entrance. Zuckerkandel asked what had brought me here. I told them, but they did not seem worried in the least. I was not to worry, he said. It would be all for the best; the Ukrainian militia would be barred from entering the ghetto and we would be left in peace. Another man speculated that the establishment of the ghetto meant the end to Akzions in Zloczow.

I could not believe my ears. I knew these men were not stupid, nor were they gullible. Was it possible that they had assurances of personal safety that made them indifferent to the fate of others? I shouted that I totally disagreed with their judgments and that I saw in this development the end of us all. Perhaps, I suggested, we should procure arms and defend ourselves. They exchanged looks of dismay. Mr. Schmierer who long ago had shared a bench in our synagogue with Father and me, and was its *gabbai,* whispered in my ear: "You are crazy! The walls have ears. You are endangering all our lives and the lives of our families. Please leave, and do not dare to say a word of this to anyone." I saw no purpose in arguing any further. As I left I saw them resume their card game.

I went home and told my wife the news about the ghetto and described the reaction of the Judenrat. Then I went to the factory to

have the edict printed. I felt that I was sealing my own death warrant. The few remaining Jewish employees became panic-stricken. Rose Dacko was exuberant, hoping that finally I would be out of the factory and her life for good.

My wife and I talked till late in the night. We decided to try to escape from Zloczow before all avenues were closed. But how—and where?

Jewish work papers were suddenly invalidated, and we were told that we were to remain wards of the Gestapo. Whether inside a camp or working outside, we were members of the Lackie concentration camp over which Warzok held power of life and death.

He was a sadist who took pleasure in playing deadly games with us. One such game I described earlier. Another time, he ordered an assembly of all the Jews who were working in various German establishments in town. We gathered at the soccer field in front of the barracks, where we were made to line up single file. There were about a hundred of us, the majority presenting a sorry sight, unshaven, dirty, many in rags. Warzok marched up and down the line, snapping at his shiny boots with his riding whip. He stopped in front of me and ordered me to step forward. I was certain that I was selected for Lackie. He then found another two whose appearance he also approved of. They were Bucio Rosen and another man whose name I don't recall. Warzok said derisively, "*Die noble Juden.*" After about an hour we were dismissed. I still shaved daily and managed to keep a fairly decent appearance. It helped me to preserve my dignity as a human being when confronting, for example, the insolence of Rose Dacko or the contempt and arrogance of the German officials.

One evening, shortly after the November Akzion, Jakier arrived with exciting news. A clandestine listener to the BBC was claiming that the British had won a momentous victory. General Montgomery had inflicted a decisive defeat on Rommel at El Alamein, Egypt, and the Germans were in full retreat in Africa. Also, the Germans were bogged down in a losing battle at Stalingrad. Next morning I rushed to the Kreishauptmannschaft pretending urgent business, but I really went to see whether Krawchuk would confirm the news. He conceded Rommel's defeat at El Alamein but felt that the news about Stalingrad was exaggerated, although German newspapers were reporting "*schwere Kampfe*" (fierce campaign) at Stalingrad. No details—the usual practice when things were going badly. In the factory a dejected Dacko told me that he had been able to catch a speech by Stalin on his crystal set, claiming a great victory at Stalingrad and prophesying that "there would soon be dancing in the streets."

Alas, all this good news gave us no relief. For us Jews, we thought, there was not then and there never would be dancing in the streets of Zloczow, because by the war's end no Jews would be left. The fence surrounding the ghetto was being built relentlessly.

During the middle of December, again at night, Steinwurzel came to warn me that another Akzion was going to take place next morning. I was afraid to try the factory again. Somebody suggested that we seek shelter in one of the abandoned houses across the Zloczowka, the small stream that formed the boundary of Zloczow. A cold rain was falling. The sidewalks and roads froze into sheets of ice and one walked as if on glass. The trip was a nightmare, with people slipping and falling repeatedly. I twisted my ankle painfully. It was the children who proved most agile. Finally, after crossing a dilapidated bridge, we reached our destination. Other people had had the same idea and soon the house became crowded. There was a bunk on which we put the children to sleep while adults huddled on the floor. It was bitter cold. Thus we spent the night, and when morning came we could barely move, stiff from lying on the cold earthen floor. Steinwurzel later sent a Jewish policeman with a message that this was a false alarm. The strangers who had also drifted to this hiding place became very upset at seeing him, since no one trusted the militia. We returned home, having survived still another day.

After the November Akzion and before the establishment of the ghetto, people had started to disappear from Zloczow. Those "blessed" with Aryan looks, light hair, straight or turned-up noses and blue eyes sought to obtain forged identification papers and thus left for western Poland. In Warsaw, they hoped to disappear amongst the Poles. Most of these people did not escape the fate of other Jews, since Poles, far from helping, frequently betrayed them to the Nazis. This happened with Otek Roth and his wife, as I mentioned previously.

Other Jews who felt that they looked Semitic went into hiding with gentile families. Some bought shelter with money, but they rarely survived, because their keepers robbed them, or else turned them over to the Gestapo. My good friends Dr. Sanio Kahane and his wife perished that way. They had been hiding only a few huts away from where we found refuge. Others who vanished from my circle of card players but survived were Steinwurzel and Izio Kudish. Suddenly there was no more card playing.

I managed to reach my father on the telephone. He was being forced to abandon his apartment and join other workers of the Pharmaceutical Trust at a concentration camp on Janowska Street, in Lwow. He

could not take Mother with him. He felt that his own safety was assured, but decided that Mother had better come to us. Indeed, in a few days she arrived, having hidden under a tarpaulin in a truck. We had not seen her in a year and a half and barely recognized her. She had aged by decades, had become very thin, and completely gray. She was extremely depressed over having to part from Father for the first time. Even seeing us and the children did not ease the pain of separation. Alas, she was to remain with us for only a couple of months.

The barbed-wire fence outlining the boundaries of the ghetto rose not, as we had guessed, around an area on the other side of the river which would separate us from the rest of the population, but at the center of town. Sokola Street was just outside the ghetto, one of whose gates was bounded by a wall of the factory. We did not understand that the ghetto was located very precisely to form a trap on the day when it would be destroyed.

The Judenrat members, the Jewish militia and their families were permitted to live in a large building, a "special" place just outside the ghetto, opposite its main entrance on Pocztowa Street. Unlike other Jews, they could move freely as long as they stayed within the town limits. This arrangement surprised many, angered some, and worried all of us. I have heard of no similar arrangements, then or since, in any other town. There were rumors, soon substantiated, that permits to live outside the ghetto were for sale at very high prices.

Permit to live outside the Ghetto, signed by Quizo, 1942. Note the typed insertion of "und zwei Kinder," *added to document by his secretary after Quizo signed the permit.*

GENERALGOUVERNEMENT
DISTRIKT GALIZIEN
Der Kreishauptmann in Zloczow.

Zloczow, den 5. Dezember 194 2

Reise~~-~~/~~und~~/ Aufenthaltsgenehmigung

Der Jude, Samuel Tennenbaum und 2Kinder Zt. wohnhaft in Zloczow
außerhalb des Judenviertels
erhält die Bewilligung, von nach ~~einmalig/zu reisen~~/
~~und/dortselbst/bis zum~~/ auf Widerruf Aufenthalt zu nehmen.

Im Auftrage:

The gates of the ghetto shut us in on December 1, 1942. Our apartment happened to have been within the ghetto boundaries, so we could stay where we were. However, everyone had to take in additional displaced people. Distant relatives moved in with us until our two small rooms contained about thirty people. My paternal uncle, Nehemia, a decorated Austrian hero of World War I, became one of the new tenants.

Hanka was forced to leave us, moving to an apartment vacated by its Jewish tenants. She offered to take our daughters and keep them safe for the duration, but after only a couple of days she brought them back. They had been crying all the time, she said, and had refused to eat.

Just before the ghetto gates closed came the news that the Americans had landed in North Africa. The optimists claimed that the end of the war was in sight, but I felt that in Poland at least the Germans were far from finished. If we were ever to see the future we had better find some ways to survive the immediate present.

A few days after we were imprisoned in the ghetto, Quizo called for me to say that he and others in the Kreishauptmannschaft needed my services. A severe typhus epidemic had struck the ghetto and they feared contagion. Therefore he had decided to give me a permit to live outside the ghetto and with it freedom to move within town. He called in his secretary and told her to issue the permits—for me and my wife. I begged him to include the children, but he refused. His secretary, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten, was a woman in her forties who had always treated me with utmost courtesy, addressing me as "Herr Tennenbaum" and "Sie" and offering me a chair when I had to wait. In the past she had shown her disgust at the way her colleagues, male and female (the other secretaries were young, brash and insolent) behaved and was outraged at the persecution of the Jews. A story had made the rounds in Zloczow that she had slapped a Ukrainian militiaman who had kicked a Jewish woman in her presence. When Quizo left us alone, I asked her for help and without hesitation she added the words "*und zwei Kinder*" (and two children) to the permit. I have this document and it is easy to see that these words were added later and on a different typewriter. When I received the permit I felt as a condemned person must feel when the death sentence is commuted.

We needed an apartment outside the ghetto, and although there were many empty, formerly Jewish apartments, I decided to look for one as far away from the ghetto as possible. In short, I hoped that we could get "lost." I knew that my piece of paper would serve only a brief

and/or scant protection. We managed to find a tiny two-room cottage on a side street on the outskirts of town. Under cover of darkness we transported all our belongings there on a sled. After I showed the permit, the Polish landlady, Mrs. Michalski, agreed to rent us the apartment. She and her two daughters, Anna and Kasia, became good friends of ours.

The assurances of the Judenrat to the contrary, the Ukrainian militia staged frequent raids inside the ghetto in search of able-bodied men for the Lackie camp. Uncle Nehemia and his son David were soon caught.

I tried to intercede with Zwerdling, our liaison between the Judenrat and Warzok, and entered the new residence of the Judenrat for the first and only time. The smell of bacon permeated the hall. The table displayed butter, eggs and an open can of sardines, delicacies that I had not seen since the war. The Zwerdling family was having supper. I was not even invited to sit down.

When I stated my plea, the fat, complacent Zwerdling, unwitting effigy of a Nazi, lectured me that Germany needed workers and that it was the duty of the Judenrat to supply the necessary quota. He added with a dour smile that I should count my blessings for having been excused from the labor battalion—this time. I left having accomplished nothing. It was shortly thereafter, I was told , my uncle and my cousin were shot by Warzok himself after they had become too emaciated to work.

Mrs. Geller, a friend and neighbor, learned about our permits and begged me to try to get them for her family. I decided to try my luck with Quizo, this time accompanying my request with a gift of a bolt of cloth. I explained that the permit was for my sister. I don't know what impelled him to give it to me. Perhaps he was not as bad as his rhetoric or the Nazi insignia he wore. It happened that Mrs. Geller had entrusted her son to a Polish friend for the duration of the war (as many of us tried to do with our children). While she was visiting him she was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to the Zamek. Fortunately, she had the pass issued by Quizo just days earlier; this along with a substantial bribe saved her life. Zuckerkandel, who had been approached by the family to convey the bribe, did not take kindly to this pass issued without his knowledge. He sought me out and warned me not to get any more passes. If I did not comply, he hinted, he would be forced to take the matter to the Gestapo. I had no doubt about the seriousness of the threat. I did not try again.

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Living outside the ghetto did not protect us from the dreadful scourge, typhus. Soon my mother-in-law caught the disease and became gravely ill. My mother took upon herself the duties of nurse and would not let my wife come near her mother. My uncle, Dr. Reichard, who had a pass, visited the patient but could do nothing, no medications were available. My mother-in-law recovered, but my mother caught the disease in turn and succumbed to it after ten days. She died on January 31, 1943, the day the German army surrendered at Stalingrad.

In the evening, a few friends and I carried her body on a small borrowed sleigh to the Jewish cemetery. A handful of people came to the funeral, some of whom consoled me: "At least she died in her own bed, and you know where she is buried." Others even said that they envied her. We marked her grave with a wooden tablet. After liberation eighteen months later, I returned to the cemetery. It had been badly desecrated, and I was unable to find the site, for the tablet had disappeared with all the other tombstones. The Germans of Zloczow used the Jewish tombstones as paving material just as years later the Jordanians did in Jerusalem.

Jakier, who came to the funeral, began to tell me about the German defeat at Stalingrad. Angered, I shouted, "Will that bring my mother back?" A few days later I apologized to him for my outburst.

I never told Father that Mother had died, and begged Rose Dacko not to tell him. I was afraid that he might kill himself, considering how close they were, the fearful times we had endured and the fact that I knew he carried a cyanide capsule.

The defeat at Stalingrad was the beginning of a disastrous winter for Hitler's armies. Only a handful of Germans escaped the Russian encir-

clement. The German woman who had been so decent to me had a son in Stalingrad from whom she had had no news at all. She said: *"Hitler hat den Krieg verloren: Gott soll Deutschland helfen."* (Hitler has lost the war: May God help Germany.) The German press admitted the defeat, but Goebbels was still defiant. I remember an article in which he compared the war to a soccer game. He admitted setbacks but claimed that the Germans were still way ahead with the score at 11-3. Who in his right mind, he concluded, would give up the game with such a big lead?

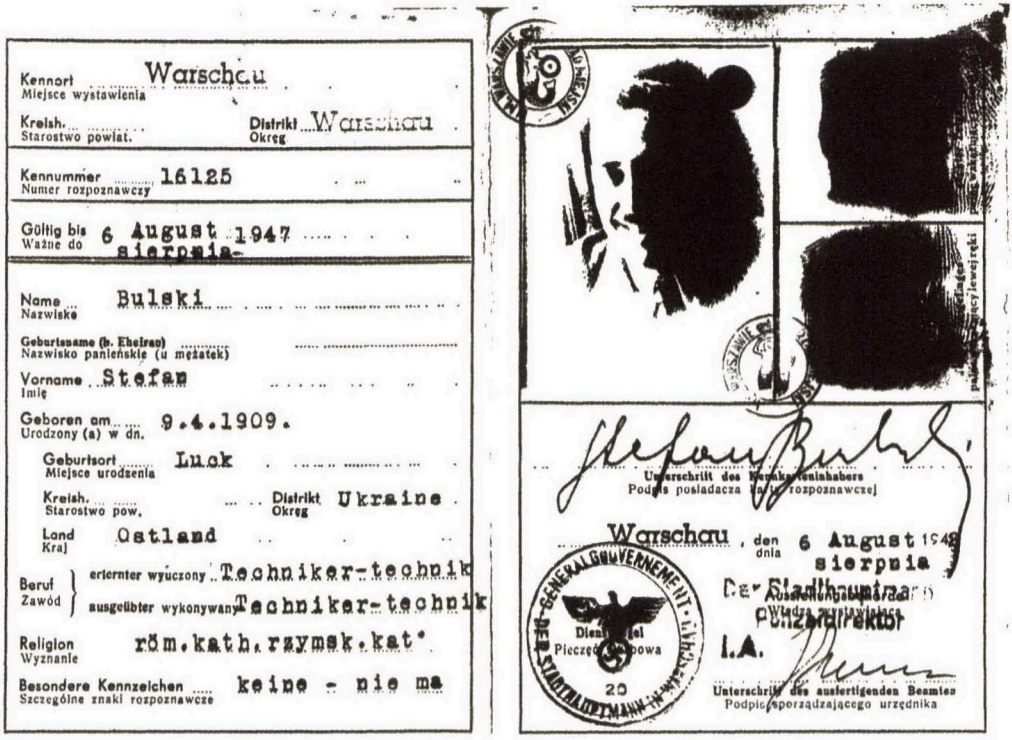
However, signs increasingly showed that things were not as rosy as Goebbels claimed. The younger men in the Kreishauptmannschaft disappeared. We noticed increasingly older men and young boys among the reinforcements going through Zloczow to the front. Early in the German occupation, many gentiles had volunteered for work in Germany, but after a series of reversals and the massive air bombardments, the voluntary enlistments slowed to a trickle and eventually ceased. Also, roundups of young Poles and Ukrainians for work inside Germany were more frequent and arbitrary. During one of these roundups, the two young daughters of our landlady hid in our cottage. Rumors told of other gentiles hiding in the ghetto, ironically, to avoid deportation.

The German setbacks turned out to be beneficial to me personally, since Rose Dacko grew, if not actually friendly, at least more agreeable. She had been furious when I obtained the permit to live outside the ghetto; she had been so sure that with the establishment of the ghetto she was rid of me forever. Her improved attitude was important, if only because she was the only link with my father. Father had told me over the phone that he had made "arrangements" for us and I had understood his meaning. Indeed, two weeks after Mother's death, Rose Dacko brought us an envelope from Father which contained "Aryan" documents for all of us, including Mother. There were birth certificates for everyone and identity cards for me and my wife in the name of *Bulski*. I have preserved these documents.

My wife hated the name; she felt that it sounded phony; she had never heard of such a name.

Father had obtained the documents after paying a fortune through a contact with the AK, Armja Krajowa (home army), the Polish underground.

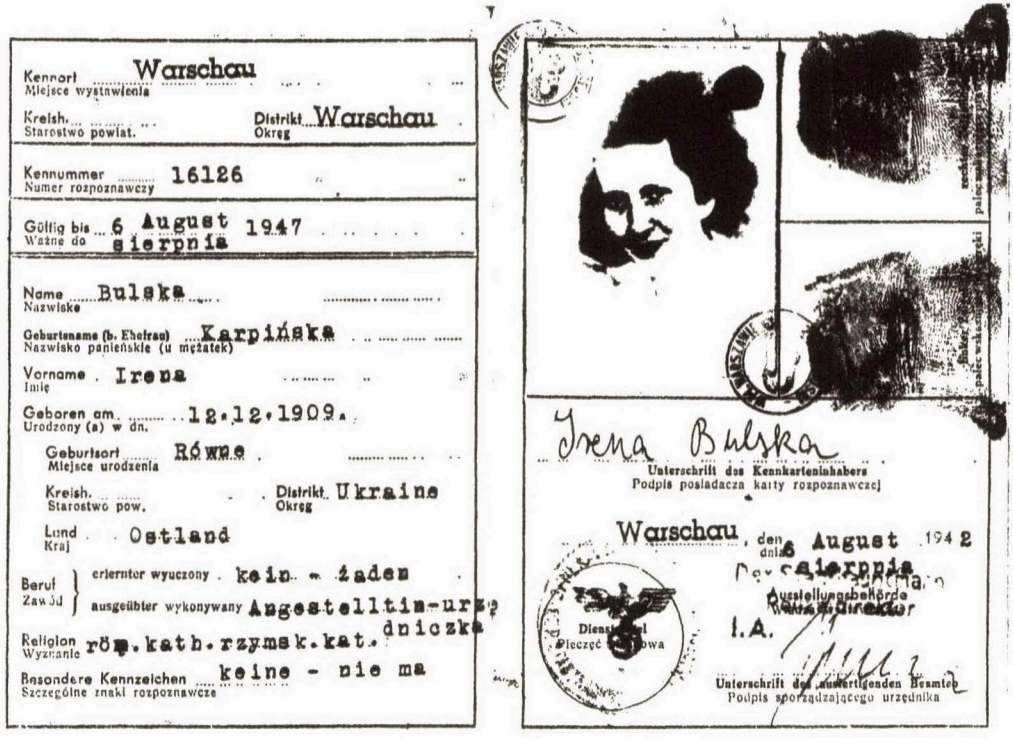
The documents were accompanied by a letter outlining the procedure for passing to the "other side." A representative of the AK, known



Kennort / Miejsce wystawienia: Warschau
Kreish. / Starostwo powiat.: Distrikt / Okręg: Warschau
Kennummer / Numer rozpoznawczy: 16125
Gültig bis / Ważne do: 6 August 1947 sierpnia
Name / Nazwisko: Bulski
Geburtsname (b. Ehefrau) / Nazwisko panieńskie (u mężatek):
Vorname / Imię: Stefan
Geboren am / Urodzony (a) w dn.: 9.4.1909.
Geburtsort / Miejsce urodzenia: Luck
Kreish. / Starostwo pow.: Distrikt / Okręg: Ukraine
Land / Kraj: Ostland
Beruf / Zawód: erlernter wyuczony: Techniker-technik; ausgeübter wykonywany: Techniker-technik
Religion / Wyznanie: röm.kath. rzymsk.kat.
Besondere Kennzeichen / Szczególne znaki rozpoznawcze: keine - nie ma

Unterschrift des Kennkarteninhabers / Podpis posiadacza karty rozpoznawczej
Warschau, den / dnia 6 August 1942 sierpnia
Dienstsiegel / Pieczęć służbowa
I.A.
Unterschrift des ausfertigenden Beamten / Podpis sporządzającego urzędnika

Our "Aryan" certificates under false name of Bulski, *described in the book, 1947.*



Kennort / Miejsce wystawienia: Warschau
Kreish. / Starostwo powiat.: Distrikt / Okręg: Warschau
Kennummer / Numer rozpoznawczy: 16126
Gültig bis / Ważne do: 6 August 1947 sierpnia
Name / Nazwisko: Bulska
Geburtsname (b. Ehefrau) / Nazwisko panieńskie (u mężatek): Karpińska
Vorname / Imię: Irena
Geboren am / Urodzony (a) w dn.: 12.12.1909.
Geburtsort / Miejsce urodzenia: Równe
Kreish. / Starostwo pow.: Distrikt / Okręg: Ukraine
Land / Kraj: Ostland
Beruf / Zawód: erlernter wyuczony: kein - żaden; ausgeübter wykonywany: Angestelltin-urzędniczka
Religion / Wyznanie: röm.kath. rzymsk.kat.
Besondere Kennzeichen / Szczególne znaki rozpoznawcze: keine - nie ma

Irena Bulska
Unterschrift des Kennkarteninhabers / Podpis posiadacza karty rozpoznawczej
Warschau, den / dnia 6 August 1942 sierpnia
Dienstsiegel / Pieczęć służbowa
I.A.
Unterschrift des ausfertigenden Beamten / Podpis sporządzającego urzędnika

to my father by the nom de guerre Wacek, would pick us up at a pre-arranged date and would accompany us to Warsaw. We were to travel from Zloczow to Lwow by truck, and from Lwow to Warsaw by train. Once in Warsaw, we were to split up, the two older women to go on separately. A job had been arranged for me. Wacek was to be paid 17,500 zlotys for his services.

After receiving the documents and the instructions, we sold a pair of my wife's diamond earrings so as to have the money ready. In February, 1942, Wacek met us in Zloczow and instructed us on how to dress and behave during the journey. The date of our departure from Zloczow was set for March 15. My wife still did not like any of this and said that she was going to look for other options.

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We had a Polish acquaintance, Hela Skrzeszewska, who with her husband Karol owned a cottage in the village of Jelechowice, our favorite vacation spot four kilometers from Zloczow. They used to rent out rooms for the summer and in the last few years before the war, as described earlier, we had stayed there during the summer. Among other guests was my wife's cousin, Nusia Sternschuss, wife of the head of the Jewish Kehilah (self-governing body) in Zloczow.

Karol Skrzeszewski was the chief of police in Zloczow. Tall and handsome, he was also usually businesslike and stern. Evenings, he used to put on phonograph records and enjoyed dancing with the ladies. Hela was a friendly woman with an easy smile, an excellent dancer with whom I enjoyed dancing at our impromptu parties. She was also a fabulous cook and we delighted in her gourmet dishes. We spent many carefree days in their home. At times they quarreled, and often violently, regardless of the presence of others. It was gossiped that both had affairs. She was the better-educated. I felt that much of their unhappiness was due to their inferior social position. Karol felt entitled to be accepted into the Polish "society," but he was not because he was a mere noncommissioned officer; the gap between commissioned and noncommissioned officers in Poland was unbreachable. Thus Hela and Karol had to limit their associations mostly to Jews who accepted them as equals, a bitter compromise for Karol who was at heart an anti-Semite. His anti-Semitism was, as with many Poles, an aspect of his paranoiac hatred of Communism . Hela shared the distrust of Russia but was not in the least anti-Semitic.

When the Russians invaded Zloczow, Karol escaped to German-occupied Poland where, as Hela told us, he joined the Polish auxiliary police, the equivalent of the Ukrainian militia in our part of Poland, and where doubtless he took part in *Akzions* against Jews.

Hela, left behind, visited us often during the Russian occupation. After the German invasion she continued her visits and always brought some welcome food, including special treats for the children. She claimed that she belonged to the Polish underground and that she carried and distributed their leaflets. Indeed, on several occasions she did show us some leaflets. She enjoyed bringing news about the progress of the war which was often optimistic, more often than not sensational, and always highly exaggerated. She had a wonderful heart but was fickle bordering on reckless. Once she gave my wife a small package containing a gun, for safekeeping. The "gun" turned out to be an old rusty weapon without a hammer or trigger, but still dangerous to own. Outside the ghetto, she became one of the few people privy to our secret.

Like everybody during that time, she was involved in the black market where she always had deals cooking, most of them unsuccessful. Just before we were to leave for Warsaw with Wacek she came to my wife for help. She needed money for the deal of a lifetime. She had lined up some furs for which, she claimed, she already had a buyer but needed cash to claim them. If my wife would lend her money, she would return it immediately. My wife let her take the money meant for Wacek, and Hela used the money to buy the furs. She promised faithfully to return the money before March 15, since she was aware of our plans. But soon she came back dejected; the deal for the sale of the furs had fallen through and our money was gone.

My wife broke the news to me; we thought of postponing our exodus but there was no way to get in touch with Wacek. Wacek arrived on the agreed date in March, and while I was pondering how to tell him that we did not have the money, he told me that the trip had to be postponed because the roads were crawling with SS patrols as some British POWs had escaped from their camp. Wacek left but promised to return when matters cooled down.

My wife was not in the least distressed by these setbacks since she continued to have little faith in the scheme. She mistrusted Wacek, and the name Bulski seemed phony to her. She felt that we would give ourselves away just by the look in our eyes.

In the meantime the war was going on. While the Western Allies made little headway in Africa, the Russians staged their own version of Blitzkrieg. Their success was amazing to us all, particularly the Ukrainians who believed in German invincibility. Only two weeks after the fall of Stalingrad, the Russians recaptured the second largest Ukrainian city, Kharkov. The effect that this German defeat had on

our local Ukrainians was shattering. I remember that day. I happened to be in the Kreishauptmannschaft. Mr. Krawchuk cornered me in the hall, shook hands with me and left in my hand a piece of paper with a single word, "Kharkov," scribbled on it. When I made a sign of disbelief, he gravely nodded his head in confirmation.

On my way back, I met Jakier and shared the news with him. He left to spread the good news around town. That was the last time I ever saw him or any other member of the Judenrat, for that matter.

I returned to the factory and told the news to John Dacko. His face turned ashen. He, Rose, and Wolyniec became involved in a heated discussion as to whether to leave Zloczow immediately. Stalingrad was far away, but Kharkov was practically *ante portas* (at our doorstep). In the preceding weeks several prominent Ukrainian families had already left. Panic was spreading among the others, particularly those who had actively collaborated with the Germans. The Dackos' behavior toward me became almost servile during that period.

Unfortunately, the capture of Kharkov marked the culmination of the Russian offensive. It was their turn to run out of steam. A month later the Germans staged a counteroffensive and recaptured the city. The front line became stabilized at about the lines from which the Germans had launched their spring offensive. But few had any more faith in an ultimate German victory.

Next, American and British forces finally broke the German lines in Africa and the German Afrika Korps was taken in a pincer movement from east and west. Rommel's name disappeared from the German headlines.

A few days after Wacek departed, I called my father to tell him what had happened. I could hardly hear his voice. It seemed that he was ill with typhus and was running a high fever. Miss Czyzowicz had arranged for him to stay at the base. I called the base daily thereafter, but strangers answered the phone and I could only ascertain that he was still alive. Miraculously he did recover and after about ten days was able to come to the phone and whisper a few words to me. That happened on March 30 and it was the last time that I heard his voice.

As March went by there was no more news of Akzions. Combined with word of German reverses on all fronts, it brought about a relaxation of tension in the ghetto, although hunger and disease continued to ravage the population. I had a pass permitting me to enter the ghetto and I visited our former apartment to deliver whatever food we could scrounge to relatives of my mother-in-law who were still there. Bringing food to the ghetto was forbidden under penalty of death, but both

the Ukrainian and Jewish militia guarding the ghetto knew me and I was never searched.

Shootings and killings continued, but not in an organized way, just random outbursts by bored Ukrainian guards. One incident happened at the gate adjacent to the factory. A Ukrainian sentry shot at and severely wounded a Jew who was going to the outhouse. It was a cold day and later the sentry, a young peasant, came to our office to warm up. I asked him why he had shot the man. He said that it was a cold night, and here he was freezing, and there was this Jew coming from a warm room and going back to a warm bed. So, in his resentment, he shot him. So what?

The winter came to an end and was succeeded by an unusually warm spring. On the last evening before the final tragedy, I was going home from work and, passing the ghetto, noticed people taking advantage of the warm weather, sitting outside their miserable quarters. I even saw young people holding hands and kissing. I remember thinking that perhaps, just perhaps, the worst was over.

On April 5, 1943, I rose in the morning, shaved, dressed, and stepped outside ready to go to work, when our landlady's daughter, Kasia, intercepted me. The ghetto was surrounded by SS men and Ukrainian militia, she said. Perhaps it was only another roundup of workers for the camps, or else for forced labor in Germany. (In which case the ghetto was so surrounded that gentiles couldn't hide there.) She advised me to stay home until she had more information. I agreed. After about an hour she reported sounds of shooting inside the ghetto. Also she heard people saying that Jews were being dragged out of their homes and led on foot to Folwarki, a village a few kilometers outside of Zloczow. Why there, she did not know. She had also learned that earlier that morning, presumably when we were still sleeping, some SS men had come to our street looking for Jews. Neighbors said that there were no Jews living there, although they knew of our presence.

On the same street as our cottage was a house which had belonged to a Jewish dentist, Dr. Davidson, who had disappeared when the ghetto was established. I was sure that, like every Jewish house at that time, it must have had some concealed hiding place. Cautiously I made my way there and carefully inspected the apartment. There was no obvious entrance to a cellar, yet I knew that there must have been a cellar. So I looked around, testing the floor with a hammer until I discerned a hollow sound and discovered a well-camouflaged trapdoor that led to the cellar. I returned to fetch the family and we all went down to see. I realized that it offered only temporary and tenuous

safety. Since I had found it, a determined search party could find it as well, but when you are about to drown you grasp at straws. (We met Dr. Davidson years later in Israel and thanked him for his providence. He died a few years ago.)

Once we were inside, Kasia covered the trapdoor with a rug. For the next two days and nights, Mrs. Michalski and her daughters brought us candles, flashlight, food, and also news from the outside—horrendous news. It appeared that the ghetto was being liquidated. Zloczow had been declared "*Judenrein.*"

Once again the children behaved admirably throughout this ordeal, never raising their voices above a whisper. On the morning of the third day one of the women said that now the ghetto was "cleaned out." Evidently only the Jewish doctors in the Jewish hospital were allowed to remain in Zloczow, presumably to attend to able-bodied workers in Lackie. The people looking after us were becoming increasingly frightened. It was becoming obvious that we could not stay in the present hiding place much longer. My wife and I talked it over and we reached a decision. We did not want to fall into German hands alive. Dr. Reichard was one of the surviving doctors in the hospital. We would ask one of the women to go to the Jewish hospital and ask our cousin to provide us with cyanide with which we would kill ourselves if the need arose.

On the evening of the third day we heard a commotion overhead. The trapdoor opened and the face of Hela Skrzeszewska appeared.

She descended to the cellar. She embraced us all. She hugged and kissed the children. She had just returned from Lwow where she had seen my father, now fully recovered and back at work. He was safe, she said. In Lwow, the ghetto was also being liquidated but the inmates of the Janowska Street concentration camp where my father was confined had been left unharmed. She consoled us with the latest news from the Polish underground. The war was coming to a close. It was a matter of weeks, if not days. "You will not stay here. You are coming to my house to stay with me for a couple of weeks, until the war ends." She was very energetic and insistent. "Let's get going right away."

We climbed from the cellar and went back to our cottage where we washed away the grime of the preceding days and nights. I shaved. We put on our best clothing. The hated armbands were discarded, never to be worn again.

We left the cottage after dark, moving in small groups. Hela Skrzeszewska and Kasia each took one of my arms. Lina and my mother-in-law walked with Mrs. Michalski. Her older daughter, Ann,

held the children by the hand. We walked with measured steps, not too fast, not too slow, along Lwowska Street, across the street from the ghetto. A Ukrainian militiaman came over to ask where we were going and to warn us not to get too close to the ghetto because the Akzion was still going on and there was still shooting. He laughed: "It is not so easy to get rid of the rats." He wished us good night and returned to his post. Today, years later, as I write this, I'm amazed at our calm. We could see fires in the deserted ghetto and an occasional dark figure, an SS man or a Ukrainian militiaman, combing the streets for the remnants of the Jews of Zloczow.

We left the ghetto behind, went past Lwowska Street, circled the edge of the Main Market and turned into Brodska Street leading to Jelechowice. Fortunately, that night an evening Mass was being celebrated at the Catholic church in Zloczow and there were other groups of people going home, so we did not attract attention. We reached the last cluster of houses on the outskirts of the town where the landlady and her two daughters bade us a tearful good-bye, wished us good luck and waited until we lost sight of them. We did not see the landlady again until sixteen months later, when we returned to Zloczow after liberation. The two daughters were by then deported to Germany and we never saw them again.

About halfway toward Jelechowice, a man appeared and tried to attach himself to us. He stuck to us for a while but finally Hela shook him off. Later, we often spoke about that man, wondering whether he might have been another Jew who had managed to escape from the ghetto.

Without further incident we walked about another hour until we reached the house. Hela shared it with a Polish spinster and teacher, Misia, and a Ukrainian handyman, Hryc, who later converted to Roman Catholicism and became Grzegorz, abbreviated Grzes. These three became our wardens.

We were greeted by my wife's widowed cousin, Nusia Sternschuss, and her son, Fred, whom Hela was already sheltering. It is difficult to describe out feelings when out of darkness and despair we passed into light and hope. We had our first hot meal in three days, and what was more, we sat at a table to eat. We were in a room. We slept on beds that night. I do not believe that we could think straight that first night. It took us a few days to get over our bewilderment. This was the beginning of an eighteen-month confinement, a harrowing period.

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In retrospect, compared to the experiences of other survivors, we spent these eighteen months almost serenely. However, at the time, we did not feel at all secure; and concealing that would not give a true picture of what we were going through. In truth, it was a most difficult period for me to write about. Much of what I am going to say about our hosts will sound ungrateful, and how could one be ungrateful to people who saved our lives at the risk of their own? The fact is, we all survived and nothing else should matter. Nonetheless I promised myself to write about events and feelings just as they occurred at *that time.* In partial explanation for some of our feelings, I must say that we did not always fully realize the mortal danger we were in or perhaps we refused to admit it.

During the first several weeks the atmosphere inside the house was pleasant. We were treated as guests. We were given the best room in the house and we ate our meals with our hosts, in our room.

As I mentioned before, our new shelter was away from the main village at the edge of a forest; before the Skrzeszewskis bought it, it had belonged to a forester. It was set back about half a mile from a main highway which led to Brody, a town at the prewar Russian border. The nearest house was several hundred feet away and belonged to a Polish woman named Stanislawska, who was very friendly with our hosts, as was another Polish neighbor, the village mailman, Zagorski. Jelechowice contained an unusually large number of Poles; most villages around Zloczow were predominantly Ukrainian.

Zagorski was a short, stout man with a stentorian voice which we could hear even through the walls. He carried not only letters but news and gossip. He had access to a radio. I am not sure whether he knew about us, but Mrs. Stanislawska did. We eventually bought most of our food either from her or through her.



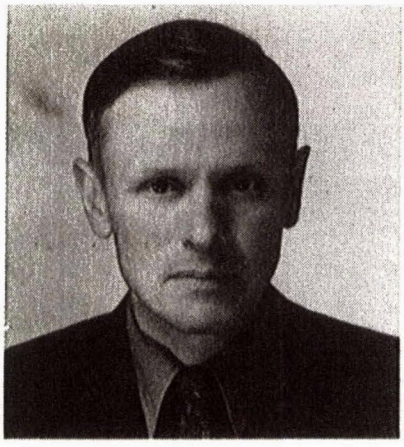
Selma, Edith, and Wusia in front of the house where we were hidden during 1943–44. (Note: picture was taken earlier, in summer of 1939, when we were vacationing in this very house.)

A picture of the house in which we hid, taken in the summer of 1939, is preserved in our family album. It shows the window of the small room in which we spent half of our confinement. In front of the window are our two daughters, and a third child, Wusia Weinstock, who with her mother joined us later.

The house consisted of two rooms: a kitchen and a large hall. During the summer when the rooms were rented to vacationers, the hall was converted into a bedroom for the Skrzeszewskis. Attached to the house was a covered veranda where in better times we used to take tea. In front of the house was a large garden; to the rear were a yard, barn and stables, empty since the Skrzeszewskis had no livestock. The main entrance to the house was from the hall, with doors leading right and left. These doors were kept locked most of the time during our sojourn and always when our host had visitors; the windows were covered with heavy curtains, preventing anyone from seeing inside.

The tranquillity of our refuge could not keep out the grim news that came from Zloczow in a steady stream. We learned that the Germans







The people that sheltered us from the Nazis. Top left to right, Hela Skrzeszewska, Karol Skrzeszewski, right, Hyrc Tyc. (Photo of Misia, not available.)



Two of those who hid with us. Nusia Sternschuss and her son Fred. Both survived and emigrated to Israel. Son is now named Ephraim Sten and is an Israeli TV producer/director/critic.

no longer pretended the Jews were being resettled. Now everyone knew that people taken from the ghetto had been removed to Folwarki, a village adjacent to Jelechowice. There, a large ditch was dug, people were forced to strip, lined up and shot down by a single SS man with a machine gun. (The single SS man version came from Zagorski.) Bodies were thrown into the ditch and some people were buried alive. Ukrainian policemen piled dirt on the bodies. Villagers witnessed the gruesome sight; some brought home clothing taken from the victims. "Our" Hryc also brought home a sack of clothing—some with blood-stains on it.

We learned after liberation that first the Gestapo had rounded up the Judenrat and other Jews who lived outside the ghetto. Since our permits had come from Quizo rather than the official Judenrat channel, we were not on any Gestapo list and thus escaped.

I don't think that I'm superstitious, but before each of the three Akzions I had a dream that a fire was devouring my house and the city. The dream was particularly vivid before the final April Akzion. I dreamt that I was standing on the Waly in front of the clock (its landmark). Huge fires were burning all around with flames shooting high into the sky. With me was my wife and my two daughters. I felt the heat but no harm came to us. I woke up and I knew that there would be a terrible Akzion.

Hela told us that she had heard that the ghetto was empty, but that there were still Jewish doctors in the hospital, and that there were Jews hidden in bunkers.

After a few days Hela made a trip to our last abode in Zloczow and brought back some of our clothing and medicines. Most of what remained of our valuables had been stored with Stefa and one or two other employees.

Hela also brought back news. Wacek had returned to take us to Warsaw. I was still in favor of this possibility but since Lina was dead set against it, we did not try to get in touch with Wacek again. Also, someone from the factory, accompanied by a German from the Kreishauptmannschaft, had been looking for me and told the landlady that I would be given an "iron letter" assuring my safety should I decide to return to work. She sensibly denied any knowledge of my whereabouts. After this frightening piece of news, we decided to sever all our contacts with Hela in case she might be spotted and followed. We thought it wise that none of the factory folk should know our whereabouts or that we were even alive. We were afraid to have any of them speak with Hela, whose discretion could not be trusted.

We suspected that some of her friends knew about us. Her own safety, probably her life, depended on keeping our whereabouts secret, but that did not make her discreet. The war was going to be over in a couple of weeks—well, perhaps in a couple of months—and that was that! Exciting secrets were to be shared. Her high hopes were not shared by Misia, nor by me, but I kept my thoughts to myself. Like most Poles, Hela believed that liberation would come from the West. Poles wanted to be free from the Germans but dreaded the thought of the despised Russians being the liberators.

* * *

In April 1943, big headlines in the German newspapers announced to the world the discovery of mass graves of Polish officers in the forest of Katyn, near Smolensk. Goebbels accused the Russians of the crime.

For the Polish underground newsletters, the Katyn affair momentarily overshadowed everything else. When almost simultaneously General Sikorski, head of the Polish government-in-exile, died in a mysterious plane accident off Gibraltar, Russian sabotage was suspected. The Russian propaganda apparatus, usually very skilled, handled all this in a heavy-handed way. For our hosts, as for the majority of Poles, Russian guilt seemed unequivocal.

Our hosts, particularly Misia, worried whether to follow the example of many Poles who had already escaped to the West. Were they to abandon us, we would certainly perish. I tried to interpret the news as I had for the Dackos, all to the Allies' advantage. They depended for news on underground leaflets, which contained some important information not available in the German press, yet were generally optimistic about the war. I persuaded Hela and the others that such a one-sided view was unreliable (which it was), and prevailed on Hela to buy German newspapers.

Patiently I explained again and again that in this Katyn affair Germany was embarking on a propaganda offensive as a diversion because the world had finally become aware of the atrocities committed by the Germans against Jews and non-Jews. I was careful, however, not to appear to be defending the Russians. I said that both the Germans and the Russians were capable of the crime, and that only after war's end would we know the truth. Privately I was convinced, and still am, that Stalin was responsible for Katyn. I managed to allay their fears somewhat, and they did not leave. I also reiterated that the liberation of Poland and the restoration of its prewar borders had been

assured by England and America, which was also my hope. We did not know then about the sellout that had already taken place in Teheran.

North African news again took over the headlines: the German Afrika Korps surrendered to the Western Allies in May 1943. To the familiar name of the English General Montgomery was added an American name, Eisenhower. The Polish underground newsletter predicted an imminent landing in Europe. We celebrated the event with a festive dinner—the last, cooked by Hela.

Even I thought that the war might end in 1943.

While the good mood prevailed I again begged Hela to go to Lwow to get my father. Months earlier I had asked Hela to go to Lwow. She had gone and came back with the message that Father, now suffering from asthma, felt that he would not be able to remain in a confined place; he felt safe at the base and intended to stay there till the end of the war. This time after an absence of a few days she again returned alone. First she said that she had been unable to find Father at the base. Then she said that the base was closed. Finally she said that she had been afraid to go there. I implored her to go and try again, but she refused.

It was only after liberation that I met a pharmacist, Mr. Seif, who had known my father well. He told me that my father had committed suicide when he was seized by the Gestapo. This was validated after liberation by gentile workers of the factory, Pawel and Stefa, who heard it from the Dackos.

At about the same time, the inmates of the concentration camp Lackie were murdered by the Nazis, only a few managing to escape. The Jews still camped at the Jewish hospital were also liquidated, among them my relatives, Dr. Reichard and his wife, both of whom took poison. Dr. Jollek, who told me much about the final days, managed to escape with his wife and survived as a physician with a band of Ukrainian partisans. Edzio Reichard had tried to escape also, but was caught and killed.

* * *

An underground leaflet proclaimed the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. We had already guessed from the German press that something unusual was going on in Warsaw but thought that German propagandists were trying to justify new atrocities against Jews. While the newsletter praised the heroism of the Jewish fighters who met tanks, artillery and machine guns with homemade Molotov cocktails and a

few handguns, it was quite obvious to us from the reports that Armia Krajowa, the Polish underground, did little to help the Jews.

The war did not end in a few weeks as Hela expected, and food became an acute problem. We soon ran out of money and did not dare to allude to the money that Hela owed us. After a lot of soul-searching, we decided against our previous plan to sever all contacts with Zloczow and, dangerous as it was, to get in touch with Stefa who held much of our property. We thought also it would do no harm if the Dackos were to learn that we were alive. It may sound naive, but we still cherished the hope that, should we survive, we would recover our belongings. The knowledge that we were alive might prevent the Dackos from squandering or running away with it.

I composed a letter to Stefa in which I confided that we were temporarily in Lwow, on the way to Warsaw. We authorized her to hand over to the bearer of the letter the gold coins in her possession. The letter was delivered by Hela, who told Stefa that while she did not know where we were, she had a way of getting in touch with us. Stefa was a smart girl and may have guessed that we were not in Warsaw but somehow nearby, or Hela might have told her the truth. Anyhow, Stefa made an effort to keep in touch with us during our confinement. She told the Dackos that we were in Warsaw and they seemed to believe it. Hela also told us that Stefa was bitter that we had not saved her fiancé, my cousin Edzio. She herself had not been able to save him because her family had objected. After liberation I told Stefa the circumstances of our escape and also that I had been unable to help even my own father. She understood.

Hela at first wanted to keep the gold but finally let us have it. We rationed the coins, one at a time, and they carried us until the fall.

As the war continued, Hela's optimistic mood of the early days wore out, fluctuating from day to day, or even from hour to hour, from extreme euphoria to the depths of doom. Misia remained hostile, as she had been from the beginning. Hryc, a simple but decent fellow, followed one or the other, Misia usually, who awed him because she was a teacher whereas he was barely literate. We entered a period of crises—major, minor, too numerous to count. Soon our hosts were edgy all the time and we too became tense and fearful.

I still think about what motivated our hosts to keep us for such a long time in spite of the mortal danger. It was basic human decency, I think, as well as a determination to keep a commitment. Was it pride in being able to defeat the Germans in a small way? Foremost, I believe, it was their deep faith. They gave us bad moments, but we survived.

In June and early July we heard the roar of heavy planes overhead, German transport planes heading east, signaling a renewed German offensive.

In July the Western Allies invaded Sicily and brought about the fall of Mussolini; however, the fighting in Sicily took longer than we expected—two months to conquer the island. In the German press the name of another American, General George Patton, emerged, to add to the familiar list of other Allied, German and Russian generals and marshals whose successes and failures had such a direct effect on our lives.

In July, also, the German press reported heavy fighting near the Russian cities, Kursk and Orel. The biggest tank battle of the war was taking place there and the Germans claimed to have destroyed hundreds of Russian tanks.

The battles at Stalingrad, El Alamein, or Kharkov may not have affected German policies toward the Jews, but, as earlier with the Dackos, they influenced the behavior of our hosts toward us. Less important were political developments. Still, the decisions of Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt affected us directly during these months.

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Out of the blue, Karol Skrzeszewski came home. Misia said that he had quarreled with the Germans and had decided to run away; he had not known about us, of course. At once Hela moved us, temporarily, she said, from the big room to the small one at the other end of the house. We could hear them quarreling but could not make out the words. Misia gleefully told us that Karol had shouted that the house was "infested" with Jews and threatened to leave unless we left. In the same breath that she told us that the SS were routing and executing Jews who managed to escape from the ghetto, she nevertheless encouraged us to leave and seek refuge in the forest. "You will find many of your people there," she said, which was true except that the people were dead and buried. Over a period of several months, part of the forest adjacent to the house had become an execution ground. We often heard the firing and were given the gruesome details by our hosts.

We spent the next few days in agony, wondering what was to become of us. Hela avoided us, leaving it to Misia to bring us the news, which was always bad.

She told us of another threat. The neighboring forest had become thick with Ukrainian national partisans, called Banderowce, after their leader Bandera. They were raiding villages, looting, and killing Poles. As Karol considered himself their prime target, he decided to sleep away from home. This alleviated the situation somewhat for us. Hela and Misia joined him, and we were alone at night from then on.

One day Karol decided to meet with me to discuss the political situation. Gone was the debonair ladies' man. Instead, I saw an aging, tense, and obviously very frightened man. Political vicissitudes as usual had a direct bearing on our relationship, and this seemingly strange discussion was no exception. Karol told me that, in July, Stalin

had organized a Union of Polish Patriots to challenge the Polish government-in-exile. The head of this new body was an unknown man named Osubka Morawski. The one prominent figure in this new group was Wanda Wasilewska, a writer married to the Ukrainian poet, Korneychuk, himself a member of the Communist Party.

The Anders army was formed during the initial stages of the Russo-German war in Russia. It consisted of Poles who were deported to Siberia in 1939–40 and released due to pressure from Churchill. This army refused to fight on the Eastern Front and left Russia through Iran and Palestine to fight on the Western Front. From accounts of my friends who served in that army, the few Jews who were permitted to join were subjected to harsh anti-Semitism. Most of them left the army as soon as they reached Palestine.

As a countermove to the Anders army, a Polish division, which took the name of Kosciuszko, headed by another unknown, General Berling, joined the Russian army on the Eastern Front. We learned after the war that several Zloczower Jews had served in that army, including the two youths who had nationalized our factory back in 1939.

Karol started out to test me by saying that he wanted to join the Polish army to fight the Germans. I replied that of course he meant the Anders army, which would be difficult if not impossible to reach. He agreed. Then he asked me what I thought of the Union of Polish Patriots and its army. I expressed the opinion that it was inconceivable for a patriotic Pole to join that army, which would be a mere tool of the Russians. He feared that the Russians were getting the upper hand on the Eastern Front. I tried to assure him that Poland would be liberated from the West and that we would see the restoration of a Poland stronger than before the war. I am not sure whether he believed me, but we parted in seeming harmony.

A few days after this conversation with Karol, Hela told us that we could stay, but not in the house. We would be moved to a cellar under the barn, about fifty feet from the house. The transfer was made a day or so later during a dark August night and gave Misia at least much satisfaction.

Our new hiding place was about fifteen by fifteen feet, with a ceiling so low that it was impossible for an adult to stand upright. It was reached by a trapdoor which could be opened only from the outside. A tiny window dimmed by cobwebs, weeds, and dirt let in some light. We were provided with straw mattresses on which we lay all the time. Our toilet facilities consisted of a bucket, which Hryc lowered every evening and took out every morning to empty, and another with water for

washing. We tried very hard to keep clean. I still shaved every second day. We managed to avoid lice, but we did suffer from fleas that nested in the straw and found our bodies an endless feast.

Hela, now more relaxed and friendly, visited us every evening after dark to bring food and the newspapers. She discussed mainly the political situation. She also complained about her husband and Misia. Misia also came from time to time, especially if she could bring bad news.

The future of Poland was foremost on their minds.

Poland's fate was already sealed at that time in the Teheran Agreement, but we had no knowledge of this and fortunately, neither did they. But I had a hunch that Poland was not the Allies' primary concern. The war was far from over. However, I insisted to Hela and Misia, and to Karol secondhand, that England's promises were sacred and that Poland would be restored to its prewar borders and perhaps even receive a slice of Pomerania at the expense of Germany.

As the military developments on the Eastern Front became more and more favorable for the Russians, the Polish underground papers were reporting shrilly that the political situation looked very dark for the Poles. Stalin was attacked directly and viciously, and the disillusionment with Churchill and Roosevelt was barely concealed.

We were seven in the cellar: my wife, my mother-in-law, our two daughters, Nusia Sternschuss, her son Fred, and I. We had candles but used them very sparingly, covering the window when we did. Fortunately, it was summer and the days were long. After sundown we sat in darkness, listening to Fred telling stories to the children, reminiscing about the past, or trying to guess at the future. Retrospectively, the period that we spent in the cellar was perhaps the safest, but during that time we felt depressed and humiliated. Books helped a great deal. I remember reading Kipling's *Stalky and Co.*, Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, and Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, each for the umpteenth time. We also played cards for hours at a time.

After reporting successes in the battle of Kursk-Orel, the German papers started to use the telling term *schwere Kaempfe* (heavy fighting). Soon it became obvious that what may have started as a German initiative became a Russian offensive and a very successful one. Most Western historians, including Churchill, consider the battle of Stalingrad the turning point of the war. I, however, share the opinion of the minority, who give this distinction to the battle of Kursk-Orel.

There was movement on the Western Front, too.

The Americans and the British invaded the Italian mainland in

September. Naples was quickly taken. With the help of maps, I showed our hosts that the Allies were as close to us as the Russians, and that liberation would surely come from the West. I remember that I was invited once to come out of the cellar, at Karol's request, to discuss this with him. He was well versed, much less optimistic than Hela.

The Western Allies seemed to be moving at a snail's pace. The Germans recovered and occupied Rome, and a crushing blow was dealt to our hopes when an SS commando unit under Skorzenny managed to free Mussolini in a daring raid.

On the other hand, the Russian offensive continued unabated. In October their armies retook Kiev and the important town of Zhitomir and were close to the prewar Polish borders.

The weeks of confinement in the cellar took their toll. We slept fully clothed, because we had to be ready to run at a moment's notice. The fact that we were virtual prisoners and could not get out unless someone opened the trapdoor from the outside caused us many sleepless nights. We became increasingly irritable and snapped at each other for no reason.

The children, deprived of sun and fresh air, grew pale. I have often mentioned their exemplary behavior during our ordeal. They were now as brave as ever. I believe that they perceived the danger, though perhaps they did not fully realize its dimensions.

Hela and Misia quarreled often, sometimes because of us, sometimes over Hryc, sometimes for no discernable reason. However, now that Karol was home, Misia had Hryc all to herself. Both women asked us to mediate their genuine or imagined grievances. We tried not to take sides and not to worry too much about them. Bad as their quarrels were, it was much, much worse when they were chummy, when we would incur the combined force of their wrath.

Days passed and fall arrived. It grew chilly and damp in the cellar. We worried that even if we survived we would be crippled by rheumatism.

One day when Hela was in a good mood, our women summoned their courage and broached the subject of letting us out of the cellar. They explained that if the stable were set afire during the night, when they were now mostly away, we would be burned to death. They spoke of the children's health and my mother-in-law's arthritis. It was the last argument that prevailed with Misia, who was always courteous toward my mother-in-law, who she said reminded her of her own mother. Hela had her own reasons for agreeing, which we only learned about later.

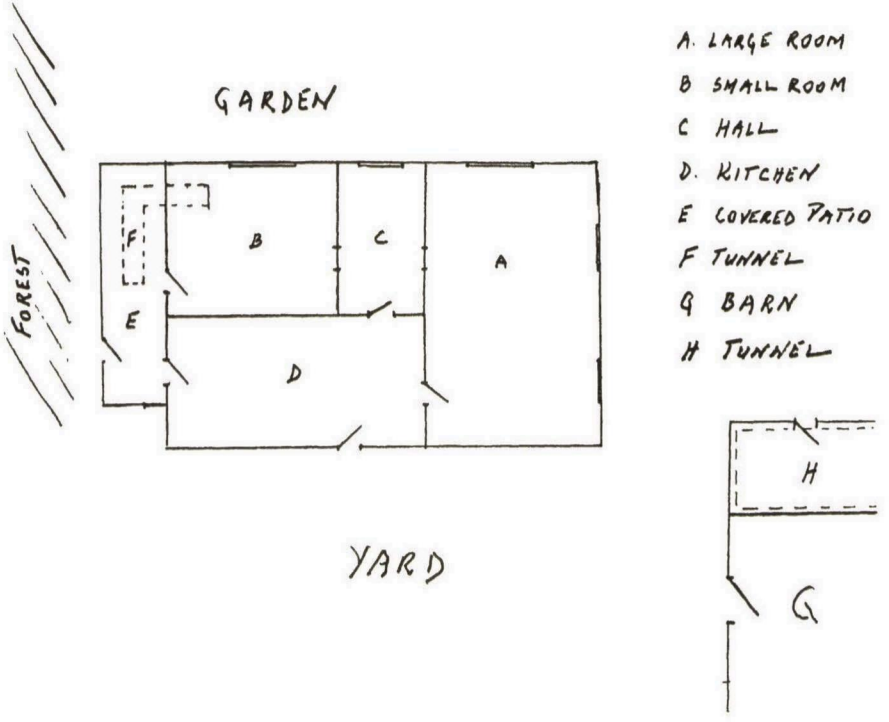


*Diagram of the Skrzeszewski house (our hiding place) and the surrounding area. Many executions took place in the area marked "*Forest.*" This was also the direction from which the Russians came to liberate us. We occupied room A first, then spent several months in the cellar under Barn G. Later, the Parilles occupied the barn where their baby was born and died. We spent the final days before liberation in room B, hiding when necessary in Tunnel F. I learned about the Normandy invasion hidden in room C. The Germans, as mentioned in this book, were in room A. I saw the Russian soldiers arrive from veranda E.*

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We soon left the cellar and returned to the small room. Karol was kept in the dark about this decision until after the change was made.

This small room was separated from the forest by a tiny veranda. It contained two beds. Straw mattresses were brought up from the cellar and stuffed with fresh straw, and Hryc burned the used straw—with all its fleas, we hoped.

Underneath the veranda, Hryc dug an L-shaped tunnel that reached under the room. It was really a hole in the ground, at its widest dimension perhaps only two feet in diameter, just big enough for us to crawl into and lie prone or supine, packed like sardines in a can. The entrance was covered with a plank, in turn camouflaged with a small rug. Realistically, the tunnel offered no protection at all against even a cursory search, not to mention an SS detail with dogs. But it served its purpose, which was to keep us out of sight of the unexpected, casual visitor.

The move was made on a moonless autumn night. We were to stay in the room most of the time, but were to climb into the tunnel in case of danger, which was occasionally real, as when German *Schupos (Schutzpolizei*—gendarmes) came to the village on foraging raids, or when SS units or members of the Ukrainian militia were in sight. But quite often the danger was imagined by our hosts, and we spent many a day in the tunnel because of someone's bad mood. Misia particularly loved to cork us up in it.

The adults slept fully clothed on the straw mattresses on the floor. My mother-in-law had a bed to herself, while the two girls slept in the other. Since the walls of the house were very thin, we kept absolutely still, holding our movements to a minimum and talking in whispers. I could not sleep at all for the first few nights after we moved into the room, but argued with myself about the military and political battles

and tried to second-guess the plans of Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin and more importantly, the thoughts in the minds of our hosts.

At last I found that thinking of Chiang Kai-shek put me to sleep. Why Chiang Kai-shek? I did not know then, and I still cannot guess today, but there it was.

By moving into the house we had won a battle, but were probably less safe. However, we stayed in that room throughout the winter and into the following spring until the arrival of the Soviet army.

A friend, Edzia Weinstock, and her daughter Wusia had escaped from a ghetto bunker and found shelter with Mrs. Stanislawska, Hela's neighbor. It was Edzia's husband who had warned me about the danger of wearing the green armband. (He had had some job with the Judenrat; we learned that he had been killed during the liquidation of the ghetto.)

I am not sure why Edzia left Stanislawska and sought refuge with us. Possibly Stanislawska herself had told her about us. Anyhow, one evening early in October, we heard Edzia's voice in the kitchen pleading with our hosts to let her stay. They refused. Lina decided to intervene and purposely dropped a spoon on the floor. Edzia heard the noise, pushed open the door to our room and saw us. Hela finally relented and let her stay.

Edzia quickly adjusted to the circumstances and did her share of the housework, but Wusia turned out to be a problem. She was a pretty little girl of "Aryan" appearance who had previously hidden with a family that had "converted" her. Frequently she told us that "If they find us, they will take you, but nothing will happen to me because I am a Christian." Patiently but sternly, I explained to her that wearing a cross did not alter the fact that she was a Jewess and that she would be killed along with the rest of us unless she behaved. At last she calmed down. She had a lovely voice and occasionally when it was quiet she would sing for us and our hosts. (Wusia now lives in Israel. The petulant, pretty child has turned into a lovely Israeli woman.)

Throughout our ordeal, Misia tried hard to convert us to Christianity. I explained to her that conversion under these circumstances would not be genuine. I said that if we survived we would consider it. She taught the catechism to the children, however, and had some success in swaying them, particularly our younger daughter, Selma, while Edith, a year older, remained more skeptical.

My mother-in-law maintained kashrut during all the time of our confinement. Her dishes were cooked separately if ours contained any

kind of fat. She would not touch meat on the rare occasions when it was available. Until her dying day she believed that it was her faith that had saved her life.

The money from the sale of coins was now gone. Every few days an article of clothing was selected to be sold through Stanislawska for food. Bean soup was our staple. Occasionally there was a treat—pirogi, if any were left after Hryc had his dinner. He was a formidable eater, devouring twenty-five pirogi at a sitting.

As winter progressed, bean soup became a luxury and we lived on millet and beet leaves. Amazing how little the human organism needs to survive.

During the first few weeks after our return to the house I kept a diary. I already quoted from it at the beginning of these reminiscenses.

Tuesday, October 26, 1943

. . . I started to write with the idea of reconstructing the events of the last four years. However, what is happening now and what happened last Sunday and Monday is so vivid that I must record it; it shows so clearly the conditions under which we live.

We live our lives, *en passant*. We live mainly the lives of our hosts. It is unimportant if one of us has risen on the wrong side of the bed, but the good or bad mood of one or another of our hosts colors our spirits. These moods are as capricious as April weather. Dark skies and thunderbolts rapidly alternate with sunshine and blue skies. We console one another: "Don't take it to heart; you know what they are like."

We say: "Who would worry about that?" Yet we worry constantly, very much. Our mood is a moonlike reflection of the sun that is our host.

Are we oversensitive perhaps? I rather think that we are in a state of stupor. But impressions aside, let the facts speak.

Saturday we were engaged in our usual game of cards, waiting Hela's return from town. Card playing—I must devote special time to that subject—made up the major part of our daily time-killing activities. Our hearts were heavy. From time to time someone sighed and pronounced the sacramental words: "Let's hope there is good news in the paper." Good news was our biggest joy; we would read each paper two or three times from beginning to end, and every word was weighed and scrutinized as if it were holy scripture.

Quiet. "They" have arrived. Loaded with packages. After some hesitation "they" came in through the hall. One would think it a simple matter which door to use, but the door through the hall is screened from our view and they use it when they wish to conceal what they are carrying.

On that day we did not get the paper immediately. If we did not get it on the same day then we knew that there was "something" in it. We were usually right. We became passionate students of psychology. In the so-ardently awaited paper—not much. We waited for the visit. It came. We asked Hela to sit down. "I can't spare a minute." Finally she sat on the edge of the chair. A moment of silence. Hesitatingly we let it drop: "What's new?" "Well"—a snapped answer—"they keep murdering. Last week they were in Sassow-Owsisko [adjacent hamlet]. In Zloczow alone there were thirteen attacks." We have learned to listen without raising an eyebrow. "And politically?"

My wife is trying to keep the barely glowing fire of conversation going. "Nothing special, except that the Bolsheviks are pushing strongly. They announced from London that November will bring the decision."

Hela is definitely neither in form nor in a decent mood. Nothing sensational, such as the capitulation of Hungary or Bulgaria, nor the occupation for the hundreth time of the Crimea or Kiev. "Also, they are evacuating Podwoloczyska and Zbaraz [75 kilometers distant]. Last week Zloczow was mined." Hela stares at us sharply in case, God forbid, somebody's face shows disbelief. But our six-months training has done the job. Our faces are a mixture of ardent belief and a slightly embarrassed and stupid look. "It doesn't pay to tell you anything. You don't believe it anyway. And one only looks stupid." Hela has used this reproach whenever in the past we have admitted that we did not believe some bit of rosy news.

Saturday brought some joy; we were given a kerosene lamp. Happy faces grouped around the lamp. How little one needs for happiness.

Thursday, October 28, 1943

Monday morning we had a visit from the "old lady," i.e., Hela's mother, who came with a woman unknown to us. With joy and loud laughter, she recounted that somewhere, perhaps in Gologory, Jews had been found and subsequently shot in a ditch. Her voice expressed such satisfaction and hatred that for the

hundredth time we asked ourselves: "For what?" This mortal hatred haunts us even after we are dead. After all, for all practical purposes, there are no Jews left in Poland. The Ukrainians would gladly exhume us in order to kill us all over again.

Bad news has come from town. The panic that against our will has started to affect us too is unbelievable and hard to describe.

Another crisis. Last night somebody knocked at a window. They had all heard it, although we hadn't. We suspect that Hryc engineered this, since he likes practical jokes.

For the last few days the unusual harmony among our hosts has worried us, since unfortunately such harmony always ends with some new plot against us. However, their mood has remained idyllic.

The biggest surprise came in the evening. We were going to bed when suddenly I was invited to visit the master of the house himself. I found him changed beyond recognition; calm, polite, and almost affectionate toward his wife. By and large, he agreed with me on the political and military situation. After I returned to our room, I could not praise him enough.

Tuesday morning, after a long series of beautiful, sunny days on the home horizon, the sky became overcast, the clouds pregnant with thunder. After a fierce quarrel, Karol fled the house. We worried that we were the cause of the quarrel and became depressed. I felt especially bad that yesterday's talk brought this result. Stanislawska arrived for her money. We discreetly asked her about the reason for today's storm, but she kept mum, as solidarity vis-à-vis us is the order of the day.

Finally Hela let go: It was because of us that her husband has left. There is no corner for him in the house. (His room, which no one has dared to enter, only measures some twenty by twenty feet!) Suddenly Edzia and Misia, who were in the kitchen, came running, hilarious. "Our guest is back." Misia yelled at Hela, who was working with Stanislawska in the garden: "Hela, you have a guest." Thereafter there reigned not just harmony, but love. Again we told ourselves how incorrigibly stupid we were to have let them upset us.

The same evening Hela read her fortune in cards, her favorite occupation. "Death is near me, very close. Tonight for sure, the Banderowce will come." However the bandits did not show up that night, although it was in the cards, and what the cards tell is as sure as amen.

Wednesday brought excellent news. Clearly, things were going badly for the Germans, very badly. The battle for the Dnieper was taking a very dangerous turn. We became happy and excited. Our ladies took liberties by replying sharply to Misia. But our joy was not total. Our hosts again united, became immediately full of gloom and fury at the thought that the Bolsheviks would return. They tried to conceal these feelings, without success. They made it clear that they were afraid of the Bolsheviks and did not trust us either. They said: "Should certain events take place, dear folks, everybody loves his own life first; we will tell you—go! Wherever your eyes will guide you." The same evening Misia, map in hand, sounded me out. She was going to report back to Karol as soon as he returned from a trip to town without allowing him time to catch his breath. We were still feeling the effects of yesterday's Dnepopetrovsk. We always labeled our hosts' moods with the name of the town that the Germans had given up "for strategic reasons," as they invariably announced.

* * *

There was a short circuit in the kitchen yesterday. Old Stanislawski ran into Edzia and Fred when he unexpectedly walked in. Hela explained that she had guests from Tarnopol. Contrary to our fear, the event improved their mood and they took it lightly. However, the next day they decided it had been a tragedy.

Thursday, November 4, 1943

I have not written for the last few days. I have no excuse. Nothing has happened. Sunday we spent ten minutes in the tunnel. False alarm? There was also some shooting at night.

Saturday, November 6, 1943

I often wonder why it's so difficult for me to keep on writing since I like to write and it is my sole entertainment besides reading newspapers. I think it may be because I decided to write about the past and to save the present as material for a psychological novel. However, the present keeps intruding. Perhaps the present cannot be shut out?

The grayness and hopelessness of our daily life, the incessant pettiness, the harping by our hosts that they rued the unguarded moment in which they decided to shelter us and save us from

certain death, the fear that, despite good news, rescue is far off—all this erodes our spirits.

I would like to write about this bitterness, this bottomless sadness, this grief, this hopelessness about tomorrow. However, I see that my pen is too weak to describe all this. Should we ever survive these terrible times, no one in the world will believe us. The mass graves will bear witness to those who died, but who will be our witness? Will our prematurely gray hair and wrinkled faces tell the story, or the sadness in our eyes which will remain with us to our dying days? Only those who went through all this will be able to understand.

This has been a particularly difficult week. November 2 was the first anniversary of the November Akzion and seven months since the last one in April. There has been continuous harassment from our hosts. It has been very cold. There is no stove in our room. There have been money problems. A letter came from Stefa with a reproach—why did we not save Edzio? My God, if only she knew the conditions under which we live! Lina tried once to send something to her cousin. Mrs. Weinstock told us that Stanislawska told her that she was hidden somewhere in the village. They refused and tormented her afterward. Did we not understand the danger?—all the people who had been shot "on account of Jews"? The man harboring Mr. Steinwurzel would not risk buying him the paper. Hela ultimately had apologized, saying that she "did not mean it that way." How could we have helped others? Even though we realize our helplessness we walk around in gloom and guilt.

We have been thinking about the future. We realize that the war is entering its final phase, but how much longer will it last? For us every day is a century—not an empty phrase, believe me. We will have to wait, at best for months. But let us assume the best, that the war will end soon and that we will be able to resume normal lives. What will be a normal life? How could there be a normal life? Our family and friends are probably all dead. Any survivors will be as psychologically derailed as we are.

Today there is tremendous traffic in the air. Planes are flying continuously. No more writing. Stanislawska has brought a book to read.

Monday, November 8, 1943

A lunatic asylum. Looking for a description of our haven, of the

situation that has been created, of our behavior and that of our hosts-wardens, that phrase comes to mind. After a three-day absence of news, much happened yesterday and was so important that the already charged atmosphere reached maximum tension, lasting for days. The delay in newspapers was caused by a colossal movement of trains heading eastward and this time the rumors proved to be true. The events of the current week exceeded expectations. Rome had been cut off, Kiev taken. There was an offensive in Italy. As usual, the German setbacks in the East unnerved our hosts. While they want the war to end as we do, they do not want a Soviet victory. It is a delemma, but we can not solve it. We, too, do not want to be the happy subjects of Stalin, but we know that we have no choice. Besides, we hope that even if the Soviets return, somehow we will be able to escape from the Bolshevik "paradise." We talk as if we had influence over whether the Soviets would or would not come. Our hosts, perhaps subconsciously, have made us responsible for the Soviet successes and take it out on us when the Soviets make headway. However, my wife rightly said: "We prefer good news and bad moods."

Karol deserves a special chapter. He is definitely a psychopath. He has gone through a lot. Born in the Ukraine, as a young man he went through the Russian Revolution. He has served with the Denikin army in the Caucasus. As he recounts it, he was already at the end of the hangman's noose. Those days have left him with a burning hatred of the Bolsheviks which he does not conceal, and of Jews, which, when talking to us, he tries to hide. The hatred is combined with fear. During Polish independence, after a brief period of military service he joined the police, reaching the grade of sergeant, and remained in that post to the last minute. He loved his police work, particularly hunting Communists. After September 17, 1939 (the day the Russians entered Zloczow) he remained in hiding for a while, then crossed the border between the Russian and German lines and joined the Polish auxiliary police. As he tells it, he was arrested twice and managed to escape after the second arrest. For a while he worked as a gardener near Lwow but ran away and, after a short period of wandering around, came home on June 13. He is definitely better-educated than the average policeman, well-informed on the political and military situation.

In conversation he is pleasant and his behavior is normal. But he is not at all normal. He has a severe persecution complex. It is hell for all the people who are condemned to live with him. Paronoia is

a terrible thing. In every innocent person he sees a spy. A child, a beggar, a stranger or a close neighbor, all are suspect and everybody is his enemies' emissary. And he has many enemies. The worst is his own wife whom he almost *privatim and seriatim* flays alive. She in turn takes it out on us. He is terrified and awed by the Germans, especially of the Schupo and Gestapo. But his worst fear is reserved for the bands, his favorite topic of conversation. He has managed to inject the last into the others. He has sciatica, which he blames on the bands, since last November he spent two nights lying in the snow, hiding from them. For days, unless the pain keeps him in bed, he stands at the window, hidden behind the curtains, ready to run at a moment's notice.

Zagorski, according to Misia, told Karol that last Friday there was a suspicious-looking fellow around the village, stopping at the better homes and allegedly surveying our house. He spoke Ukrainian. He asked very detailed questions and possessed exact information on where and whom the bandits had recently looted. Except for the detail of circling our house, Stanislawska told us the same story. Karol has no doubt that the man was a spy for the bands and that he, Karol, is their main target. Furthermore, yesterday the dog was barking ferociously and every bark affects him as if someone is driving a nail into his brain. Admittedly, in these days a dog's barking could unnerve even a normal person. This mad atmosphere soon hung over all the household. Karol had just returned from town and confirmed the news of the fall of Kiev. He observes that there is deep depression in town, especially among Ukrainians.

Would that it all came to an end soon. Our nerves cannot last. Karol, Hela, Hryc, Misia, master, mistress, cowherd, lady, each with moods and nerves which are taken out on us—the fire centers, unfortunately, on my wife. Should it go on for months . . .

Wednesday, November 17, 1943

I have not written for some time. On the one hand, there was lack of time—I am reading *Tarzan*; on the other, there has been a deluge of news, military and political, and the mood, not shared by me, is that the Bolsheviks are *ante portas*. It is a fact that the tempo and progress of the Bolshevik advance is amazing. Zhitomir fell one week after Kiev, but . . . Nonetheless, the panic has been a fact which I too have had to consider. Every night there have been unending discussions, speculations on what the Bolsheviks would do

on their arrival. Even more on German retreat. People are afraid of both—more of the German retreat, because when the Germans have retreated in the past they have always left a desert behind and have executed people. The situation is unpleasant, for us particularly, since we cannot move from where we are. Tension has run high. Money is a major problem.

Sunday, November 21, 1943

Against my warnings—pessimist, they called me—our women became too excited over the conquest of Zhitomir. When I dared say that such a sharp and deep wedge was untenable, my wife shouted at me: "Don't start crowing." When it became certain that the Germans had recaptured Zhitomir, my friends were on the point of collapse. I was not surprised by the German rebound. Unfortunately, I have a better perception of the situation and no illusions about German power and their defensive capacity. This knowledge did not insulate me from the depression. We have had enough of all this.

Friday, November 26, 1943

This has been a difficult week. Monday, three trucks loaded with SS men appeared in the village. The local forester, Antonowicz, reported that there were secret invaders in his woods. Everybody told us different, mostly contradictory, versions of what happened. Hela said that every house and every building in the village was thoroughly searched, including our stable and barn, but by some miracle, the SS had not entered the house. We were fed this story and its implications . . . what would have happened if . . . for the next two days.

Under these circumstances, the tenth anniversary of our marriage was not very happy. But just yesterday a ray of warmth reached us. I had replied to Stefa's letter and tried to describe the conditions under which we live, the excuse ourselves, to answer her reproach. Yesterday we received a food parcel from her with flour and millet and candy for the children. My wife was deeply touched. I myself felt a tightness in my throat. She does not have much herself and is completely on her own. But she has heart. We were grateful for her compassion, so important to us . . . "

* * *

This is the last entry in the diary.

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Days went by slowly, and nights never seemed to end. An early and severe winter set in. We put on several layers of what remained of our clothing. To kill time and to avoid thinking, we read every book in the house. From time to time Hela, Misia, or Stanislawska brought a book from outside. As usual, we played cards and games, especially solitaire.

Over several days, my wife began to notice that food was disappearing at twice the anticipated rate. Hela at first denied any knowledge of it, but finally confessed to us that she had taken in another Jewish family, four people, who were sheltered in our former hiding place, the cellar under the barn. Their name was Parille; they had lived in Jelechowice before the war, had escaped the Germans and had been living in a hole in the ground in a nearby forest. Winter had made it impossible for them to try to survive there so one night, Mr. Parille came to Hela for help and she took them in.

They had nothing, so from then on we shared whatever we had with them. We never saw them. Mrs. Parille gave birth to a child in the shelter and there was fear that its crying would give them away to the Nazis; however, the child died after only a few days. Misia told us proudly that she and Hela had put the dead infant in a basket, had had it christened by a priest, and had buried it in the Catholic cemetery under a cross. We were nagged by suspicion that the child might have been smothered to stop its crying.

A huge row ensued over this. Hryc, in broad daylight, ran into the yard and started to yell at the top of his lungs, *"Nabrala sobie kupe zydow, a sama sie zabiera"* (She gathered a bunch of Jews and then disappeared for days at a time). I grabbed a rusty revolver, which Hela had hidden under the bed in our room, and ran out after Hryc. After I managed to get him back into the house, he calmed down quickly. Next day he

went to confession. When he came back, he kissed my wife's hand and apologized for his behavior of the previous day. We were both happy and worried. Now the priest, too, knew about our presence. It was Nusia who offered the idea that it might be for the best that more people knew about us, particularly prominent people. That, she thought, would insure our safety. Perhaps. People often ask what was the main factor that motivated our hosts. I believe that it was their deep faith. I am not a religious person, but when you take away religion from the unsophisticated there is no moral force left to counterweigh the vicious nature of man.

A few days after the Parille baby died, we had our first close encounter with German soldiers. A detachment of SS took quarters in the village and a number of them were billeted in our yard. The SS did not trust the villagers and slept outdoors. They used our kitchen, however, and lodged their horses in the stable underneath which the Parilles were hidden. Under the cover of darkness, food was carried to the family trapped in the cellar. Fortunately, the SS moved out after only a couple of days.

Shaken by the arrival of the SS, Karol left us, for good as it turned out. But with his comings and goings we did not believe that he would not return again someday. As days passed with Karol gone, Hela and Misia started to compete again for Hryc's favors. Little by little Misia got the upper hand because, I believe, she promised to marry him, as she did after the war. Karol's departure eased the tension temporarily.

During the short stay of the SS, our hosts remained in the house while we spent most of the time in the tunnel. Once again they began to sleep elsewhere and left us alone at night. We worried that one day they would not return. We kept watch while Hela and the others were away, one of us staying by the kitchen window all night.

One evening the roof of the house caught fire. Hryc happened to be in the house. He went to the roof to extinguish the fire. The three women and I went outside, formed a chain, and passed buckets of water to him. Fortunately, the fire was confined to the chimney and was soon extinguished.

1944 arrived. The Russians resumed their offensive but the West seemed stymied. The Allies having failed to open a decisive Second Front, we lost all interest in the battles in Italy which became irrelevant us. However, in my "strategic" sessions with out hosts, I still reiterated the importance of progress made in the West. I pointed to the news of the devastating bombings conducted by the Western air

forces on German cities, and stretched every inch of advance made by them into miles. It was vital to keep alive our hosts' hope that the rescue would come from the West. With Karol absent, it was easier to convince the women. But I knew that, for us, it mattered only what and how the Russians were doing in our sector of the front. To the despair of our hosts and to our joy, they were doing very well indeed. Early in January their forces crossed the former Polish border in the vicinity of Rowno. They were no more than a hundred miles from us. It seemed a matter of days before rescue would come.

Hela was well acquainted with Zuckerkandel's girlfriend, who was hiding him. She told us one day that this girl had been showing off a treasure in gold coins, diamonds and jewelry, her reward for saving his life. Hela's mute reproach was: "And here I am, doing it for nothing."

We were scraping the bottom of our dwindling resources, strained further by the addition of the Parilles, but we had to do something to counteract the impact that Zuckerkandel's treasure made on Hela, and also on Misia and Hryc. There was no way that we could possibly match what Zuckerkandel did for his girlfriend.

I decided to sacrifice one of the few remaining major items of value that we had, my fur coat, which was in Stefa's safekeeping. Lina was very much against selling it and preferred to part with her engagement ring instead, but I would not think of it and wrote to Stefa authorizing her to deliver the fur coat to Hela. The proceeds from the sale kept us going; for Hryc the immediate result was a meal worthy of a king.

* * *

There were no more newspapers, little solid news, but no lack of rumors. One day Hitler was about to conclude a separate peace with the West; the next day, no, it was with Stalin. Hitler had ordered the persecution of Jews to stop and reportedly Jews were moving freely about Zloczow. After liberation we tried to track down that rumor, which was confirmed by some Poles and Ukrainians and denied by others. We could not find any Jew who admitted to having been at large in Zloczow at that time.

Stalin said this, Churchill said that. No, it was Roosevelt who said it. Hela kept reading her cards, which said one day that the war would end definitely this spring; but on the next day, no, it would last another three years; no, five years. No, definitely not; see the ace of diamonds!

A few Germans came into our yard, and we had to run into the

tunnel once again. They left, and we came back into the room. We no longer had patience for books, games, or cards.

* * *

One night I was keeping watch at the kitchen window overlooking the yard. Around midnight Lina came up. We talked for a while, then she suggested that I give up the watch and go to sleep. It was late and surely nobody would come now, she said. I told her I'd stay up for another hour. I was ready to retire, when I thought I saw movement at the gate. I discerned men in uniform. Germans! I rushed to our room where all were sleeping. except my wife who was waiting up for me. We wakened everyone, straightened our room, and hid in the tunnel. We had had a lot of practice doing that; the whole operation took only a few moments. The children, though wakened suddenly, did not utter a sound. We were able to close the entrance to the tunnel from the inside, but at the last moment we decided that it would be dangerous to leave the house looking uninhabited. It seemed sensible for the women to meet the Germans and my wife and Nusia volunteered to stay in the house. After the rest of us hid, Lina and Nusia opened the door.

The SS men greeted the two women politely, but remained outside throughout. They wanted to know where the men were. The women replied that there was only one man, a stable boy, but that he was away from the house, hiding because he was afraid of bandits. "Ah, Juden," said the SS man. "No," was the reply, "he is afraid of Ukrainian partisans."

Nusia made the dangerous mistake of speaking to the SS men in excellent German, a language that few natives spoke that well. She realized her mistake, panicked, and ran away to hide in the tunnel, leaving Lina alone to cope with the Germans. The Germans called her occasionally, asking for various items, a bucket, a pot, or things of that sort, and so passed the night.

It was not until late the next morning that Misia and Hela appeared. As they recounted later, they froze when they saw the yard full of German soldiers, SS men at that, and their first impulse was to run. But they approached on seeing that the soldiers seemed unconcerned. Only then did they notice my wife calmly in conversation with a German. She told them what had happened during the night, and they insisted that she go to the tunnel. It was a stupid idea and my wife objected, but they prevailed.

Hela told us later that the Germans had asked about what had happened to the two nice ladies they had met during the night and that she had explained that these were friends from the city who had come here shopping for food and had returned home. We were fortunate that there were no Ukrainian militiamen accompanying the SS, because they would have been harder to fool. It was my wife's courage and composure that saved our lives that night. However, neither Hela nor Misia understood that. Instead, they scolded my wife and Nusia for opening the door and appearing before the Germans. The event had a beneficial result. After that they never left us alone again.

The SS unit remained in Jelechowice for several days, capturing and shooting several Jews who had been hiding in the woods adjacent to the village. Our hosts gave us the gory details. We heard the shots of the executions which took place only meters away from our window.

33

In March the Russians took Tarnopol and Kolomyja and were no more than twenty-five kilometers from Zloczow.

One memorable night we heard a distant continuous rumble which we took at first for the thunder of an early spring storm. But soon we realized that it was artillery fire. News continued to come secondhand, richly embellished, mostly from Zagorski and Hela from her frequent trips to town. The Germans, according to one rumor, put up a fierce fight in Tarnopol; the city was leveled by artillery and air bombardment, and the Russian drive was halted. This turned out to be true. The Russian winter offensive came to an abrupt stop.

Our spirits plummeted, but I was particularly worried. I had made a hobby of studying military strategy and knew about the advantage of short inner lines and corresponding difficulties of supplying advancing forces over extended distances. I worried that the Germans were more in the first and the Russians in the second situation. I tried to keep my apprehension to myself, feeling that the women had enough to worry about, given the food situation and the behavior of our hosts.

At this time our hosts became more cheerful. They told us with obvious relief that the Kreishaupmannschaft was back in Zloczow and that even some Ukrainians who had fled the city earlier had returned. The newspapers were back. We learned from them that though the Russians had made great progress during their winter offensive, their advance was halted over the entire length of the front.

The Western Allies were still moving at a snail's pace. The underground Polish newsletter reported the taking of Monte Cassino in Italy where the Polish army under General Anders played a heroic and decisive role. Hela and Misia believed that this was the army that would come to our rescue, and I did everything to reinforce that belief.

April 5 was the first anniversary of the destruction of the ghetto in

Zloczow. An entire year had passed since we came here and liberation was still not in sight. My thirty-fifth birthday came on April 9 and I reflected that I had lost what should have been five of the best years of my life. (As I write these lines I am nearing seventy-five and have lived longer than both my father and my mother whose lives were tragically cut short by Hitler. On my thirty-fifth birthday I never dreamt that I would live beyond seventy.)

Spring arrived early that year. We were able to shed some of the clothing we wore to protect ourselves from the dampness of the unheated room. From our window we saw the snow disappearing and the country abloom again.

One morning Misia rushed into our room: *"Musicie sie wszyscy wynosic, niemcy sa we wsi. Zapisali caly nasz dom na kwatery"* (You have to get out, all of you. The Germans are in the village. They have billeted the entire house).

However, she was too late.

* * *

Before we could even discuss this a German infantry detachment arrived in the yard. The army did not shun indoor quarters as the ss did. Misia showed them the large room which Karol had occupied. Hela, who was rarely home these days, moved in with Misia and Hryc into the center hall. At first, after the Germans arrived, we stayed in the tunnel all the time, but in a few days our hosts relaxed and permitted us to stay in the room, the door to which was now locked all the time. The Germans were mostly middle-aged men, quiet, weary and low-spirited. Best of all, they minded their own business. Hela, who now stayed home, and Misia became quite happy to have them. They felt safe and protected from the bandits. So did we. Who, so we told each other, would ever suspect that there were Jews living under the same roof with Germans?

The Germans had a field kitchen in the yard and shared the food with our hosts, who in turn shared it with us. We particularly cherished the soup with chunks of meat in it, so different from our own thin, watery brew. We also had some of their bread, which tasted delicious to us. Judging from the quantity and quality of their food, the German army was far from starvation.

It took us a while to get used to their conversation, since they never talked but screamed at each other. That was their way. Germans

always talked in loud voices, but I speculated that, coming from the front, perhaps these Germans were deaf from the constant pounding of artillery.

One of the Germans had a Russian girlfriend, an attractive young woman, we were told. Hela and Misia did not like her even though she tried to be friendly with them. She came often to the kitchen and stayed for long periods of time, preventing our ladies from helping out in the kitchen. Misia and Hela were very unhappy with this, having become accustomed to help in preparing the huge meals. We were worried, too, thinking that a woman in the kitchen would not fail to notice the huge kettles of soup and the piles of potatoes being prepared every day. We solved the problem partly by having the potatoes brought into our room for peeling, but the cooking was still taking place in the kitchen. Her curiosity must also have been aroused by the fact that all the doors were always kept locked. Men, unless they are policemen, pay no attention to such details. A woman is more observant.

Nightly now, in good weather, we heard Russian planes overhead, the low-flying, noisy single-engine spotter planes the Russians called Kukuruznik. The same type of plane had announced the outbreak of the Russo-German war in June of 1941. Now it was bringing good tidings. I purposely said a Russian plane, because we firmly believed the same plane came back night after night to cheer us up. We sort of adopted it and called it *"nasz kukuruznik"* (our plane). It delivered its message by dropping flares which lit up the countryside with an eery, ghostly light. Occasionally it also dropped small-caliber bombs, one or two of which fell near the house and rattled the windows. We greeted these bombs joyfully since they were signs of approaching liberation. We swung from despair to hope.

Spring brought also genuine lightning and thunder. One particularly stormy night the Germans celebrated a birthday which lasted late into the night. Our hosts were invited. The celebrants were having a great time, when they heard a noise outside a window. Misia, who had had more than one drink and who loved to stir up panic, yelled: *"Bandy"* (bandits). The Germans, who had been told stories about bandits by our hosts, became excited; two of them seized their guns and ran out of the house, circling it in opposite directions. Inevitably, they ran into each other, and in the darkness and confusion one of them shot the other in the chest. The injured man was the Russian girl's lover.

Misia and Hryc came running into our room, wringing their hands

and wailing, *"Co to bedzie, co to bedzie? Teraz Gestapo przyjdzie, przeszukaja, dom i znajda was"* (What is going to happen, what is going to happen? The Gestapo will come, they will search the house and find you). They rushed us into the tunnel where we spent the next day and night. We were very frightened, since Gestapo reprisals for shooting a German included the execution of all persons living in the house from which the shots had come, and the killing also of additional hostages from the entire village.

Next morning the Schupo came rather than the Gestapo and to our surprise and tremendous relief the situation was quickly resolved. Our Germans explained how the shooting had occurred. They were careful to send the Russian woman away before the investigators came, since fraternizing was strictly forbidden. Again, the event was providential since with her lover in the hospital the Russian woman never came back and we were spared her snooping.

The detachment of Germans that caused the shooting incident moved out a few days later and was replaced by another group which remained with us till early June. They were frontline troops sent to the rear for rest and recuperation. They kept themselves in readiness by conducting war games in the adjacent woods.

One day I was looking out the window in the direction of the country road, when a helmeted head appeared no more than a couple of feet from me. I swear that my heart stopped beating. Then I saw another helmet and another as men, crouching with guns ready, emerged from the woods and moved along the wall of the house. I ordered everybody into the tunnel where we remained until Hela lifted the plank and asked what we were doing. When I told her what I had seen, she burst into laughter, saying that these were only our Germans conducting exercises. We were too frightened to find the incident funny.

These Germans were veterans of the Eastern Front and spoke some Ukrainian and Polish and thus were able to communicate with our hosts. They all became quite friendly, which worked to our advantage, as our hosts felt safe and were more relaxed than at any time since we came to their house. This was probably the best time in our confinement. The soldiers shared their food with our hosts and we too received German soup and other food. We even got to know some of the men by name. Their commander, Hans, a noncommissioned officer, was particularly decent, so Hela told us.

One day Misia reported with great indignation that Hela was sleeping with Hans. "How could she do it?" she kept repeating self-

righteously. "He is a German!" This was sour grapes—perhaps. Still it was an odd situation, worrisome because, knowing Hela, we suspected that she might have told him about us. Neither then nor after liberation did we ever even hint to her that we had known about that relationship, yet we felt sure that she had confessed to him that she was hiding Jews.

Except for the overflights of the Kukuruznik and the distant rumbling of artillery, the month of May was quiet and the relative calm brought a new wave of rumors. Hela's impeccable sources told her that peace negotiations were going on and that an armistice was a matter of days.

Fred, who had a habit of talking in his sleep, screamed one night and woke up the household. As usual we rushed into the tunnel, where we remained until the next morning. Misia said that the Germans wanted to know what the screaming was all about. She told them that she had been having a nightmare and they believed her.

May slipped into June.

* * *

On the morning of June 6th, we were awakened by a big commotion outside. The Germans were running in all directions and their voices sounded even more shrill then usual. Misia came to our room, very excited. *"Cos wielkiego sie dzieje"* (Something big is happening). She said that the soldiers had removed a radio from a tank and had placed it on the table in their room where they were now grouped listening to communiqués. They seemed very tense. They would not tell her what was going on and she couldn't understand either the radio or the conversations. Misia suggested that I slip over to her room and listen into the room occupied by the Germans.

The door leading from our room to the hall was swiftly opened and I slipped into Misia's bed, which was set up against the door leading to the large room. I could clearly hear the communiqué. That is how I heard the news of the Normandy landing. I also heard that Rome had fallen on the preceding day. I was feverish with excitement. When I related the news to our hosts, they too were seized by the euphoria of a renewed hope that liberation would come from the West. I not only did nothing to dispel the hope but used all my powers of persuasion to encourage it, although I did not share it.

The very next dawn an alarm sounded and our Germans moved out precipitously. I saw their departure from my post at the window. They

were the last Germans I was to see until I saw the POWS under Russian escort.

Hela came running with a new rumor. Hitler would not resist the invasion from the West. He would concentrate his remaining forces against the Russians. Whether that was an actual rumor, the figment of her imagination, or the wishful thinking of the Polish people, we would never know. Probably a combination of all three. At the time the rumor did make sense and gave us some bad moments.

Without the German kitchen, our food situation immediately deteriorated. Whatever there was, we saved for the children. Although the rest of us were not starving, we came close to it in these final days of our ordeal. One day Hyrc brought a couple of loaves of bread left behind by the Germans. They were already moldy in spots, but the women cut away the mold and we relished what was left. But it did not matter. We lived through those final days in the fever of expectancy at the coming liberation.

We talked about the future. About what was waiting for us on the outside. We talked mostly of going to Palestine. If not Palestine, where? The German newspapers gleefully reported that America did not let in Jews. Would we be able to get out of Russia?

June passed. The summer was upon us. The rumbling of the distant artillery became more frequent and of longer duration.

There was no news from either front, not even rumors.

Our kukuruznik now flew all night long, dropping his bombs frequently and ever so close. During the days we could see, and nights we could hear, planes in large formations flying westward. They flew too high for us to identify their markings. There were mere flecks in the sky. We assumed that they were Russians on bombing missions.

One night around the second week in July, we again mistook deep rumblings and uninterrupted flashes for a thunderstorm, but we soon realized that it was a heavy-artillery duel. Either the Russians or the Germans had renewed their offensive. However, a few days passed and all was calm again.

And then things really started to happen.

34

Hela brought the news that the Kreishauptmannschaft was again suddenly evacuating from Zloczow. The few Ukrainians who had returned in April and May ran away in a panic. She also said the Russians had taken Tarnopol, finally, and were moving fast in our direction. The rumors were supported by the sounds of heavy artillery. At night we began to see flares over Zloczow.

On the night of July 15 all hell seemed to break loose. First came flares like thousands of moons illuminating the earth until it was bright as day. Then came wave after wave of planes swooping down with a shrieking noise. We could see in the glare the clusters of bombs coming down like huge luminescent raindrops. Even though we were a couple of miles away, the noise of explosions was deafening. The view was both frightening and fascinating. The bombing lasted several hours, calmed down for a while and then resumed again. We could see clearly the flames of the fires engulfing the city. Some of the bombs started to fall frighteningly close. I told the others to get away from the windows and to lie on the floor, although I realized that the flimsy building offered no protection should a bomb score even a near miss. The floor rose with every explosion. We were at once scared and exhilarated. At dawn quiet returned.

Through the window, in the semidarkness of early morning, we saw a man stealthily approaching our house. He burst through the door. It was Edzia's brother, Mundek, whom we knew to have been hiding in the city with his Polish girlfriend. He was haggard, red-eyed, his face was covered with soot, his clothing torn and smeared with dirt. In shock and nearly incoherent, he kept repeating: *"Niema wiecej Zloczowa, niema wiecej Zloczowa"* (No more Zloczow, no more Zloczow). After he recovered somewhat, he told us that the city had been bombed into

ashes and that not a single house remained standing. He doubted that there were many survivors. Stupidly I asked about Sokola Street and my factory, about Podwojcie and our house. Yes, he had seen it with his own eyes. All was destroyed, flattened, gone. We were stunned.

He told us that he had managed to escape as soon as the bombardment started, had spent most of the night in a ditch without encountering another living soul. When the bombardment eased he ran to Jelechowice. Our hosts also heard his story and kept crossing themselves and repeating: "Jesus, Maria, Jesus, Maria." So passed the morning.

As the day progressed, we could hear heavy traffic on the highway coming from the direction of Brody and could distinguish the churning of tank treads on the pavement. There was noise of planes directly overhead and the sound of cannon and machine-gun fire from the highway. It seemed that the Russians were strafing the moving vehicles.

Intermittent artillery fire lasted into the early evening. That day we heard for the first time a frightening roar that sounded like a herd of bulls, the sound of the Katiusha, the rocket launcher, the Russian secret weapon that the Germans feared most. By about ten o'clock at night all became quiet. We were very tired. The children went to sleep in the tunnel while the adults spread out on the floor of our room. I kept a watch at the window.

Around midnight I heard intense firing from small arms and also machine-gun fire from the woods between the village and the highway. It seemed very near, lasted for an hour, and was followed by calm. Another hour passed. I went out to the veranda which was covered with ivy and pushed the leaves aside to look through the opening into the forest. In the twilight I could discern figures of soldiers moving cautiously between the trees toward the village, guns at the ready. Some of the men crouched, others were running from tree to tree. I saw that their helmets and uniforms were not German. I rushed back into the house and whispered excitedly: "The Russians are here!" There was silence, and then the women started to cry. We woke the children. It was July 17, 1944. We were liberated, fifteen months and twelve days after we entered our asylum.

Later on, through the window of our room, we saw a column of Russian soldiers moving slowly on the road leading to the village. Soon our yard was swarming with them. Misia ran into our room in a fury. "Back to the tunnel at once, all of you!" she commanded. "The

Russians are killing Jews." We were flabbergasted. Both Misia and Hela were bitterly disappointed that they had to greet the Russians as liberators and were taking their frustration out on us. Thus the joy of liberation was marred. We exchanged a few harsh words. I made it plain that the time of ordering us around was over, and that we would never again crawl into a cellar. However, only the women and children went out to greet the Russians, while Fred and I stayed indoors. I've often wondered why Misia and the others spoiled the beautiful and courageous deed of saving our lives while endangering their own by treating us with hatred at the moment of freedom.

A few Russians soldiers came into the house. These front-line troops looked and behaved very differently from the defeated army that we last saw in June of 1941. They looked tough. They were self-confident, even boisterous. The discipline seemed to be loose. They laughed and sang. Several danced in the yard. They kept repeating, "Hitler *kaput.*" When they found out that we were hungry, they brought black bread, sausage, onions and vodka. They were particularly tender with the children and played with them. They gave them lumps of sugar. Soon they left; they were marching on to Berlin, they declared. Wave after wave marched through the village. One group stayed overnight, and a Russian sergeant became very friendly. He brought a couple of tins of meat marked "Spam," and said that it was a gift from the "Amerikantzy." It tasted delicious and we had a real feast. Misia and Hela forgot their unhappiness and drank and sang with the soldiers. In fact, we all got quite tipsy. We were a little anxious about the effect that this food might have on our stomachs, which had become unaccustomed to such plenty, but there were no ill effects.

From a copy of the Russian military newspaper which the soldiers had brought along, we learned that the Russian army had staged an offensive along the entire length of the front to help the Western Allies. The Allies were stalled on the beaches of Normandy, but the Russian offensive was a tremendous success.

The sergeant told us of his deeds during the war and proudly showed off a row of medals on his chest. Practically every soldier had one or several medals. I managed to talk to them even though my Russian, never fluent, had become very rusty during the past three years. We spoke also of what we had done before the war. I told the sergeant I had been technical director of a factory and, in the effort to explain what had happened under German occupation I used the words: *"Ya zdies sediel poltora godu"* (I was confined for a year and a half). The word "sediel" can be understood to mean "spent time in jail," and that was

exactly how my sergeant understood it. Immediately and with comradely feeling he told me that he had also been a director of a factory and that he had spent *ten years* in jail. "If you are a director that's what you have to expect," he added, and embraced me. Laughing inwardly, I did nothing to dispel this timely misunderstanding, and my new comrade and I talked until late into the night.

The artillery fire resumed after midnight and became very intense. We could see clearly the flashes from the muzzles of the German guns shooting at us. The flashes were followed within seconds by the screaming sound of exploding shells. The explosions were coming nearer, with shells hitting trees in the adjacent forest. Some of the shells whistled over our heads, and with each hit, the sergeant would say, "*Nitchevo*" (never mind). "Our boys are teaching the Germans a lesson." To us it sounded more like the other way around, and once again we became apprehensive. After a while the soldiers were called out and left us. We put the children to sleep, but the adults remained awake and fully dressed. Daylight came. We could see Russian planes, Stormovics, diving in the direction of the German positions. We saw the wings of one separate, then the entire plane explode in a ball of fire. It crashed, just missing our yard, a bare 100 yards away. There was no question now but that we were in the center of a battle.

By midmorning Misia came bursting into the room. The Germans, she said, had broken through the Soviet lines and were returning to Jelechowice. By not obeying her orders to remain hidden, we had compromised our presence and must leave at once. With or without her orders, we had no desire to see the Germans again. We woke the children and left the house rapidly on foot. We took only some bread left by the soldiers, except for Edzia who packed a suitcase and with Wusia's help carried it along. Our yard and the village road were empty. We crossed the Zloczow-Brody highway and walked in the forest toward the Russian lines. Unaccustomed as we were to walking after our fifteen-month confinement, we had to rest every few hundred feet. After dragging ourselves along for about a mile, we started to pass rows and rows of Russian artillery of all sizes and calibers, many real monsters. It seemed to us that there must have been hundreds if not thousands of guns. They were neatly camouflaged with branches and green nets, and silent. Suddenly there was a roar that sounded like a wounded animal. Edzia jumped and dropped her suitcase. The soldiers gathered around the guns burst out laughing. *"Eto Katiusha,"* one yelled, *"khoroshodielo"* (This Katiusha, a fine piece of work).

We walked away from the gun emplacements until we arrived at a

clearing with a little knoll and a single tree at the center. It was noontime, the heat was overwhelming, and we were exhausted. The children, as usual, did not complain, but they could not walk another step. We, the adults, were tired too and our feet were bleeding. We sat on the grass under the tree, ate the bread, and took off our shoes. Surprisingly, it was my mother-in-law who held up the best.

From where we were sitting we could see on the other side of the clearing a detachment of motorcyclists lounging under trees. Two soldiers started coming toward us, not directly across the field, but edging their way, circling the clearing under the cover of trees. After reaching us, they sat down on the grass a few feet away without uttering a word. Finally they moved closer and one of them whispered, *"Yiden?"* "Yes," we answered. "We are Jews." Briefly I told them our story. They asked whether we were hungry. "Yes," we said, "hungry and thirsty." One of them went back and returned with a couple of loaves of black bread, some sausage, and a large canteen of tea. He also brought lumps of sugar for the children. Then they told us that they were Jews from Czernowitz, who had run away to Russia when the Germans took over Rumania. They did not know what had happened to their families. Even though they were not Russian citizens, they had been drafted into the army but did not mind because they were fighting Hitler. They said that in their outfit were former convicts released from prison when the war broke out, and they had concealed the fact that they were Jews because they were afraid of being killed. But they had not been able to resist getting in touch with us, having been drawn especially by the sight of the children. The two spent a great part of the afternoon with us and had tears in their eyes when they said good-bye. Leaving, they warned us again to be wary of some Russian soldiers, particularly of the *Peredowaya* (front line). Misia's rumor was partly correct. They reiterated that we should never say that we were Jews unless the person talking to us first admitted to being a Jew.

Later that afternoon the artillery resumed, though only intermittently and on a much lighter scale. We were still very tired; I had cramps in my legs, but we decided to move on. We dragged along perhaps for another mile. We walked through the forest on a path covered with treadmarks from tanks and other heavy vehicles. We passed soldiers marching singly or in small groups, who paid no attention to us. Here and there under the trees were corpses of German soldiers, all without their boots, some half-naked.

An artillery officer accompanied by an orderly passed, stopped,

looked back, turned around and walked back to us. *"Yevrey?"* (Jews), he whispered. We nodded our heads. He motioned his orderly forward, evidently to prevent him from listening. He asked what we were doing walking in the open while there was a battle going on. We explained briefly. He too was a Jew, he said. He told us also that there had been a major battle, that several German divisions had tried to break out of the encirclement, but that their attempts were unsuccessful and they were being destroyed. He was sorry that he could not do anything for us, but advised us to go on to the rear where we would be safer. We should watch out for marauders. He patted the heads of the children, wished us luck, and went his way.

By that time the sound of guns ceased completely. We continued painfully for another few hundred yards. On the way we saw more dead German soldiers and more Russian graves marked with wooden planks that gave the name and rank of the dead. We reached a cluster of huts where a larger column of soldiers were bivouacked. We rested on the grass. An officer came over and asked us what we were doing. Without telling him that we were Jews, we said that we were refugees running away from the Germans. He told us that the battle was over, that we were safe now. He gave us some food and blankets. We went into the nearest hut and asked the farmer to let us sleep in the barn. He did, and also gave us milk for the children. He asked no questions but I am sure he knew that we were Jews. We had the best night's sleep since the outbreak of the war.

Next morning we returned slowly to Jelechowice. On our way back we met the first columns of German prisoners of war. They were a wretched lot. Many were wounded, their heads and injured limbs wrapped in dirty rags. Practically all were barefoot. No more the master race, the defeat had changed them back into vulnerable human beings. Unbelievable as it may sound, I almost felt sorry for them. They begged for water and Nusia gave them some.

We met several such columns on our way. The prisoner group was escorted by a single Russian soldier on horseback. He grinned widely and motioned to us, showing off his arm covered with perhaps twenty wrist watches. A couple of cameras were hanging from his neck.

We returned to the house that had been our shelter for so many months. Hela was not home, but both Misia and Hryc greeted us with broad smiles, to our great surprise and pleasure.

The yard was crowded with soildiers and vehicles. I saw my first jeep and asked a Russian what kind of car that was. He took me for a

short ride and proudly showed off the easy maneuverability of the vehicle. It was, he said, the product of "our Russian engineers and workers." When I pointed to the English signs on the controls, he explained that the Soviet Union was sending many of these vehicles to the Americans. However, I must say that this soldier was an exception. Other officers and soldiers gladly expressed their appreciation of the help given by America and praised the quality of the materials, particularly the trucks. They also loved American canned food, Spam being the favorite. In this outfit all the trucks were Dodges. The guns, however, were Russian-made.

At once, out of nowhere, a German plane flew in at treetop level, firing machine guns and cannon. It disappeared as fast as it came, but we ran for cover and the soldiers, too, dispersed. The soldiers then set up an anti-aircraft gun in our yard, but planes did not return. In this one attack, several soldiers and villagers were killed or wounded, among them the letter carrier, Zagorski, who was hit in the neck. His wound, Misia had said at first, was slight, but he died of infection the next morning. He had been a diabetic we were told. And so the carrier of news did not survive the war.

A column of tanks came in sight, moving on the narrow country road leading to the village. We went to look. They were monsters, at least half again the size of the biggest German tanks. When they moved along the road they looked like a herd of elephants. The men told us that these tanks bore the name of Stalin and were the newest in the arsenal of the Soviet army. There was a seemingly unending flow of traffic on this dirt road from this point on. Column after column of artillery, some of huge caliber and drawn by tractors, was followed by trucks with soldiers, radio trucks, Red Cross trucks, jeeps with A-A guns, motorcyclists—on and on. We could only imagine what was going on on the main roads. Some trucks carried contraptions covered with tarpaulins that looked like huge flat boxes. We thought they carried ammunition but found out later that these were the Katiushas. The covers prevented us from seeing their construction. However, we knew their frightening sound and devastating power. The soldiers pronounced the word "Katiusha" with respect bordering on awe.

As anxious as we were to get back home, or what was left of it, we spent the next day resting. Misia and Hryc attended Zagorski's funeral. After a long discussion, it was decided that the women and Fred would go first and I and the children would remain in Jelechowice. The women went early in the morning on foot and

returned late in the afternoon. They reported that Edzia's brother's story about Zloczow being totally destroyed was an exaggeration. Heavily damaged as it was, the city still remained.

The ladies had met a handful of Jews, some emerging from bunkers, others returning from the surrounding forests, still others like ourselves coming out of shelters. There was only enough time to express joy at meeting another Jew; the details of their escapes would have to wait until later.

The women had also encountered several Russian party members whom they had known from 1939–1941. There was Nazimov and, to my surprise and delight, Narayevski. Both of them embraced my wife and asked about me. When they found out that I was alive, they said that I was to come back as soon as possible, because I was needed. My wife wanted me to rest another few days, but I was eager and decided to leave the next morning.

In my excitement I was unable to sleep that night. The next day turned out to be warm and sunny. I walked out of the house in Jelechowice a free man. It was like awakening from a long nightmare. Alas, it was not a nightmare, and the experience of the past four years would never go away. Out in the open I instinctively touched my arm for the armband, so long the sign of the Jew, a gesture that I would be repeating for months to come.

Throughout our stay in hiding we had kept the "Aryan" documents that my father had provided for us when we were contemplating escape to Warsaw, as a precaution if we were discovered. We had planned to claim that we were Poles, the "Bulski" family, the name on the documents, hiding from the Ukrainian partisan bands. Now we were once more the Tennenbaums, never again in need of a disguise. Or so we thought.

35

My mother-in-law and the children remained in Jelechowice while the rest of us set out on our way back home. We walked slowly. Traffic on the road leading to town was very heavy. We saw few civilians. There were craters on the road and in the adjacent fields. The drivers showed their customary disregard for such obstacles and bounced jauntily over the holes left by the bombing. Abandoned tanks and other military vehicles, both German and Russian, littered the countryside, fewer in number than in 1941 when the Russians retreated. Here and there on both sides of the road were signs: "Beware—Mines." As we approached the town we saw burnt houses with their roofs caved in and also heaps of rubble that had once been houses.

Here and there we saw more exotic destruction: houses with walls sheared away yet with floors intact and furniture in place, like empty theatre sets waiting for the actors. Some houses looked habitable though scarred. There was not a whole windowpane in sight and broken glass crunched under our feet.

The streets of Zloczow were crowded with soldiers but we saw few civilians. I did not see any familiar faces. The pungent Russian odor remembered from the past filled the air. Lawns along Main Street were lined with graves of Russian soldiers which had neither crosses nor Stars of David, but were decorated with flowers. The larger and more elaborate graves contained the bodies of officers and heroes of the Soviet Union. We stopped to read the names and other details inscribed on wooden markers. The dead had come from all over Russia. The number of graves showed the heavy price that the Russian army had paid for its victories.

We separated. My wife and the others went to look around. I went to the party headquarters to look for Narayevski, who was delighted to see me. We embraced. He wore a military tunic with a pistol strapped

to his waist, looked haggard and tired, but he smiled. He next asked about my parents. I told him that my mother had died of typhus, but I had no news of my father. He asked about the others. I told him that I feared that all of the Jewish workers in the factory were dead. He then asked how the gentiles had behaved and I told him that the vast majority had been very decent toward me and my family. When I told him about the Dackos, he said that he had never liked them and had always known that she was a whore and he was a fascist. "We will take care of them when we catch them," he said. "We will take care of all the traitors." We talked for a long time. Narayevski had been promoted to party secretary and would not be involved with the factory anymore. He took me to see Nazimov, who had also been promoted to second secretary in full charge of the party apparatus, as no first secretary had yet been appointed. He, too, wore a military tunic and was armed with a pistol. He had lost weight. Nazimov greeted me warmly although we hadn't been friendly before. In fact, he too, hugged me. I asked about his wife. He said that she had remained in Kiev.

Nazimov said to me with a shewd glance: *"Idi stroi tvoyu fabryku"* (Go and fix your factory). He had put special emphasis on the word *"tvoyu"* (your). This took me by surprise. I let him know that I had brought my family into town but we had no place to stay. To my amazement, he told me to take over my old apartment in the factory, and wrote out a document appointing me director. I could not believe what was happening to me. I went to look for my wife and found her in the factory, waiting. When I repeated the conversation with Nazimov, she was as surprised as I. We wondered what it all meant. Were property rights being restored in Russia? Was the Communist system crumbling? Somehow it did not seem believable. If that were so, why did the old party bureaucracy return and seem to be in charge? Another matter kept me wondering. How come the people familiar with local conditions before the war returned the first day the army retook Zloczow? It was an organizational achievement of first rank and did not jibe with our recollections of Russian inefficiency.

Well, no matter. I had a job and a place to stay. The factory building seemed in reasonably good shape. The Sokol building across the street had been hit; its roof had disintegrated and only the walls remained. I went around the factory to look for damage. There was a hole in one of the walls of the main building caused by an artillery shell, and one of the auxiliary buildings had been demolished by a small bomb or shell which had also torn off the rear gate. Fragments of a bomb were scattered over the yard.

It was a strange feeling to wander over the house in which I had spent my youth and some of the happiest days of my life, the house from which I had been exiled and to which I was now returning. Was it to be mine again?

The floors which housed the machinery as well as the floor where we had lived, and where I intended to live again, seemed to be solid. There was, as elsewhere, no glass in any of the windows.

Pawel appeared, was surprised to see me, and his greeting was very reserved. I told him about my visit with Nazimov and that I was in charge of the factory and asked him to see how many of the old employees he could round up. Together we went to inspect the machinery. All but one lathe were still there in excellent condition but covered with a heavy layer of dust from the ceilings. There was not a single roll or sheet of paper to be found. Pawel told me that he had guarded the factory—did he have proprietary feelings too?—until the bombardment started and had returned to his post after the Russian army arrived. It was the Russians, he claimed, who had hauled away the paper and removed the lathe. When he had tried to stop them, they threatened to shoot him. I was really mystified by the way they had managed to remove the lathe, since we had had to break a wall to get it installed.

Pawel did not know whether any Jewish employees were still alive. He had heard from Rose Dacko that my father had committed suicide, and he said that both Mr. Brandes and Edzio Reichard had been killed. The Dackos had left in May, presumably for Germany, while Wolyniec had enlisted in the Ukrainian voluntary SS Galizien division. Goral had also disappeared.

He told me right away that all the valuables that we had entrusted to his safekeeping had been stolen. He averted his eyes while telling me this, but what could I do—turn him over to the NKVD? I shrugged my shoulders instead.

Presently we went to look at the cottage we had occupied during the winter of 1942-43 and from which we had escaped into hiding. The old landlady, Mrs. Michalska, greeted us warmly and tearfully and said that her two daughters were in Germany, having been caught in a roundup and deported. Both had written to say that they were working on a farm. She was relieved that they were far from the front.

She had tried to protect our place but it had been broken into several times at night and vandalized. We went in through the unlocked door and were greeted by the sight of books, documents and photographs strewn all over. The photographs had been torn out of the pages of the

albums and the covers of the albums and books slit open. My *tefillin* (phylacteries) had been cut to shreds. The straw mattresses were emptied and straw covered the floor. The vandals had been probably looking for hidden money or jewelry. The iron bed on which my mother had died was still there and so was another bed and the children's beds. We also found a table and a couple of plain chairs in usable condition.

Our first day of freedom was drawing to an end and we returned to Jelechowice completely exhausted.

We went to town again the next day. It seemed that the feeling of freedom had made us forget our fatigue. Our first order of business was to transport the salvaged furniture to the apartment in the factory. A handful of old workers showed up, all women, who seemed genuinely happy to see us. I asked about other Jews, but they did not know of anyone else still alive. Some folks brought gifts, milk, potatoes, lard, and fruit. One brought a pail of cherries. We ate and ate. We had all lost a great deal of weight. Surprisingly, my mother-in-law looked relatively better than the rest.

Stefa came. We embraced and we cried. She told us that every single piece of jewelry that we had entrusted to her was safe. She would bring it over as soon as we were settled. She said that the previous year she had married a wealthy mill owner but that she would never forget Edzio, her first love. We told her about our escape during the liquidation of the ghetto—how we had been on the verge of suicide when Hela miraculously rescued us. Stefa told us that the Dackos suspected that she knew where we were hiding and had tried to pry this imformation from her; so, to avoid them, she had quit her job in the factory.

Several people described a battle that had taken place several miles west of Zloczow, which must have been the battle we had witnessed from Jelechowice. The Germans had tried to fight their way out of an encirclement in a fierce struggle which had lasted a day and a night, but the Germans were slaughtered by artillery and Katiusha fire, and one woman who had seen the battlefield with her own eyes described it in these words: "*Trupy leza jak snopy na polu, na chlopa wysoko*" (The dead were piled up like sheaves in the field, a man high). She said that the stench from the corpses was terrible and that she had run away when the Russians started to round up people for a burial detail. The Ukrainian SS division had fought and died there. There were also severe Russian casualties, these dead buried by their comrades in individual graves.

Stefa helped us find a peasant with a horse and wagon, and with

their help and the help of other workers we moved in. Miecio Lis, the only Pole who joined the Komsomol, showed up. Because he was very nearsighted, he had escaped deportation to Germany. He was strong as an ox and was of great help to me during that summer. He brought fresh straw and helped us to fill the mattresses. In spite of the fact that the windows were broken, I decided to remain in the factory and never set my foot in Jelechowice again. My wife went back one last time to fetch the children.

The next day we went to look at our second house on Podwojcie Street. It had suffered no damage except for some craters in the garden.

I did not want to depend on the good will of our workers for food, so I had to find a way to earn some money. I did not have to wait for long. The very next day an army captain came to say that he urgently needed forms to be printed and that the party had sent him over to see me. I promised to do everything in my power, but I had no paper and no money to pay the workers. There was also no electric power, but that obstacle could be overcome because some of the printing presses were equipped with pedals and could be operated with manpower, although this was a slow and cumbersome operation.

"Nitchevo," was the captain's cheerful reply. He would provide paper, advance money, and allow me a few soldiers to operate the presses. Now the problem was to get a skilled printer, as I could not do everything myself. Our printers had been Jewish and all were dead. Again luck was with me. A young Ukrainian fellow showed up claiming to be a printer. He was subject to military draft, he said, but could claim exemption if he could get a job important enough to satisfy the draft board. (The board had been instituted the first day after the party was installed.) "It would be a shame to go into the army now and be killed," he said, "since the war will be over any day." I was glad to have him, although I was skeptical about his skills. I was wrong. He turned out to be an excellent and intelligent worker.

I notified the captain that I was ready to go. Soon a truck loaded with several bales of paper appeared at the gate. The paper looked very familiar, had German markings, and was the type that we had used in the factory. I could have sworn that it was our own stock; however, I was not foolish enough to ask questions. We set to work. The captain put at my disposal a dozen soldiers, who seemed to be very happy about the assignment. In addition, I managed to gather about twenty workers, all women, except Pawel and Lis. We swept the floors and cleaned the machines. In a few days the factory was operating, the first

in Zloczow. At a meeting at party headquarters, I was singled out by name and praised for my effort. No more was I the pariah of the past.

The captain found glass for a couple of windows for my apartment. Lina and the children were with me. The Jelechowice chapter was closed. We resumed normal life. But could life be normal for us again? The frenzy of the first days did not allow time to think.

There were some isolated memorable incidents. My wife was stopped by a Russian officer who asked her whether she were Jewish. When she told him that she was, he gave her a sack of flour, saying that he too was Jewish.

A Polish woman, Mrs. Kawowa, with whom we had left our linens and some clothing, said that she had sold everything to get food for her children since she was sure that we were all dead. Stefa said that the prevailing opinion in the factory had been that we were alive somewhere in the West, probably in Warsaw, but at least Mrs. Kawowa showed up to explain, unlike others who simply disappeared. As I've said earlier, Stefa alone faithfully returned everything that we had entrusted to her.

Among the old employees who came back was the young Hanka, our former maid, who became the first and only Stakhanovetz in the factory. She also helped my wife with the children and housework.

I heard that some other Jews had reappeared, but so far I had met none. Retrospectively, our frantic preoccupation with securing food and shelter must have served as anaesthesia which prevented us from immediately realizing the dimension of the tragedy. But the anaesthesia soon evaporated.

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Within the next few days we began to meet with the other survivors. Everyone had a horror story to tell; everyone felt that his or her particular survival had been a miracle, and all were right. The largest single group to emerge had withstood all German efforts to find their hideout, a bunker built by Strassler, who had made candy before the war. This bunker, which I mentioned earlier, was built with great ingenuity and extended beneath several buildings, with hidden exits leading to the outskirts of the city. Among those who hid there were Dwora Marder, the sister of our secretary, and Rozia Lerner, the daughter of my father's former partner. This was Rozia's third extraordinary escape from death. I mentioned earlier she had once jumped from a Russian train that was deporting her to Siberia, and later on, from a German extermination train heading for Belzec. Both times she had tossed her son out of the car before she herself jumped, and both times she and the child lived. Rozia confided to me a sad story of corruption and murder in the bunker. During a quarrel among the inmates, Wilo Freiman, a high school friend, had allegedly been knifed to death.

Other people had hidden with peasants in Jelechowice and in other nearby villages. Among them was my cousin, Salek Altman, who was so ill that he had to be carried out on a stretcher. He had survived, thanks to a good German who supplied him with food and money.

Of the Judenrat, Moishe Zuckerkandel survived and also Steinwurzel, the deputy commandant of the Jewish militia. Neither returned to Zloczow, afraid that the Russians would punish them for their collaboration during the occupation. Steinwurzel's wife had survived as an "Aryan" in Lwow, but was killed in the single aerial attack on the city by the retreating Germans.

As I've said, it was probably for the best that I kept so busy doing my daily chores, worrying about my family, the factory, and even about

stolen machinery and other such unimportant matters. Thus I kept away the realization of the magnitude of the cataclysm that had destroyed nearly all that was familiar and real.

With the appearance of the first Jewish survivors, the terrible facts of what had happened began to strike me. Being alive felt strange, unfair. I found myself still touching my arm to check whether the armband was in place, or walking stealthily as if the Gestapo were still around. In the very beginning it seemed as if Jews avoided each other, but after a while we began to congregate and to talk. We wondered if there were any Jews left in the other cities. We named those who had been murdered, and when. Was it during the first Akzion, or the second, or in the final destuction of the ghetto? These discussions were heated sometimes, to be followed by embarrassed silence as we realized how pointless such talk was.

Despair set in as parents and children, spouses and others looked for one another and realized that the searches were in vain. But eventually came a form of acceptance; survivors formed new family units and people began to think and talk about the future. Occasionally these new liaisons ran into difficulties as spouses given up for dead suddenly turned up. This, however, happened only rarely.

I found, as during the time of confinement, that thinking about Chiang Kai-shek was a wonderful soporific for me for reasons I still can't fathom.

One evening during supper we heard a cautious knock at the door. Outside stood Wolyniec in torn civilian clothing and crying. He was in a state of panic. He had been stout, but now looked emaciated and pale. We tried to calm him down. He sat down and my wife gave him some food which he wolfed down. Between sobs he told us that his unit had been destroyed by artillery and Katiusha fire, that he had managed to escape and hide with a peasant. He had shed his SS uniform and had put on the clothing the peasant had given him, but the peasant would not keep him so he was forced to hide in the forest. He had had to avoid capture by the Russians, since they executed people like him. He blamed his fate on Rose Dacko, who had forced him to join the Ukrainian SS division. He begged me to hide him in the factory.

I felt sorry for him, not only because he had always behaved decently toward me, but also because he was in a similar state to the one we had been in only recently. I was considering what to do with him and where to keep him, when we heard voices outside our windows. Wolyniec's

face turned ashen; he got up from the table, ran out, and I never saw or heard from him again. (Years later I learned that Wolyniec and the Dackos had escaped to Austria, where John Dacko died, and that Rose and her daughter had emigrated to Canada.)

Morris Henis, the brother of our former bookkeeper and brother-in-law of Rose Brandes, arrived with a very tragic tale. His family, father, mother, sister and also Rozia and her daughter had survived the ghetto massacre and had hidden in the woods. They had dug a hole in the ground, camouflaged it with branches and had thus survived. Morris had had to leave the hideout from time to time to forage for food. Just two months before liberation he had returned from one such trip and found the murdered bodies of all his family. He was sure that it had been the work of Ukrainian peasants finishing the work of the Germans.

We adopted Morris into our family. I gave him a job in the factory, the same job that Wilek Hessel had held before the war.

More women than men had survived, among them several who had assumed "Aryan" identities. In Poland only *Jewish* males were circumcised; thus they were vulnerable and the easy prey of blackmailers. Some Jewish women told me, however, that many of our people betrayed themselves merely by a certain look in their eyes.

I learned that my good friend Otek Roth had died, betrayed by a Pole while using Aryan papers in Warsaw.

A marriage ceremony was held for Abram Geller and Dina Galatzer which became the occasion for a gathering of survivors. Everybody left alive—seventy people out of a Jewish population of about ten thousand—came to the wedding, many on crutches; Salek Altman was carried on a stretcher. There were no smiles, only tears at the ceremony.

A new problem surfaced in the continued hostility of the gentiles toward the handful of Jews that had survived. "Too many of you did come back," was the message expressed in hostile glances and even words. We wanted to go away, but where to? The war was still going on. Our talk turned to Palestine. Would "they" let us out of Russia and would we be permitted to go to Palestine? The few Jewish Communists who had survived were as anxious to get out as the others. We were all Zionists now.

We heard the news that there had been an attempt on Hitler's life; some said that he had been killed; others that he had managed to escape. "So what," was our reaction. "For us it is ten years too late."

In a few days the Russian newspapers reported that Hitler had indeed survived an assassination attempt. The war went on.

I was very anxious to get to Lwow to look for Father. A Captain Ponomayko, who had become my friend, arranged for a military truck. The road was in better shape than when I had traveled it in the fall of 1939. Contrary to rumors, Lwow had suffered little damage. The Palace, the biggest and most beautiful movie house, and Pasaz Mikolasza, a glass-covered shopping arcade, had been hit, but otherwise the inner city seemed intact.

Like Zloczow, Lwow was crowded with Russian soldiers. Few civilians were about and the stores were empty.

In the offices of the Pharmaceutical Trust I saw no familiar faces. I called on the new chairman, a woman from Kharkov. She knew nothing about my father. I returned home with little hope of finding him alive. I also felt that the Russians were here to stay, and that the system was not going to change.

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In Lwow, Russian civilians, mainly women, were much more visible than in Zloczow. I presumed that any Russian not in uniform was a party member. They moved around looking like conquerors. I felt lost in this city that I had known so well and loved.

I returned home to a crisis. By that time we had acquired a large number of customers including military units, the party, the local NKVD. The bureaucracy, always insatiable, did not seem to be affected by the war and everyone needed printed forms. All had to supply their own paper except for the party, for which I "borrowed" material from the military. I did not dare touch the NKVD stock since they monitored us very closely.

Soon after my return from Lwow, a major drove up in a big truck to pick up his order. He was leaving for the front, he informed me, and was taking along two of my best printing presses. I tried to play for time, stating that I needed permission from the party to release any machinery from the factory, but he wouldn't listen. "To hell with the party," he said. "We are in command now." Unlike during the first Russian occupation, the army officers were pretty open about their contempt for the party. Incidentally, he addressed me as "*Pan*" (Mr.)Tennenbaum, rather than the customary comrade.

My proprietary feelings rebelled at giving up my machines without resistance. While the major's men were already inside removing the bolts that held the machines to the floor, I motioned to Pawel and told him to run to the NKVD and to bring the commandant over at once. And also to advise Nazimov of the emergency.

A young lieutenant, Titow, had become quite friendly with me and had spent hours in the factory, insatiable in his questions about prewar Poland. He also wanted to know about the West, particularly about America. I was leery of him and was careful to present a balanced pic-

ture of the conditions in the countries in which he was so interested. However, even my guarded information made a deep impression on him, which he did not try to conceal. He was very different from his rude predecessors with whom I had had so many unpleasant encounters; still, I did not trust him.

Within minutes Titov appeared on the scene and a heated exchange took place between him and the major. He threatened to arrest the major and his crew if they so much as removed a nail from the premises. Then Nazimov too appeared and joined the fracas, the three of them screaming and cursing at each other in the front of the building. As one point, Nazimov and the major drew guns, but no shots were fired. I and the workers of the factory watched the show from behind the windows. The argument continued for another half an hour, until tempers visibly cooled. Finally, the major ordered his men to withdraw. Titov and Nazimov were all smiles. While Nazimov had made most of the noise, it seemed to me that it was the presence of the NKVD that had prevailed. Nazimov praised me for defending the property of the government, a thought that frankly had not even occurred to me.

About that time, my duodenal ulcer started up again and I suffered an internal hemorrhage. Dr. Salo Jollek, the one surviving Jewish physician, attended me, but there was little he could do besides keeping me in bed, where I stayed for three weeks. I was sure that my end was near but I pulled through.

While I lay sick, Jews and gentiles who had been deported or had escaped to Russia during 1940-41 started to trickle back. Among them was Dr. Moszynski, the former mayor and member of the Sejm (Congress). He had lost weight but not his sense of humor and cheered me up with jokes about Russia and Stalin. Mundzio Werfel, the son of the prominent lawyer and Zionist and himself an ardent Communist, showed up in the uniform of an officer in the Polish (Bierut) army, his faith in communism undiminished. Cousin Clara's husband returned and soon left for Warsaw, to look for his family. Most of these people were passing through Zloczow on their way to Przemysl, which was to belong to the future state of Poland, according to rumor.

Meanwhile a so-called Polish government had been established in Lublin: its best-known official was Wanda Wasilevska, the poet. It was rumored that a truncated Polish state would be created along the lines of the Molotov-Ribentrop pact. That meant that Zloczow would remain in Russian hands.

Hela, Misia and Hryc came to visit at the time of the Warsaw uprising which the Poles had set to coincide with the advance of the Soviet armies on the Eastern Front. The Poles wanted to have a hand in the liberation of their country, contrary to Stalin's plans. The Russian offensive came to a sudden halt on the banks of the river Wisla just outside Warsaw. The Germans crushed the uprising and more Polish dead were added to the victims of the war. Hela and Misia had with them a Polish underground newsletter which accused the Russians of treachery and questioned why the Western powers did not come to the aid of the Poles.

Soon after, Hela set out to look for her husband. We never saw each other again, although we remained in touch until her untimely death from cancer in 1956. She and Karol, who had also survived the war, were never reunited.

Several small shops opened—a tailor, a shoemaker, a butcher, several bakeries—in stores left in usable condition despite the bombardment. The owners slept on the premises to prevent looting, but there was little of that this time. The Russian soldiers had loads of rubles and were only too glad to have some place to spend them.

The Soviet authorities not only did not interfere with these capitalistic ventures but actually encouraged them. Among the most popular ventures were eating places catering to soldiers. Together with Nusia and Misia, my wife established such an eating place in the undamaged part of her mother's restaurant at the railroad station. The business was profitable and my wife's income combined with mine permitted us to live a relatively comfortable life.

One of my Russian acquaintances was a captain named Sandomirsky, manager of the army pharmacy in Zloczow. From him I got a few medical supplies otherwise unobtainable. Sandomirsky insisted that he came from a Polish family that had settled in the Ukraine before World War I. One evening he rushed in, saying he was being moved to the front and had come to say good-bye. Suddenly he started to cry and blurted out, "Well, I can tell you now; I am a Jew."

A new rumor persisted that there would be a resettlement and that Poles would be permitted to move to the new Polish state. Jews would also be eligible. During my recovery I had done a lot of thinking about our future. Regardless of whether the Communist regime would mellow or perhaps disintegrate—(and I saw no sign of the latter)—we did not want to remain in Russia. Many Jews were not waiting for the official agreement and had already left, moving westward.

Should we follow their example? Soon the rumors regarding the new

Poland and the resettlement agreement proved true. A resettlement office was set up. The remaining Poles registered, as did many Ukrainians who overnight converted to Roman Catholicism. Hryc became one of the converts and was now permanently if not yet officially coupled with Misia.

* * *

We, the Jews, were in a quandary. We did not trust the Soviets. Vivid in our memories was the registration of 1940 when Jews who had registered for return to western Poland had been deported to Siberia. Was this to be another trap? We talked and we worried but in the end we all opted for Poland and registered. Particularly eager to register were the people who had come back from inside Russia. One of them, Mr. Steinbruch, registered as soon as he set foot in Zloczow. "One of the things I learned in Russia," he said, "is that when they issue sugar you'd better grab it today because there will be none tomorrow."

I must pay tribute here to a decent Communist, Narayevski. Although he was a dedicated and loyal party member, I confided to him that I intended to register for resettlement. He encouraged me, "By all means, leave. We are not for you and you are not for us." He was one of very few Russians whom I trusted.

The registration office was set up in a couple of dingy rooms in the former Jewish orphanage and was crowded when we arrived. Most of those present were Poles, with a handful of Jews and a few discreetly mixed-in Ukrainians. The staff of the registration board consisted of Russians with a representative of the Polish Lublin government. They were all extremely rude. Particularly unpleasant was a Pole who did not conceal his hostility toward Jews, an ominous sign of what awaited us in the "new" Poland.

On my way out, a piece of furniture caught my eye. It was our cupboard that had been confiscated by the Germans. It would have been futile to ask for its return and we did not bother.

Presently we received our resettlement permits.

Fall arrived and with it came repatriation trains. But we still distrusted the Russians and asked ourselves the nagging question: "Was the train going west or east?" However, after some days we received news that the first train had reached Przemysl, the town at the border between Soviet Russia and the new Poland.

About half the Jews decided to spend the winter in Zloczow, some because they wanted a longer period to recuperate and some because

they wanted to avoid getting too close to the front. There was a rumor that food was scarce in Poland.

For me the question did not exist. I wanted out. If I had had any doubts about the Russians they were soon dispelled over the matter of a couple of chairs.

I had kept in my office two upholstered chairs that I had retrieved which did not fit into my apartment. One day the newly appointed third secretary of the party came to order some stationery and sat down in one of the chairs. As he was leaving he remarked that he liked the chairs very much and that of course I would let him have them. I felt pretty sure of myself after the cordial treatment I had received from Nazimov and after the praise that the party had heaped on me since. I also felt that I had an excellent relationship with the commandant of the NKVD and with the officers of the army. I refused his demand and he left in a rage.

A couple of days later he retaliated. A Russian in military tunic appeared in the office. "I am the new director here," he introduced himself. "And what am I?" I asked. "You will be the technical director." After I got over my shock, I told him that his arrival suited me fine, because I had registered for resettlement to Poland and that I intended to leave soon. He shook his head, saying he would not let me go. Not yet.

The new director, named Sapokhin, turned out to be a fairly decent fellow, a noncommissioned officer in the tank corps, discharged from the army after receiving a severe head wound. He had a metal plate in his skull and suffered from terrible headaches which he treated with vodka. He became particularly friendly with Morris Henis, whose job it became to supply him with his "medicine."

Like Narayevski before him, he never interfered with my running the factory and also, to my satisfaction, refused to give away my chairs to the third secretary. His dependence on me, while satisfactory at first, was worrisome in the long run, because I was afraid that he would never let me go. Not too prudently I decided to turn for help to my "friend" in the NKVD. I got another shock when he told me that I would be arrested if I tried to leave.

The Jewish holidays arrived. The thick, ancient walls of the main synagogue had withstood the bombardment but the building had been converted by the Germans into a stable that was now filled with garbage and rubble. We cleaned the small women's section and held the services, which were attended by every single Jewish survivor,

KOMITETU [illegible]

[illegible] ZŁOCZOWIE

21 grudnia 1944 r. Nr 4193

ZASWIADCZENIE

na przesiedlenie do Polski.

Okaziciel niniejszego Tenenbaum Lepa vel Leona

Rok urodzenia 9.4.1909

Miejsce urodzenia Złoczów

Narodowość polska

Ostatnie miejsce zamieszkania Złoczów

ul. Sokoła 11

Ewakuuje się do Przemyśl

pow. [illegible] Woj. [illegible]

Z nim jadą [illegible]

Ważne do dnia 31 grudnia 1944

Rejonowy Pełnomocnik dla spraw ewakuacyjnych:



Our evacuation papers issued in 1944.

[illegible] ZŁOCZOWIE

28 grudnia 1944 r. Nr 371

ZASWIADCZENIE

na przesiedlenie do Polski.

Okaziciel niniejszego Tenenbaum Elżbieta c. Salomona

Rok urodzenia 12.11.1904

Miejsce urodzenia Złoczów

Narodowość polska

Ostatnie miejsce zamieszkania Złoczów

ul. Sokoła 11

Ewakuuje się do Przemyśl

pow. [illegible] Woj. [illegible]

Z nim jadą

Tenenbaum Edek c. Samuela 7.II.1935

Tenenbaum Selma 6.III.1936

Ważne do dnia 31 grudnia 1944.

Rejonowy Pełnomocnik do spraw ewakuacyjnych:



believer or not. We cried more than we prayed, and on Yom Kippur everyone fasted. I am sure that this was the last time Zloczow had a Jewish community gathering. After the holidays we never got together again and soon we all left for the West.

A couple of Russian Jews came to the services, one a captain who told me that his father had been a wealthy mill owner in the Ukraine before the Revolution, a rare admission by a Russian.

The clothing that we had worn in hiding was now completely threadbare. There was nothing to buy in Zloczow, but a thriving black market existed in Lwow where, we heard, one could get practically anything. The phrase "black market" is misleading, since the transactions were conducted openly and were tolerated by the authorities. Stalls stood in the old market place and it was amazing to see how much was still left from the prewar stocks of "poor Poland" after four years of plunder by the alternating Russian and German occupations. Gold watches to safety pins and razor blades. From English woolens to Lodz percales. New and used clothing. Peasants with vegetables, fruit, eggs, butter, meat, and poultry. Live chickens in cages. As in 1939, the Russian officers were buying everything in sight without bargaining. They had rolls of rubles to spend and spend they did.

We bought some dresses for the children, also an elegant woolen dress for my wife and a pair of trousers for myself. I splurged on a handsome leather suitcase. Alas, our pleasure did not last long. The suitcase containing our purchases was stolen from us a few days later in the once elegant St. George Hotel, where we slept on beds without sheets, amidst bedbugs and lice.

I paid the obligatory visit to the offices of the Pharmaceutical Trust. I met a prewar acquaintance, Mr. Seif, a pharmacist, who told me that he had been with my father at the Janowska concentration camp. He confirmed the fact that the ss surrounded the camp one day and that my father had swallowed the poison he always carried.

We returned home. The new director had started a hot romance with our former maid, Hanka. They spent hours in his office behind locked doors. Finally she moved in with him. She began to lord it over the other workers, who resented her, and laughed at them behind their backs. But Hanka never changed toward us and continued to help my wife with the housework and the children.

We followed the war news in the Russian papers, but without access to a radio it was difficult to know the truth. It seemed as if the war was coming to an end. The Russian papers quoted American newspapers

and commentators favorable to the Soviet position, such as *PM* and the *Daily Worker*, which we suspected were Communist organs. Speeches by Churchill and Roosevelt were printed without comment. There were, however, ugly comments about the Polish government-in-exile. That the political situation was unsettled, we gathered from reading the clandestine Polish newsletter. The Poles were worried whether America and England would have the will to keep their commitment toward an independant Poland.

Things were going smoothly in the factory. I turned over more and more responsibilities to my Ukrainian assistant, who made no secret of his wish that I depart and leave him in charge. I was at once glad and resentful. The proprietary feelings were still there. The new Russian director moved into the factory, taking over an empty room on the second floor and becoming our neighbor. It was high time to leave.

38

It was winter. I still had my heavy overcoat but it was too light for the expected freezing weather. My wife and children badly needed coats. Women were wearing coats made from Russian or German overcoats. The green German tunics, softer and lighter, were preferred since the Russian fabrics were coarse and ugly gray. Soon we bought such coats and had them altered appropriately.

With the director now our neighbor, we were practically imprisoned. We had to be patient and wait for the proper moment. In the meantime we kept him happy by keeping him well-supplied with *samogon* (moonshine). He urged me to drink with him at times and I had trouble convincing him that I had swallowed the contents of my glass. Henis, however, always stepped in and kept him company.

Captain Goldberg, who attended the Jewish holiday services, was also a frequent visitor to my house. He always brought vodka for us and candy for the children. After a while he gained my confidence and we discussed the military and political situation quite freely. He had a healthy respect for the German military might and expected the war to last another year or even two. He laughed at the idea that the future Poland would be independent of Russia: "Where the Russian army sets its boots, it will never get out again," were his words. Stalin was a genius and the Western statesmen were no match. "Roosevelt and Churchill will do what Stalin wants," he insisted. When I told him that we had no intention of remaining in Poland but hoped to reach Palestine eventually, he sadly said, "What about us Russian Jews? Stalin will never let us go!" He was very pessimistic about the fate of Soviet Jewry, since anti-Semitism in Russia was rampant. He told us that he had a wife and children somewhere in Russia and did not know whether they were still alive. Before he left for the front, he came to say good-bye. His parting words were, "Hope to see you in Jerusalem."

(We did meet again after the war in Katowice, Poland, where he was living with a German girl, all thought of Palestine evidently forgotten.

I became convinced that unless I left at once I would never get out of Russia. There were new persistent rumors that the emigration would be stopped by the end of the year, definitely by the end of the war. Steinbruch's words: "When there is sugar, grab it, tomorrow there will be none," haunted me. It was December, but the winter was unusually mild, the mildest since the outbreak of the war.

And then a miracle happened. Late in December the director was summoned to Kiev for a two-week stay. I called in my Ukrainian assistant and confided to him that I was leaving. I told him that it was in his best interest to know nothing about it and he gladly agreed. However, a new complication set in. Both of our daughters came down with measles, and Dr. Jollek advised strongly against moving them. My wife and I talked it over and decided that I should leave alone, now, and that the family would follow when the children recovered. It was a risky decision but we both felt that for me it was now or never.

I did not dare to go by train where travel documents were checked by the NKVD. We had been using a truck belonging to a local cooperative to ship goods to the Pharmaceutical Trust in Lwow. The driver, a demoblized Russian veteran, took on passengers for a fee. I arranged with him to pick me up next day before dawn.

It was still dark when I said good-bye to my wife and mounted the truck which I hoped would take me to Przemysl. I carried only a briefcase with a change of underwear and some bread and sausage. The bottom of the truck was covered with straw and I crawled into it, both to protect myself from being seen and from freezing. The streets were empty. In a few minutes we were at the outskirts of town. As we passed the Jewish cemetery, I took a last glance at it. There I had buried my mother two years before. Not a stone was left to mark the place where she and so many generations of Jews had been laid to rest.

I left my hometown Zloczow forever, with no regrets. I have never since wanted to see the town again, but now, as I am getting old, I am not so sure.

The trip to Lwow was uneventful. We were never stopped on the way. We reached the center of the city. I said good-bye to the driver and left on foot to look for transportation to Przemysl, a hundred kilometers away.

I went to the market place where I hoped to find Jews who would give me information on how to proceed. The news was not encourag-

ing. The inspection on the border was strict and people without travel documents were arrested. Men were looked upon as deserters, put in uniform, and sent to the front. I was advised to go to the railroad station and try to get aboard an emigration train. It was good advice, except that I was afraid to use my resettlement papers. I knew that the NKVD had a long reach. I kept my emigration permit with me, but I also had the Polish identity card that my father had provided during the German occupation. The picture on the document was mine and the name on it was Stefan Bulski. I decided to use this document in the event that I had to identify myself.

Lwow looked more decrepit than a couple of months of ago. I went into a restaurant where I was served some sausage of doubtful freshness and a rank smell. I forced myself to swallow it and washed it down with a mug of watery tea without sugar. I still had some left from home but decided to save it for later.

I walked to the railroad station. It was a long uphill walk on Grodecka Street. Only a few homes and a church looked damaged. The railroad station, considered the most beautiful in Poland, was totally destroyed. The walk exhausted me. I was cold and hungry. I ate my bread.

The station was filled with soldiers. There were NKVD sentries everywhere. Only a handful of civilians were to be seen, mostly women with children. I approached a group and asked a woman about a train to Przemysl. She said that she had been waiting for a train for two days, but nobody knew if and when it would arrive. There were several military trains loaded with tanks and guns on the tracks. I spotted one consisting of many lorries and a few passenger cars, with a steaming locomotive looking as if it were ready to move at any moment. The windows of the passenger cars were covered, but I could see lights inside, indicating that they were occupied. So far I had not been challenged, but my luck could not last forever.

I made up my mind to take a chance. I crossed the tracks and opened the door to one of the passenger cars which was full of Russian officers, all men. My opening of the door was greeted with yells: "Shut the door, shut the door!" followed by the favorite Russian expletive which puts one's mother's virtue in question. Undaunted, I went inside, pulled myself up and introduced myself loudly in Russian: "Comrades, my name is Stefan Bulski. I am a reserve officer in the Polish army and I am trying to get to Przemysl to join my unit."

There was a moment of silence, and then one of the officers got up

from his seat to make room for me on his bench. *"Davay"* (come on), he said. I sat down. At this point I was so weak that I probably could not have taken another step. The car was warm and the ambiance lively. The faces of the officers were flushed with food and drink. I was offered black bread, herring, sausage and vodka. The officers were singing and a few tried to dance between the benches. The door opened again and an NKVD officer peered in. *"Dokumenty,"* he said. *"Idi k'chortu"* (Go to the devil) yelled one of the officers. A chorus of yelling and curses followed: "Out with you, you son of a bitch," was the mildest greeting that he got. The NKVD man surrendered to the hostile greeting and withdrew. No one else entered the car.

After eating some food and downing a hefty gulp of vodka, I regained strength. The officer who had first invited me in engaged me in conversation. Where was I from and what was my occupation? I said that I was a lawyer from Cracow and that at the outbreak of the Polish-German war I had run away to Lwow to escape the Germans who were seizing members of the Polish intelligentsia. I was careful not to mention that I was a Jew, which was prudent. In turn, he told me that he was a physician from Moscow, married, and the father of three children. He had recently spent a few days in Lwow and liked the city very much. He said that he would like to settle there after the war. I replied that there would be a great need for doctors in Lwow. Many of the doctors were Jews and Hitler had killed them all. *"Khorosho sdielal"* (He did well), was the officer's comment. I froze inwardly but showed no emotion. After this exchange he showered me with questions about life in prewar Poland. I described it in glowing terms, and he kept shaking his head in wonder.

The train moved on after midnight. I dozed off. I was awakened by commotion. It was daylight. We were in Przemysl. I said good-bye to my officer and thanked him, wishing him luck. The mood of the officers was now subdued. The Russian's words *"Khorosho sdielal"* kept ringing in my ears.

I walked toward the station. It was crowded with soldiers and civilians. Most of the soldiers were Russian but there were a few with the Polish eagle on their caps. The sign on the station was in Polish. I was out of Russia! And for the first time in four and a half years I felt free.

39

Bedlam reigned at the railroad station. There was a buffet, and I grabbed a couple of hardboiled eggs, some black bread, and tea. A repatriation train had pulled in the previous night and people were sitting on suitcases, crates, or furniture that had been unloaded from the train. Mostly women and children, with very few men—all seemed exhausted and had a bewildered look in their eyes. I approached a group that seemed to me to be Jewish. We started talking. I was informed that there was a repatriation committee in town which was assigning apartments for the arrivals from Russia.

The latest edition of *Pravda* was posted on the bulletin board, and a large crowd was gathered before it. I pushed through. The big news was that the German army had staged a counteroffensive in Belgium and made a deep penetration on the front of the Western Allies. A map showed the position of the Germans. I shuddered at the thought of what would have happened if Hitler had decided to attack in the East instead. We would surely have come under the Germans again! It did not make sense. The Poles always hoped that Hitler would throw his remaining forces against Russia and that the Americans would liberate Poland.

I was familiar with Przemysl from before the war. I went into the city, found the office of the committee, and received an assignment for an apartment on Moniuszki Street, No. 4. Anticipating the arrival of Hela and Misia, I also got apartments for them in the same building.

I went to look at the apartments. The house looked fairly orderly from the outside. I was told by neighbors that the apartments had been briefly occupied by Russians.

Once inside, I got a shock. There was an unbearable stench. There was human excrement all over the bathroom and all the floors. There was a toilet but it was obvious that the Russians did not know how to

use it. The most unbelievable sight was outside the windows, which showed without a doubt that the soldiers had been relieving themselves perched on the ledges. In the corners were puddles of urine and vomit. The straw on the floor was crawling with bedbugs and lice, the size of small peas. Empty vodka bottles were strewn everywhere.

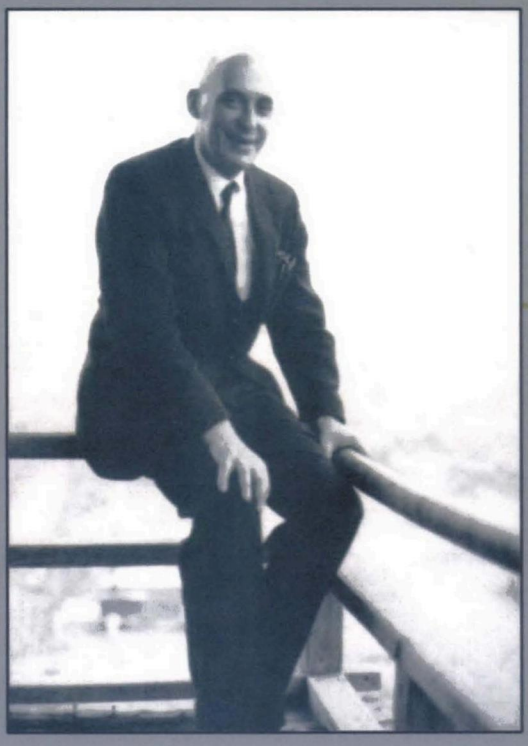
I went back to the neighbors, who told me that their apartments had been in the same condition when they moved in. I said I was waiting for my family to arrive. A couple from Brody named Friedman asked me to stay with them. I gladly accepted the offer.

I went to look at the town. My first impression was that the city was cleaner than Zloczow or Lwow. Many stores were open and there was plenty of food, contrary to what we had been told back in Zloczow.

I had no communication with my family and I spent the days at the railroad station. Finally a group from Zloczow arrived, and Josiu Tauber, who was on the train, brought greetings from Lina. The children had recovered. They should be arriving, he told me, on the next train.

They did. We had a joyful reunion. Henis, Misia and Hryc were with them. I was told that the director had returned and was furious when he learned of my departure. But Henis kept him drunk until my family was safely on the train, where Henis joined them. We decided to await the end of the war in Przemysl, but fate decided otherwise.

But that is another story.



Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum, a lawyer and businessman living in Zloczow, Poland, managed to preserve notes, a diary, documents, and photographs throughout World War II. In 1975 at the prompting of his daughter Lynn, he began to assemble these into a chronicle, the *Zloczów Memoir.*

The memoir relates the story of Mr. Tennenbaum's family against the panorama of political events in Europe. The author has a strong sense of history, and the personal and anecdotal are presented with insight and with in the context of broader world events. His is a moving story of ordinary people trying to deal with extraordinary times.

ISBN 0-595-19399-4

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$16.95 U.S. / $27.95 CANADA

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Cover art by:
Loraine Machlin

iUniverse.com