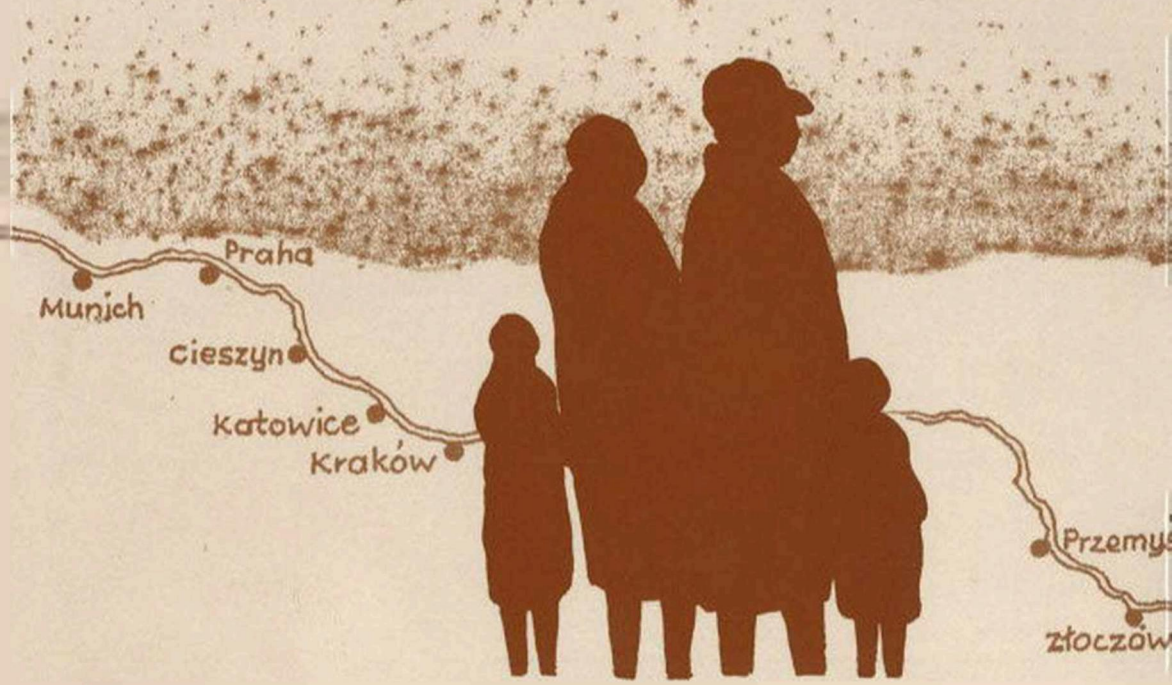


LEKH -LEKHA

Get thee out of thy country. . . , (*Genesis* 12:1)



by

SAMUEL LIPA TENNENBAUM

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SHENGOLD PUBLISHERS, INC.
NEW YORK

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2026

ISBN 0-88400-163-6
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 93-085460
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Published by Shengold Publishers, Inc.
18 W. 45th Street, New York, NY 10036

Printed in the United States of America

LEKH
-LEKHA

By the same author

ZLOCZÓW MEMOIR

To Lina

Introduction

This book is the sequel to *Zloczów Memoir—A Chronicle of Survival* and is based on notes that I kept after we were liberated by the Soviet Army in July 1944, as well as on my recollections over the years.

I describe how between July 1944 and June 1946 we wandered in the Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany in search of a permanent home. I speak about our arrival in the United States, give our first impressions of America, and describe our early years as immigrants.

I was encouraged to continue writing the story by my family and friends, by the reactions of readers, and by newspaper reviews (that in the *Jerusalem Post* was particularly gratifying). While writing the book I also wrote occasional letters to the editor and OpEd articles on topical subjects; a selection of the published pieces is included in the appendix.

For her loyal encouragement, I wish to thank my wife, Lina, to whom this second volume is dedicated as was the first.

I am also grateful to the following people: my daughters, Edith Tennenbaum Shapiro and Selma Tennenbaum Rossen; my son-in-law, Jack Rossen; my grandchildren (in order of seniority) Lynn Shapiro Helmer, Michael Rossen, Mark Shapiro, Deborah Rossen Knill, and Barry Rossen; and their spouses, Yaron Helmer, Kate Troast (Rossen), David Knill, and Danielle Rossen. Their generous support has been most encouraging.

Our late son-in-law, Harris Shapiro, was always a tower of strength, and his untimely passing has thrown a shadow over our lives.

I am writing this book also for my great-grandchildren: Daniel, Rebecca, and David Helmer, Elena Troast Rossen, and Ari Knill.

I should like to pay tribute to the memory of Dr. Kurt Elias, who encouraged us to come to the United States and has remained a

trusted friend of our family until his death.

My thanks go to Bridget Cimilluca for her patience in the typing and retyping of this manuscript as well as its predecessor, and for her expert editing.

My special thanks to our daughter Edith for her invaluable contribution to the editing of the manuscript.

West Orange, New Jersey—August 1993

Foreword

Irwin Howe in an article in the October 27, 1986 issue of *New Republic* commented, "Literature has (and has not) met its greatest challenge—Writing about the Holocaust. . ."

"The subject resists the usual capacity of the mind. Our language lacks words to express [the meaning of the Holocaust]," was the opinion of Primo Levi, who also reported having been told by a Nazi guard in Auschwitz, "Der ist kein Warum." "There is no WHY." Theodore Adorno had warned back in the 1950's, "Writers in the post Holocaust era might be wise to be silent."

There have also been many attempts at visual and dramatic depiction of the Holocaust, documentaries, television shows and films describing, accusing, defending, fictionalizing, dissecting victims, perpetrators, and witnesses.

"The Holocaust does not lend itself easily to film presentation. Too often the spectacle of well fed, sparklingly toothy Hollywood actors trying to depict the inhumanity of Nazi Germany. . . is so absurd. . . as to be obscene," said John J. O'Connor of the New York Times.

So today, fifty years later, the question still haunt us. Is it possible to write or otherwise tell the tragedy of the Holocaust?

Other questions are also being raised. Is writing about or otherwise depicting the Holocaust an exercise in futility, given a world that is eager to forget? Is it perhaps even dangerous, since discussions about the Holocaust invite hostile attacks and lead to revisionism? A worrisome aspect of the revisionist writing is the claim that non-Jews were also victims of crimes that had in fact been *reserved* by the Nazis for Jews. A typical example from fiction is the character of Sophie in *Sophie's Choice,* a novel written by an American, William

Styron.* Hannah Arendt and Raoul Hillberg have both shifted focus from the Nazi perpetrators to Jewish victims by emphasizing the Jewish passivity.** It is undoubtedly significant that these last two writers are German Jews who were fortunate to run away from Germany before these tragic events and before they themselves had to be tested by fire. When I read these writers, I am reminded of a comment by a young black woman who, when asked to describe her experience, replied, "If you want to know how I feel, paint yourself black."

The uniqueness of the horrors of the Holocaust is being submerged in generalization of all horrors. Leftist writers and philosophers even compare Auschwitz to Dresden.

The most preposterous and outrageous among the commentators on the Holocaust are some individuals on the lunatic fringe who deny that the Holocaust took place at all. Implausible as they are, they still find followers.

I believe that for all these reasons and more, we must remember and document the Holocaust.

In the first years after the Holocaust, the survivors gave scant testimony to what had happened. They were still recovering from the trauma, still trying to reassess the past, still trying to rebuild their lives. Also, like the rest of world Jewry, the survivors were enthralled by the miracle of the rebirth of a Jewish state and were inclined to look forward rather than back. The Eichmann trial in 1960 was a catalyst that released a flood of reminiscences and assessments of the Holocaust. Memoirs never intended to be published emerged. A new Holocaust literature, fiction and nonfiction, appeared. Fortunately the

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* In a recent essay in *Time* (May 3, 1993), Charles Krautheimer writes: ". . . the Jews are much and grotesquely envied for having suffered the greatest crime in history. Hence the common attempt to universalize the Holocaust. It was a war against the Jews, but it could have been against any other nation. *Well, it wasn't.* Yes, the Germans considered the Poles an inferior race, but they did not issue a death sentence and did not track down every child of Polish descent."

**It is gratifying that the accusation of Jewish lack of will to resist has been resoundingly answered by the tiny Israeli Army successfully defending the country against the overwhelming Arab forces.

Germans with their obsession for *Gründlichkeit* (thoroughness) had retained records and photographs that bore witness to their heinous crimes.

The writer Mendele Mocher Sforim tells a story about standing in the street and yelling at thugs who had thrown his pants from the roof down to the pavement. Surprised onlookers gather around him, asking the reason for the outcry about a pair of pants thrown from a roof. His reply: "I was inside the pants."

Memoirs of Holocaust survivors, fiction, essays, and analyses of this unique tragic event in the history of the Jewish people can be counted in the thousands.

Several major writers have tried and failed to depict this tragedy, including Erich Maria Remarque, the author of the searing "All Quiet on the Western Front," *the* Great Book of World War I. But no one, not even Remarque has succeeded in giving us a work about the Holocaust that adequately encompasses that tragedy.

Those of us who were "inside the pants" must continue writing and otherwise documenting. Every survivor has a tragic and educational story to tell. Some can tell stories of miraculous survivals against incredible odds. Others celebrate non-Jews whose courage saved some of us from annihilation.

Some who continue writing and reminding the world of the disaster that had befallen the Jews from the Nazis write badly, theatrically; some indulge in self-pity or inflate their experiences. Samuel Gringouz, quoted in the *Jerusalem Post* (June 28, 1986), himself a survivor, bemoans memoirs "full of preposterous verbosity, exaggeration. . . dilettante philosophizing, unchecked rumors, bias, and apologies. . ."

Some of this is doubtless true, but it doesn't alter the fact that testimony is still preferable to silence.

Replying to a most painful question, whether the Holocaust could have been prevented, David Wyman in his monumental *The Abandonment of the Jews,* says "Yes" and blames the American Jewish establishment for its failure to act. He includes American Jewish organizations, Jewish Congressional leaders, and other influential Jews with direct access to President Roosevelt. Wyman says that these people were reluctant to use their influence to urge action on the

president that might have saved some Jews, but might have perhaps increased American casualties. Paul Johnson in the "History of the Jews" (page 504) writes: ". . . there was. . . great resistance in America to accepting the facts of the Holocaust. . . the GIs were furious when people back home refused to believe what they had seen or even look at their photos. A major obstacle to action was Roosevelt himself. He was both anti-Semitic, in a mild way, and ill-informed. . . Roosevelt seems to have been guided purely by domestic political considerations. He had nearly 90 percent of the Jewish vote, and felt no spur to act." There was evidently a predisposition not to "overreact" to information about the Holocaust that was coming out of Europe.

The stories of the Holocaust told and retold should secure that no one forgets and insure that no such event will ever again be repeated.

Chapter One

Przemysl, January–February 1945

I left my hometown, Zloczów—formerly Poland, now the Ukraine—on December 24, 1944, beginning a journey that was going to bring our family to the United States of America sixteen months later on June 16, 1946.

The family consisted of me, a thirty-six-year-old lawyer and factory manager, my wife, Lina, the same age, our two daughters, Edith nine and Selma eight, and my wife's mother, Bessie Horowitz, who was a widow in her early sixties. On this first step of our Odyssey, I set out alone, circumstances having arisen that made it necessary to leave Zloczów precipitously. I arrived in Przemysl, across the border in southeastern Poland, on Christmas Day.

As I wrote *Zloczów Memoir*, my reminiscences of the war years, we five had been hidden for the last fifteen months of the Nazi occupation by a trio of Good Samaritans: Helena Skrzeszewska, Misia Tyz, and Grzegorz Tyz. In memory of their courage, Grzegorz has recently been honored as a righteous gentile at Yad Vashem. The conditions of our hiding out had seemed to us harsh then, but when we compared them after the war to the experiences of the inmates of the death camps, we realized just how benign they had actually been.

Six months before I reached Przemysl, we had been liberated by the Soviet Army. We had spent those months in Zloczów, a town lying between Lwow and Tarnopol, where the Russians made a show of forgetting the past and appointed me manager of the factory that had belonged to my father before the war and had been taken away from him.

Zloczów, because of the Yalta Agreement, had been arbitrarily included in the Republic of the Ukraine and thus in the Soviet Union—and the name changed to Zolochev—we had become Soviet subjects. However the Soviets and the Polish provisional government (the Lublin Government), had agreed to allow ethnic Poles to

emigrate and settle in the new Poland. Jews were given the choice of emigrating or staying. I had wanted to leave, but I was told by the authorities that I could not. Once considered an enemy, I had suddenly—by virtue of my expertise at running my father's factory—become vital to the economic recovery of the city and to state interests and was watched by both the party and the local NKVD.

Father's factory had been confiscated twice, first by the Soviets and, after the German invasion in 1941, by the Nazis. Ironically my recent appointment had been made by my former enemy, Nazimov, a secretary of the Communist Party, an important position. His wife, the propaganda head of the party, had been my scourge, always threatening me, "Just wait, we will get you." She had been perhaps the most hated Russian, not only in our factory but in the entire city.

When Nazimov, now elevated in rank, had recognized me, he had embraced me, kissed me on both cheeks and had said, "*Idy, stroyu swoyu fabryku* [Go, start up your factory]." It was, of course, a sham, because as soon as I restored the factory into operating condition, a Soviet war veteran was installed as my replacement. However, the new director felt that I was needed and had refused permission for me to leave. And so, I had to escape, using a subterfuge.

When I had crossed the newly established border between the Soviet Union and the reconstituted Poland, the inspection of documents had been perfunctory. There was a single Pole in uniform and several Soviets in the green hats of the border guards, a section of the NKVD. The Soviets paid no attention whatsoever, but the Pole seeing my resettlement paper had grunted, "*Jeszcze jeden Zydek, popacz ile ich zostalo.* [Another kike. Look how many of them are left.]" I had looked about me at that, but no one had paid any heed. I had heard similar words before and was to hear them many times again.

Why the Soviets were letting Jews go was a mystery and remains a mystery. Perhaps now that more and more KGB and NKVD secrets are being revealed, this question may be answered. I believed that the Soviets realized that, after 1939 (the Hitler–Stalin pact, which made the defeat of Poland possible), the sympathies of Polish Jews with Communism had evaporated. Thus Jews were no longer an asset. In any event, they made no move to stop me.

At the time I arrived in Przemysl, the war with Hitler was still in progress. In Zloczów rumors had been rife: "Hitler was planning a final strike toward. . . the East". . . "the border between Russia and Poland will be closed soon". . . "there is no food on the Polish side."

The most ominous rumor—that Hitler was preparing a strike toward the East—was fostered by the underground Polish papers, and ironically even prayed for by the Poles and Ukrainians. If Hitler attacked toward the East, it was thought American and other Western troops would follow. The hope of the Poles was that the ultimate liberation would come from the West. We Jews had different priorities. We did hope that the Russians would eventually leave, but we were most terrified at the prospect of Hitler's return. When I arrived at the railroad station in Przemysl, I at once joined the crowd reading Russian newspapers posted on the walls, giving the war news. One headline caught my eye: "Hitler attacks toward the West!" With other Jews in the crowd, I breathed a sigh of relief.

I worried over the next two days whether my family would also manage to leave; I was reassured by people trickling in from Zloczów that they were on their way, contrary to the rumors, the border had remained open.

Within the next few days, my wife, my two daughters, and my wife's mother arrived. With them were two of the three people to whom we owed our survival, Misia and Grzegarz, the latter now rechristened with the Polish version of his name. Helena Skrzeszewska, the third of our rescuers and the one most responsible for having saved us, had gone on farther west in search of her husband, Karol. Morris Henis, brother-in-law of my childhood friend, Rozia Brandes Henis, had joined up with us in Zloczów and was also in the group of emigrants. Rozia herself, her daughter, Morris's parents, his sister and her child, had all perished, murdered by Ukrainian bandits only weeks before liberation. Kuba Henis, Rozia's husband, had been drafted into the Soviet Army in 1941 and was never heard from again.

My wife told me that, among the Jewish survivors in Zloczów, some people were too weak to leave while others decided to wait.

They had become frightened by rumors that food was scarce on the other side of the new Russian–Polish border.

Just after liberation I had suffered recurrent hemorrhaging from a duodenal ulcer. The bleeding had stopped, but I was still emaciated. Nevertheless, I realized that I did not look much worse than everyone else.

Seeing Bessie, my indomitable mother-in-law, I was struck anew that a woman in her sixties could be in the best physical and emotional shape of us all. She had remained an observant orthodox Jew regardless of our circumstances. Our guardians always treated Basia with the utmost respect and, noting her observance of kashruth, cooked for her separately whenever possible, even at times when our relationship grew tense otherwise. Even Misia who had never concealed her dislike of the rest of us, respected Bessie. Bessie firmly believed that it was her faith in God and observance of rituals even under impossible circumstances that had saved us all. Perhaps that faith had also sustained her physically and emotionally.

Our two daughters, eight and nine, had attended school in Zloczów for the first time in their lives. We now registered them in a school in Przemysl, where they excelled rapidly—and this despite the fact that the only schooling they had received until then had been from tutors in the ghetto, from their parents, and from their Cousin Fred.

Both girls had read a great deal. In hiding they were restricted to reading what was available, mainly religious tracts and odd novels. Cousin Fred and I had taken turns retelling entire books from memory. Now the girls were exhilarated by the world of books suddenly available in the reopened libraries. For the first time in years, they also discovered friends as they became acquainted with classmates.

Misia and Grzegorz were now looking to me to keep things going, a reversal of our previous roles. Before the war Grzegorz had been a farmhand and Misia a schoolteacher in the provinces. Neither had ever set foot outside the immediate neighborhood.

The political situation was unclear. Przemysl was supposedly Polish, but we soon realized to our regret and concern that the Rus-

sians were indeed in power. However, economic realities ruled and transcended other concerns for the moment. In practice Przemysl was no-man's-land. Contrary to rumor, food was plentiful, possibly because free enterprise flourished in a fashion that would have made Milton Friedman ecstatic. There were as yet no restrictions, no government regulations; the only law was the law of supply and demand.

Buying and selling became everyone's major occupation, a sort of game in which both men and women joined, none more enthusiastically than the Russians, who, as in 1939 when they saw the West for the first time, were the best customers, buying everything in sight. Lina, Misia, Henis, and I all became immediately active in these entrepreneurial activities.

Many currencies were in circulation, and one dealt in rubles, dollars, pounds, and any and all gold coins. The Polish zloty was least trusted and accepted only reluctantly. The German mark, which people bought in bushels, was considered valueless. Within a few months those who had held onto marks—because of foresight or trust in German ingenuity or, more likely, had been stuck with them—became rich.

In dealings with the Russians, barter was currency, and vodka was king. Demand for anything and everything was so great that it was not unusual to see people buying in one store and selling the same product at a profit next door. In spite of the fact that we were officially in Poland, a Polish administration of real authority was still to emerge, and the Russian Komandantura was issuing regulations. The Russians did not behave either like guests or like conquerors but as if they were at home. A few Polish officers in Russian uniforms (but with Polish four cornered caps and insignia) showed a servile attitude toward the Russians, who were plainly the masters. But the same officers who acted so cravenly toward the Russians did not conceal their anti-Semitism. Fortunately they were unable to do us any harm; they had no power.

In addition to what we earned in this way, we still had some money left from my earnings as plant manager, and Lina had brought provisions from Zloczów, but all that would soon be depleted. Also

although the winter was mild, our clothing was barely adequate. We decided to await the end of the war in Przemysl, and I began to think about finding more legitimate work.

I had had many acquaintances in Przemysl before the war, but now I could find no one. The owners of pharmacies and drugstores in Przemysl, as in many other towns in Poland, had been customers of my father's factory. I had called on them before the war and had made many good friends. I made the rounds now, but I was met with strangers who were either indifferent or responded with barely concealed hostility to my queries. To my knowledge, I did not encounter a single Jew, and if there was one, he did not give himself away.

The old marketplace, a large square, was now lined with motley stores. It had become one enormous flea market, offering goods ranging from household items, to food, to clothing. There were cans with English labels; others of Russian caviar, and also silks, fine linens, English woolens mixed with crude homemade cotton blouses, glassware, porcelain, some things in good condition, others chipped and cracked. There were men's and women's hats, some with plumes. Every store was crowded and business was brisk. The traders were mostly old women in babushkas.

I finally saw a familiar face, which belonged to a lawyer from Zloczów, Lonek Terk, and I ran to greet him.

While I was still in *gimnazjum* (academic high school), Lonek was already in law school. He had been a local hero to us youngsters, since he had played center forward on the Jewish soccer club team. However he had been unpopular with the older folks, particularly the women, because he had jilted his fiancée, whose family had supported him during his studies.

Terk did not seem happy that I recognized him. He told me that he was married to the Polish woman who owned the store where we had met. She had sheltered him during the German occupation. I had known his older sister, a brilliant student (he had been mediocre), but she and his widowed mother had perished in the Holocaust. Lonek appeared indifferent to the fate of his family. Sensing his attitude, I said good-bye. I never spoke to him or heard of him again.

We did not socialize with the local Poles, but our daughters did make some friends in school. There were several reasons for this. We were strangers in Przemysl, and I had been unable to find a single person whom I had known before the war. Another reason was the latent anti-Semitism. I thought that I could read in many faces a hostile look and the comment, "Look how many of them Hitler left." Furthermore some Poles were afraid of us; we were considered collaborators with the Russians and intent on vengeance.

In time some of these prejudices were broken. The more sophisticated Poles could not fail to notice that we had as little fondness for the Soviets as they had. Some mutually convenient contacts were made.

Misia regularly went to church and returned home with leaflets from the still very active Polish underground. The texts seethed with hatred toward the Russians and with contempt for the Western powers. The Yalta agreement was blamed for the catastrophe that befell Poland; the war had started over Poland, but in the end Poland had been betrayed and was being sold out to the Russians to whom America had surrendered.

The Russians created the so-called Lublin Committee, whose members were largely unknown to us; it was led by a man named Osubka-Morawski, a communist, who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union. The only figure known to me was a leftist writer, Wanda Wasilewska, married to a Ukrainian poet, Korniejczuk. There were people with Jewish names on the committee, one of whom, Jacob Berman, was destined to play a major role when the Lublin Committee displaced the London based Polish government-in-exile.

In addition to the underground leaflets, our other sources of news were Russian newspapers displayed on the bulletin board at the railroad station. Possession of radios was forbidden under penalty of death, but that did not prevent some courageous individuals from building makeshift receivers. On January 12, I learned from a Polish woman whose acquaintance had such a radio, that the Soviet Army had attacked and within a few days had overrun the German defenses, liberating Warsaw and Krakow, and practically all of Poland. That

news was confirmed in newspapers on the bulletin board. The Soviet version was that Stalin had started the offensive in order to relieve the pressure on the West, and implied that the Americans in particular were saved from pending disaster. Deprived of access to other sources of news, people believed and feared that the Soviets were all-powerful and would indeed soon conquer all of Europe.

In the first few months of 1945, there were perhaps more Jews in Przemysl than in any other city of Poland, because it was the transit point for people crossing from east to west and from west to east. From the east came people returning from the Soviet Union; the majority of them had originally lived in the western part of Poland and were now going home to search for wives, husbands, and children, from whom they had become separated in escaping from the invading Germans. From the west came survivors with "Aryan" papers, who sought to return to parts of Poland now occupied by the Russians. They too were looking for relatives whom they had left behind. Alas, only a few—very few—were able to find anyone. Still hope lasted for a long time. Occasionally miracles did happen, and couples were reunited, parents found children with strangers, or in monasteries where nuns had saved them.

Nuns had saved the Mansberg children, who were looking for their parents, but the parents had perished in the second *Akzion* at Zloczów. The Mansbergs had been wealthy egg exporters, who had managed to place their children in a convent just before that second *Akzion.* Eventually the youngsters went on to Israel.

The International Red Cross was of no help whatsoever in locating survivors. (I will have more to say about the Red Cross later on, in the chapter recounting the time when I worked for HIAS in Munich.)

In addition to the Jews, Poles were returning from exile in Siberia and other remote provinces in the vast lands east of the Ural. Ukrainians as well and (we suspected) Russians with Polish sounding names, all came through Przemysl in an attempt to disappear in Poland or, if possible, even farther west. Some of them were war criminals who successfully evaded justice (Demjanjuk, for example).

The survivors coming from Warsaw told us of the ghetto uprising there and of the Polish uprising the following year, which had left Warsaw in ruins.

From Warsaw came Nusia Altman, who was married to my cousin, Salek. She told us that our dear friends, Otto and Pepa Roth, had perished in Warsaw. Pepa had been caught in a roundup; when she did not return home, Otto handed himself over to the Gestapo. Nusia told us painfully how she and others had been harassed and blackmailed by some Poles who had spotted them, including some Poles from Zloczów who had escaped from the Russians to the then German-occupied part of Poland. Nusia rushed on to Zloczów when she heard that Salek had survived, although in poor health. She found her husband, and they stayed in Poland until 1956 when many of the Polish Jews were forced to leave; the Altmans then emigrated to Israel. Salek later testified at the trial of the Commandant SS in Zloczów, Hauptsturmführer Warzok. Salek has died but Nusia still lives in Israel. We last saw her in 1987.

For the first time we also encountered the wretched survivors of concentration camps who showed us tattooed numbers on their forearms and told us about the crematoria. For the first time we heard the name "Auschwitz."

The stories that the former concentration camp inmates told us were impossible to believe, even after our own unbelievable experiences. We had witnessed mass killing of Jews in Zloczów; we knew about other executions in Zloczów and in other Polish cities. However the descriptions of the crematoria and the death factories built by the Germans, the inhuman experiments performed on Jewish men, women, and children were beyond comprehension. Alas, all those horrors were true. The hell that had descended on the Jews had taken many unspeakable forms.

We allowed ourselves to think about the horrors for only short periods at a time. Otherwise, we would have gone mad. We avoided talking about the five years. But horrors persecuted us in our dreams. Many a time my wife or I woke up screaming.

Among the first group of survivors were many more women than men. The surviving women were educated, endowed with "Aryan"

features, many blond and blue-eyed. Many still retained a trace of elegance. The surviving men were the more robust types, who resembled Polish peasants. Some were barely educated. Many carried concealed guns, leftovers from the days of hiding in the forests. But all class distinctions and political differences, so prevalent among prewar Polish Jewry, had disappeared. New liaisons formed without regard to the former status of either side.

The newly formed liaisons soon evolved into marriages. The women maintained their intellectual superiority, but the men, who had hardened during the war, proved to be excellent breadwinners, and the marriages on the whole turned out to be very successful and durable. I had the opportunity to observe such couples during my stay with HIAS and later in the United States.

Days passed; daily lives went on. We waited for the war to end, but had no idea what lay beyond.

We spent much of our time playing cards with other arrivals. Sometimes we speculated about what kind of a future was waiting. Only a few expressed any desire to remain in Poland, and most focused their hopes on Palestine. We were living that old Yiddish song, *Wie wil mir gehn*? [Where will we go?]

As more people arrived from the West, they brought with them German newspapers, which, although filled mostly with propaganda, still gave us a better idea of the real state of the war than the Soviet papers or the underground Polish leaflets. Arrivals from Warsaw had had access to radio, both German and the BBC; the latter had been eagerly listened to and believed.

We gathered from all these sources that the Soviet reports about the sad state of affairs of the war in the West were highly exaggerated. The German papers admitted that their offensive in the Ardennes had created only a temporary setback for the Allies. However German newspapers and German radio continued to predict a final victory and claimed that Germany had a new secret weapon, which would reverse the trend of the war. They raved against the "Jew" Roosevelt, the drunkard Churchill, and still another Jew, Morgenthau, a name then unknown to us (Henry Morgenthau, Jr., FDR's Secretary of the Treasury). The Germans vowed a fight to the end. But the BBC

predicted a swift end to the war, and for us it meant that there was hope for some kind of a future. Our discussions about Palestine became more real. We speculated on the best way to get to western Europe and from there to Palestine. When the roads opened to the western part of Poland, Przemysl started to empty rapidly as Jews left for Krakow and the West.

We too decided to move westward, but not yet. The women in our group wanted to await the end of the war in Przemysl as far from the front lines as possible. However, as happened so often in the past, events overtook plans.

One day I met in the street a Russian sergeant whom I had known in Zloczów. He told me that his commanding officer, Captain Galitzyn who had been my customer in Zloczów, was now stationed in Przemysl and was a supply officer on the staff of Marshal Konev. I was happy to hear this and went to see him at once. He greeted me warmly. He warned me that the Zloczówer NKVD had issued a warrant for my arrest for having left Zloczów against orders, but, he added, he was not going to betray me. Instead he ordered his orderly, an attractive, blond, blue-eyed young woman, to bring out refreshments. There were the customary black bread, sausage, and vodka, but he added some refinements: French cognac, some delicious fish, Russian *bychky* (tomato herring) and pastry. After a few drinks (he had already had a few before my arrival), his tongue loosened. "We, the Army, are going to run things after the war," he said. "The rubbish will be out." He made a sweeping motion with his hand to indicate the Communist Party. "You shouldn't have left Russia. We will be needing people like you." (A similar comment had been made to me during the first occupation of Zloczów by an army major, who had tried to take some machinery out of the plant, but was prevented by a party secretary and a lieutenant of the NKVD. They had drawn guns on one another until the major finally gave in.) I saw again that there was little love lost between the NKVD and the front line troops.

Captain Galitzyn gave me some bread, a couple of bottles of vodka, a few cans of fish, and absolutely refused payment. However he asked me to come to see him again, winking, "Perhaps we can do some business."

Although I was glad to have met the captain, I was also worried by the news he gave me. He may have disregarded the order to have me arrested, but what if some other Russian were to recognize me and hand me over to the secret police?

Another episode sounded an even louder warning. A rumor had gone around that the Russian Army was conducting roundups in the streets, looking for deserters—Russian soldiers who had shed their uniforms and had tried to melt into the countryside among friendly peasants—and for Ukrainians who had fled to Poland. My wife and Misia begged Grzes and me to remain indoors and, although Grzes listened to them, I chose not to. I forgot how the Soviet system worked; in my stupidity I put faith in my evacuation papers, which identified me as belonging to neither of the threatened groups.

I went out for a stroll and within minutes was caught with many others in the dragnet. I decided too late that the Russians were evidently also looking for Jews when the soldier who arrested me did not even bother to look at my documents once I told him my name.

We were taken to the courtyard of a school where we slouched dejectedly on the ground, waiting to be sent to the front, the usual destiny of detainees like us. I was sure that I should never see my family again.

Meanwhile an acquaintance had seen me being arrested and run to tell Lina, and she and Misia came immediately to find me. They bartered with the sentry for my release; capriciously, the soldier settled easily for a mere bottle of vodka, a cheap price indeed for my head.

The two ladies guided me home where I got a well deserved tongue lashing from Lina, mixed with tears of relief.

The incident taught me a lesson or two; it was still no bargain to live as a Jew. We dusted off the "Aryan" papers we had never gotten to use during the Nazi occupation and became "Bulski" overnight. My name was Stefan Bulski.

It had been my father who had provided me, Lina, our daughters, and my mother-in-law with the false documents. Papers of that kind were widely circulated and peddled for a stiff price by the AK (Armia

Krajowa, the Polish nationalist underground). Lina hated the name, and still insisted that it sounded phony. However the name and the papers, which had been secured by my father for our aborted escape attempt to Warsaw during the Nazi occupation, served us well for the remainder of our stay in Poland.

I completed my "Polonization" by letting my mustache grow longer until the ends hung down, as worn by Polish gentry and peasants. I bought a pair of prewar leather boots and tucked the ends of my trousers into them. I discarded my hat, exchanging it for a fur cap with long earpieces that covered half my face, which was fine since it was still cold. However, having learned my lesson, even with all that disguise I did not immediately venture out into the streets. After a few days, things returned to relative normality; the roundups ended as suddenly and arbitrarily as they had begun. I was unable to wear the boots, which hurt my feet, so Henis sold them at a profit. But I retained the cap and the mustache for several months.

I visited Captain Galitzyn again, and he sold me some of his "surplus," which we resold at a handsome profit, the money lasting us for some considerable time. I continued to deal with the captain.

By the middle of February a new rumor swept the town: It was disclosed that the three leaders, Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill, meeting at a place called Yalta, had decided on permanent steps to be taken after the end of the war. Poland was to be restored as an independent country but with revised borders. The new lines were drawn along the so-called Curzon Line proposed originally in 1919 by the then British foreign secretary*. The eastern provinces, including our native Galicja (called Western Ukraine by the Russians), were to be incorporated into the Soviet Union. Poland was to be compensated in the form of the eastern provinces of Germany after they were liberated, and the refugees from eastern Poland would receive priority for the apartments and farms left by the Germans, who would be resettled after the war in the truncated Germany. The Polish Lublin Government, plus a few Poles from the London Polish government-

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* For more on Yalta see my comments in *Commentary*, November 1986.

in-exile who were acceptable to the Russians (prominent among them Stanislaw Mikolajczyk), was to become the independent, legitimate government. Also included was Dr. Emil Sommerstein, the only name familiar to us from former times, a prominent Zionist and member of the pre-war Sejm (Polish Parliament). According to a Polish leaflet, he had been released from prison only days earlier.

The tone of the underground leaflets that reported the gist of the Yalta agreement was anger. True, Poles were happy that the new Poland was to receive the provinces of Silesia and Pomerania, to which they claimed legitimate ancient rights. But they were furious at the loss of Lwow and Wilno; and of Ukraine and Lithuania. Lwow had never been part of Russia and was a city with a long, patriotic Polish history. Wilno, although Lithuanian hundreds of years before, was dear to the Poles, having been part of Poland since the fourteenth century; then the Polish Princess Jadwiga had married the Lithuanian Jagiello, joining the two nations and also converting Lithuania to Christianity.

Lwow had held one of the largest Jewish ethnic groups that had participated actively in the cultural life of the city, and was known for its collective sense of humor. The best known tongue-in-cheek program on Polish radio had originated in Lwow and was called "Wesola Niedziela" or "Happy Sunday." The two Aryan characters, Tonko and Szczepko, were played by Jews as stereotypical, happy-go-lucky fellows. The show was eventually aired on all Polish stations, even though it had been written and staged primarily by Jews. Unfortunately, as later developments have shown, this did not make the majority of the Lwow population less anti-Semitic than the rest of Poland.

It had been in Lwow that the Virgin Mary had been crowned by King Jan Kazimierz as "Queen of Poland," during the Swedish wars of the seventeenth century, and Poland's ultimate victory is credited to her intercession. The Virgin Mary, as Queen of Poland, is held in particular reverence by Poles.

Wilno was the city where the greatest Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, was born. His famous epic, "Pan Tadeusz," opens with the line, "*Litwo, ojczyzno moja* [Lithuania, my Fatherland]," but for Mickiewicz, as for many Poles, Lithuania and Poland were one. After

the union, the combined nations had achieved their greatest victory over the Germans in the battle at Grunwald (1410). It was only when Hindenburg defeated the Russian Army at Tannenberg (1914) that the Germans felt that that ancient defeat had been avenged.

The rumors about the new borders proved to be accurate but not the promise of a truly independent Poland, which turned out to be an illusion. In reaction a screaming headline in one of the leaflets read, "Treason." Harsh blame was put on both Roosevelt and Churchill.

The war was still going on. German POWs, escorted by mounted soldiers and surrounded by dogs, appeared on the streets of Przemysl. They were spiritless, emaciated, haggard. The majority, in spite of the winter weather, were without boots and had their feet wrapped in rags. Many wore bloody bandages on their heads, arms, and legs. Some begged for food but the sentries would not let anyone near them. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* Crowds on the street watched the procession of prisoners. Although the German occupation had ended only a few months ago, words of pity came from Polish women, Misia among them. There were few men present, most of whom were elderly.

We Jews wondered whether Polish hatred of the Russians was the reason for sympathy toward these German POWs. But even among Jews, a few expressed compassion.

There was one particular group that caught our attention; men in Russian uniforms, who were surrounded by uniformed NKVD. A Russian soldier walking by, spat, and told us that these were Russian deserters, who would be dealt with severely. We learned that the majority of these men had been former prisoners of the Germans and had been led to fight on the side of the Nazis by a General Andrei Vlassov. Vlassov had been captured by the Germans at Stalingrad and had become commandant of an anticommunist Russian Army that was serving the Germans.

As I mentioned before, in the first weeks we had little contact with the local Polish population, but the need to earn a living made it imperative to make some acquaintance among the Poles. The peasants had the food; we had to buy provisions from them, which we supplemented with canned goods acquired from the Russians.

We also needed the outlets that were in the hands of Poles, almost exclusively women. Younger Polish men were practically nonexistent or not visible. Some had enlisted either in the "new" Polish Army or were forced into the Soviet units. Others were either prisoners of war somewhere in Germany or were in hiding to avoid being caught in the many roundups. The Soviets ignored documents as I had learned, and I realized now that they would take any male capable of carrying a gun whom they happened to snare.

The behavior of these women toward us was reserved, and I saw, or I believed that I saw, animosity in their eyes. Little by little as there were more transactions, I developed relationships in a few stores with the owners and felt more comfortable.

One of the major stores was owned by a woman in her early forties, Mrs. Kozlowska, and she and I became friendly. I had been selling her goods acquired from my friend, the captain, and she had always paid me a fair price. Once as we started to talk, I confirmed what I assumed that she had guessed, that I was a Jew. During a conversation I happened to mention that our lives, mine and my family's, had been saved by friendly Poles. She paid me the usual "compliment," that I did not look Jewish, and that she would have never taken me for "one of them." I asked her what she meant by that, and she blushed and answered lamely, "You know what I mean." I did not press her further.

It was not the first or last time that I heard that "compliment" from embarrassed people who wanted to say that they were not really anti-Semitic, but did not care for many of my faith. Mrs. Kozlowska told me that she had been a *gimnazjum* teacher before the war, teaching history and geography, and that she had had many Jewish pupils. Her husband, an artillery captain, had been drafted into the army on the second day of the war and had been captured by the Germans. She was lucky; she had received a few letters from him, and had been able to send him a few food parcels. I told her that we had two daughters, and she invited them to play with her two children, a boy of twelve and a girl, six, born just before the war. I asked her how she felt now after liberation, and she answered cryptically, "*Zamienil stryjek na siekierke kijek* [The uncle substituted the stick for an ax]."

And then she added, "You know—the Germans weren't really so bad—some were perfect gentlemen!"

Her comment reminded me painfully of another occasion when the words "perfect gentlemen" had been applied to Germans. During the first day of the German invasion of Zloczów, a young Jew, Tinter, had been killed by the Germans in the home of Mrs. Kubricht, the sister of my old friend, Ignac Herman. She had converted to Catholicism and had married a violent anti-Semitic, a veteran who had lost an arm during the 1920 war against the Russians. Mrs. Kubricht describing the shooting of Tinter had added, "But they [the Germans] had behaved [toward her] as 'perfect gentlemen'."

The invitation for my daughters to meet the Polish woman's children came to naught because we left Przemysl shortly after it was issued.

But meanwhile our apartment was becoming crowded with people, since we kept an open house, and Lina welcomed everyone. Some of the Zloczówers whom we hosted included Josio Teiber and Dudi Zimand and their wives, the former Lusia Mindlin and Rena Deutsch, who became among the first to leave Przemysl for Krakow—that is, to move further west.

Tauber had once been my Grandfather Meir's pupil. He later took over his father's store and became a successful businessman.

Zimand's family had owned a sawmill in Zloczów. Lusia Mindlin's mother had been a housekeeper. Lusia had been a popular young woman, but she and Lina had not been part of the same circle and were acquainted only slightly. Rena Deutsch's mother had owned a petroleum store and one of the two gas stations in town, had been my mother's close friend and had come over every Saturday for a schmooze. Mrs. Deutsch was one of three women jokingly described in Zloczów before the war as the "three poor widows"—jokingly because all three of these prosperous ladies were anything but poor.

Both Tauber and Zimand remained in Germany after the war and became millionaires.

Another of the "poor widows," a Mrs. Fürgang, had had a son, Dr. Elias Fürgang, who now lives in Peru. He once came to the

United States and traced me through the telephone book; he drove over from Manhattan to New Jersey on the chance that he might find me at home. To my delight, he was successful. I was home, and I really appreciated his effort. We corresponded after that; when my first book was published, he honored me with a contribution in my name to the UJA.

The third "poor widow," Mrs. Weiss, was a tobacconist. Her son Kuba still lives in Poland. We correspond, and he gives us news of Grzes. Kuba too once visited us in New Jersey.

I paid yet another visit to Captain Galitzyn. When I announced myself to the sentry, he corrected me, smiling, "You must mean *Major* Galitzyn." When I entered Galitzyn's quarters I was greeted by the same pretty young woman whom I had met before and who, I saw, had been promoted to sergeant. I asked her her name, and she said that she was Marianna Halinska. She pronounced the name the way the Poles pronounce it; a Russian would have said "Galinska." I looked closer at her and saw that she did not look like a typical Russian woman. It's not that she was so pretty—so were many of the Russian women—but she was slim, and her features were delicate, and she was blond in a typically Polish way and had blue eyes. She was also well-groomed and her makeup was low key. There was a trace of elegance in her demeanor. Russian women tended to be coarser. I asked her whether she was Polish, and she said that she was; we switched to speaking Polish, which she spoke haltingly with a Russian accent.

Before the war her father had been a vice-*starosta*, a deputy county executive, in the town of Rowno. Her family had consisted of two brothers, who had been drafted into the Polish Army (Rowno was part of Poland then), and two older sisters. The father was arrested by the NKVD on the second day the Russians entered Rowno. Next, the two older sisters were also arrested and deported somewhere to Kazakhstan, where, she did not know. At age fifteen, she was permitted to stay with her mother, who was exiled to a different town in Kazakhstan, where she died from malnutrition after two years.

Breaking up families and sending members to different places

was routine for the secret police. The reason was obviously to prevent contacts between family members. The system was applied not only to Poles, but also to Jews deported into exile. My good friends, the Osterns and the Bonoms, were separated and found one another only after the war. Many others died in exile, and never saw each other again.

Marianna said that next she was adopted by a Kazakh family, for whom she had high praise. She had had no further contact with any member of her family, but had longed to return to Poland. Therefore she had enlisted in the Russian Army hoping to go west with it and to reach Poland. In the army, she had met the then Lieutenant Galitzyn and had remained with him ever since. She blushed at this point but continued her story. She was now his assistant she said, because after her promotion she could not remain an orderly.

After a while the newly minted major came in and apologized for the delay. He was in high spirits and proudly showed off his new epaulettes. I congratulated him on his promotion. He ordered Marianna to bring a bottle of wine. He opened it and offered a toast to the successful end of the war. I toasted him in return and ended with the words in Polish, "*No zdrowie, Pan Major Galitzyn.*" His first reaction was a look of surprise, but then he smiled broadly and replied, "*Dziekuje, Pan* Tennenbaum." When I spoke the Polish words, Marianna, who had joined in the toast, had blushed again.

Galitzyn and I settled down for a long talk, and he told me that he had received orders to transfer to Krakow. He invited me to look him up there. At this point Marianna left the room. I again congratulated Galitzyn and flattered him saying that now, after his promotion to the rank of a staff officer, he must know even more about the conduct of the war. I asked him how much longer the war would last. He replied that at the very least another year, perhaps longer, even two. He was anxious to get into Germany, he said, but it might take a long time. The Russian Army was the best in the world and was led by the top generals—Marshal Konev being the best of the three, the other two almost equal, Marshals Zhukov and Rokossovski. I asked him what he thought about the German Army compared to the British and American. He thought well of the German generals, especially

Rundstedt and Rommel. His opinion of the Germans as fighters was very high. They were, he said, almost as good as the Russians. The British were equal to the Germans but were afraid of casualties. He did not have a high opinion of the Americans, but he allowed that the Americans had sent their best divisions and best general, MacArthur, to fight the Japanese. When I asked about Eisenhower, he made a dismissing motion with his hand and used an expletive. Generally he felt that the Western Allies were lacking good generals. He also dismissed Montgomery but said that the Americans had one good general on the German front, George Patton. However, he had read in the papers that Patton was a fascist. He pronounced the name Patton with the accent on the second syllable.

We emptied the bottle, and he ordered another, this time French champagne. I was not accustomed to drinking and became slightly woozy.

We switched next to talk about statesmen. Roosevelt was a good friend, a fine fellow, but Churchill could not be trusted. He again used an expletive. Significantly Stalin's name was never mentioned in our conversation. However in the many talks we were to have, he never repeated the boast that he had made during our first conversation that "we [the army] will take over."

Galitzyn was a handsome fellow, tall for a Russian, about 5 feet 9 or 5 feet 10 with good features, strong build, blond hair neatly cropped, the neck not shaven like most Russians. His blue eyes matched Marianna's. After the good life he lived in Przemysl, he was developing a slight paunch. He was always neatly dressed, his tunic pressed, a fine specimen of a soldier. When still in Zloczów, he had often hinted at his genteel ancestry, had always addressed me as *Pan* Tennenbaum, even while I kept calling him *Comrade* Captain. Many of the military men had called me Pan, but not the civilians, with the single exception of a lady from Leningrad.

When speaking to us, Russian officers often mentioned genteel ancestry while the Jews among them invariably hinted that their parents had been wealthy and/or had come from religious backgrounds. Almost always, there had been a rabbi in the family.

We parted finally, the major kissing me on both cheeks and

repeating the invitation to visit him in Krakow. In the anteroom, I shook hands with Marianna.

Whether Galitzyn's military and political opinions represented the thinking of Konev's staff or Galitzyn's boasts as a Russian, I would never know. His ranking Konev over Zhukov, who was generally considered the best of the Russian commanders, was obviously colored by his loyalty to his boss. His prediction three months before the end of the war that the war would last much longer did coincide with opinions of other Russian officers to whom I spoke.

After I returned home, I repeated to Lina my conversation with the major, particularly his prediction of the duration of the war. Whatever, it would not affect our decision to leave Przemysl as soon as possible.

I would go first by myself, we decided, to scout the conditions in Krakow and, if satisfied, would return to fetch the rest of the family.

I left Przemysl one sunny morning early in March 1945.

Chapter Two
Krakow

The morning I left Przemysl was unusually warm for March. The winter had been mild, but there was still a layer of snow covering the fields. The sun was shining, melting the snow and making the road slippery.

Here and there, mounds of different sizes indicated graves of Poles and Germans, identified by overturned crosses. Otherwise there were few signs of the fighting that had taken place. The villages we passed seemed untouched; the craters on the road left from shelling or bombardments had been covered with gravel and sand.

I left Przemysl with mixed emotions. On the one hand I wanted to get away as far as possible from Russia, particularly after my last experience, but on the other hand, I was to be separated again from my family—God knows for how long. However once the truck moved, I concentrated on what lay ahead. The people who had made the trip to Poland before me had said that life in Poland, particularly in Krakow, was much easier than in Przemysl, in strong contrast to the warnings when I had left Zloczów for Przemysl, and had been told that food would be scarce. It seemed that the farther away people got from the Soviet border, the more optimistic they became.

About two dozen of us were traveling in the usual way—by hitchhiking on a military truck—all bundled up; the weather was cold and the tarpaulin gave little protection. We all looked alike, mostly men, two women. I knew three of the other passengers who were Jews from Przemysl. There was also a fourth Jew who kept close to us. The rest were middle-aged women and old men, peasants carrying provisions for sale or barter. The women occupied the two benches that ran alongside the truck, protecting their merchandise under and between their legs. Some men sat on empty crates, the peasants on their sacks; the rest of us on the floor. We sat separately, as if there were an invisible line dividing us.

I carried my German *Ausweis* (identity card) with the Polish

name Bulski. After my experience with the Russian soldiers in Przemysl, I felt safer using the Polish name. I hid documents with my real name underneath my clothing in my suitcase. It occurred to me that only the Jewish passengers carried suitcases. This gave us away, a lesson we learned too late.

The driver was paid either in rubles, of which the peasants seemed to have pocketsful, or with vodka, which he obviously preferred. He was armed and kept the gun handy, right beside him on the seat. There was good reason for this precaution, because the small towns through which we passed and the woods alongside the road were infested with marauders, deserters, and guerrillas of all persuasions, I had heard. The Polish *AK* and the Ukrainian *Banderowce** were feared most. One of the Jewish passengers confirmed the rumors, and told me that he had made the trip twice before. Once the truck he was on was held up, and the passengers were robbed. The driver who had tried to resist was shot and wounded, but the passengers weren't harmed. My informant claimed the band was made up of members of *AK*, and that he had feared that he was going to get killed once they to discovered that he was a Jew. Fortunately the band had been in too much of a hurry to interrogate the passengers, he said, and that's how he had survived.

We passed through Jaroslaw and Rzeszów, two of the larger towns on the road to Krakow and here too, except for the bombed-out railroad stations, there were no signs of destruction. The Russian advance and the German retreat must have been swift. I regretted that we were not stopping at Rzeszow where my family had lived for a year (1917) during WWI. I would have liked to have seen the beautiful street, Aleja Kasztanowa, Chestnut Alley, where our home had been. However the town had also been my first personal experience with anti-Semitism; as a boy I had been beaten up by a gang of Polish hoodlums shouting "Jew."

The driver did not stop except briefly for (*Wasserablass*) "relief" on the side of the road. Either he had heard about or had himself had

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* Ukrainian guerrillas, named after their leader, Stepan Bandera. The band was known for hunting Jews hiding from the Germans. Bandera escaped to Germany after the war and was assassinated in Munich.

previous experience with the hazards of traveling through the countryside.

In addition to the gun, the driver held next to him several bottles of the vodka he had been given in payment by his passengers. His gun offered protection from the marauders, but his constant drinking to assuage an evidently inexhaustible thirst loomed as an equal danger.

We did stop for a short while in Rzeszow to stretch our legs and relieve ourselves. The driver also took the opportunity to refresh himself with some bread and another half bottle of vodka. He had started in Przemysl in a relatively sober state and had appeared only slightly tipsy in spite of continuous sips from the bottle on the way, but by now he was drunk. We, the passengers, remained huddled close to the truck, afraid that the inebriated driver would take off with the load and abandon us on the road, which according to my informant, was a not infrequent occurrence.

We mounted the truck after a stop of about half an hour. I and the other three Jews kept together, anxiously watching the peasants, who in turn stared at us with hostile eyes. Somehow they *knew* that we were Jews even though we were dressed in peasant garb as they were. One of my fellow Jews told me that neither in Jaroslaw nor in Rzeszów was there a single Jew left, that the entire countryside between Przemysl and Krakow was *Judenrein*, the word coined by the Nazis to indicate a place "liberated" from Jews. I noticed that one of the other passengers showed a large bulge under his coat; I surmised that he too carried a gun. Traveling with us, as invisible fellow passengers, were the fear of other passengers and of the driver and the uneasy feeling at being in a strange country.

The driver was totally drunk by now and was singing patriotic songs repeating the refrain "*Za Stalina, za rodinu*" (for Stalin, for the fatherland) over and over again. As he sang he increased speed. Under his unsteady hands on the wheel the truck swerved dangerously. On a sharp curve it suddenly overturned, rolling over into a ditch. An instant before, feeling that the truck was about to topple over, I had grabbed the bars holding the tarpaulin, and now I hung on for dear life. I touched ground upside down but without a scratch. Lucky.

Fortunately, the ditch we landed in was still full of snow and ex-

cept for one woman who suffered a cut nostril, and perhaps had broken her nose, all the rest had only cuts and bruises. The woman bled profusely; her companion (husband?) applied snow to the wound and bandaged it with a piece of cloth making a sort of mask.

The driver was in a stupor; he just kept singing and giggling.

It was getting late in the afternoon. We hailed passing trucks and cars, but they paid no heed to us; some even accelerated, afraid of a trap. We decided to try to lift the truck ourselves and to put it back on the road. In a common effort, first unloading what was left on the truck, we succeeded in pushing it back on the road and righting it. By then it was getting dark and only military traffic passed along the road. The driver, his eyes glazed over, seemed comatose. One of the women tried to revive him by rubbing his head with snow. The other energetically put her fingers down his throat and made him vomit. After this administration, he revived somewhat. Still unsteady on his feet, he climbed into the cab. The passenger with the bulge under his coat sat beside him; he claimed that he knew how to drive a truck and would do so if needed. One of the sacks of potatoes had broken in the accident, and the contents spilled in the snow in the ditch. The owner wanted to gather his property but had to give up when the rest of the passengers threatened to leave him behind.

After a few tries, the engine started. The lights worked. We were able to continue our trip.

We arrived in Tarnów, the largest city between Przemysl and Krakow, shortly before midnight. The driver wanted to stay but we were anxious to go on and persuaded him to continue in order to reach Krakow at daybreak. We did not trust him. We feared that once we left the truck, he would take off and leave us stranded literally and metaphorically in the cold.

Unfortunately as we passed the center of town at the crossroad leading toward Krakow we were stopped by a sentry, a woman. These military traffic commanders were known for their no-nonsense style. Nobody dared to argue with them, but behind their backs they were called all kinds of names, the most polite being "skirted bitches."

"Oh, oh," sighed my fellow passenger, my friend, knowingly. His fear was unfortunately soon justified. The sentry unceremoniously or-

dered us out of the truck, disregarding the feeble protests of the peasants left standing in the middle of the road with their many sacks and bundles. She severely dressed down the driver and ordered him to return to the depot forthwith. From a few meters away, he cursed her and then took off in a hurry. We, however, were stranded just as I had feared.

My new friend said that there was in Tarnów a Jewish center run by a committee where transient Jews could spend a night or two. We, the four Jewish passengers, started to walk back to town. It was pitch dark, and we were very frightened. To our surprise, two of the "peasants," the one with the bulge and another with a drooping mustache, bulbous nose, and a strong build, joined us. They were Jews too, they said, but had not wanted to admit it earlier. Previously I had noticed that they had not mingled with the other peasants either and had kept by themselves, but I had given it no further thought.

The peasants separated into small groups and walked away from us, cursing *moskals* and *zydki* for their trouble. Why *zydki*? But weren't we always the culprits? We were relieved that they limited their aggressiveness to insults and did not attack us physically. My experienced friend said that traveling Jews, like ourselves, were assaulted, robbed, and thrown off the trucks by peasants with the collusion of the Russian drivers.

The six of us walked slowly, keeping to the center of the dark and empty streets, away from the houses. We reached the Jewish Center, a single dingy room with the stench of sweat and tobacco hanging heavily in the air. The caretaker "committee" turned out to be a middle-aged couple whom we woke up to let us in. They had slept fully clothed, I saw. I would not say that they were happy to see us. There were wooden benches along the walls covered with straw mattresses, and straw was also spread on the floor. I expected that the straw was infested with fleas or lice and so it was, crawling with both species. There were also mice droppings, and as we entered, a large rat scurried across the room. I was dead tired and so were my companions but before we went to sleep we discussed our predicament and decided to get up at dawn. The others soon lay down, some on the benches and others on the floor. I sat in the corner of a bench shiver-

ing from cold and exhaustion, unwilling to lie down because of the vermin. I still fell asleep.

It wasn't until about eight o'clock that I awoke, still tired but somewhat refreshed. Two of the other fellows were up too, and we woke the others. Each of us had carried his own provisions, so we ate what we had. The female half of the caretaker committee brewed a large kettle of strong tea, for which she refused payment. Both she and her husband were much friendlier than the previous night. They apologized for their behavior explaining that while they were often awakened at night and didn't mind that, they had to be careful of strangers.

There was little talk. The other travelers and I decided to split up and try our luck separately. However my new friend wanted to stay with me. I was pleased at that because he had had the experience of former trips. The other Jewish pair from Przemysl also stayed together. The man with the gun and the fellow with the Slavic features, round face and bulbous nose went their own ways.

My companion and I had no luck. The few trucks taking passengers were all full. There were convoys carrying Russian soldiers that might have been willing to take us along, but we were afraid to try. We returned dejectedly to the center before nightfall, and the others also came back, all except for the man with the bulbous nose who had evidently caught passage. He remains a mystery since he told us neither his name nor where he was from.

The second night in the shelter there was more talk, each passenger telling his story. Soon the caretakers too joined in. They were natives of Tarnów, they said, and had returned to claim their property, a large house in the center of town. The present occupants had refused to relinquish possession and had threatened them and had warned them never to come back. There were many empty apartments in town, "*po wywiezionych zydkach* [after departed kikes]," the occupants had said. It should be easy to find a place to live. The caretaker couple had wanted to leave Tarnów at that, but eventually had decided to stay to await the establishment of a governmental authority through which they would try to regain their rights. I wished them luck. In the meantime they managed the center.

The caretakers told us that there were many transients, some

stranded as we were, most of the others wanderers from west to east and from east to west in search of loved ones. It was the same story as in Przemysl.

As we were talking, a man and a woman came in. They too had been taken off a truck. After they settled down, conversations resumed, and someone mentioned that soon it would be Pesach. Sentimentality was not allowed: It could weaken and derail us from the goal of survival. Even now we were in danger. We would not perish now, not now when we had survived the mass killings by the Germans and their helpers, the Ukrainians, Latvians, Poles, Russians. . . . We, the people in that room, were a hard-boiled lot.

But the mention of Pesach changed everything. The newly arrived woman started to cry unabashedly. We all cried.

The tears changed something, and the group came to life emotionally. Tongues loosened. Everybody had his favorite Passover story to tell. Even some jokes were exchanged. We seemed to forget the darkness of our present lives and the hostile surroundings. We talked and talked. Everybody was talking, mostly to himself, but it did not matter whether or not the others were listening.

Of all the Jewish holidays, Pesach is special, the most joyful holiday, perhaps the most "Jewish" holiday. I remembered that I had always gotten a new suit and new shoes for Passover and so did other youngsters, my friends. Grandfather Meir would come to our house to assist with the Haggada reading. He'd bring along his own *shmirah* matzoth, the baking of which he supervised himself. He also made his own wine from grapes, which was delicious. He was a good cook because his wife, Grandmother Ethel, the businesswoman, was a very poor one. Our factory would be closed.

Would we ever celebrate again? Perhaps when we reached Krakow there would be matzoth and wine.

After a while, the stories about Passover started to fade. Silence fell. Everybody became engulfed by his own thoughts. I was thinking that we were all running away from the Russians, from our hometowns, perhaps from the past. But where were we running to? Talk about Palestine? What was to be expected from that country and how were we going to get there?

Then as suddenly as it had stopped, talk resumed. Now

everybody was telling the story of his/her survival. Every story was different, but the themes were similar. Miracles. . . and luck.

A man from Tarnopol who went under the name Gorski said that he had been hidden by a peasant who soon robbed him of all his money and threw him out. He next hid in the local forests where eventually he found a group of Jews living in a hole dug in the ground. Miraculously all survived. (Gorski and Sosnowski were two of the most favored assumed names because of their prevalence among real Poles.)

Another speaker told us that he was an Auschwitz survivor, and he showed us the stigmatic numbers tattooed on his arm. His story was about killings, killings, more killings, and torture. The new couple (husband and wife? brother and sister?) did not speak about themselves but were anxious to hear other people's stories. They did not give their names, say where they had come from or how they had survived. It puzzled me that they had come to the center in spite of the fact that they could have passed. Of all of us, they had the most "Aryan" appearance, being blond with blue eyes, treasured traits during the Nazi occupation, albeit not infallible. It was said that even Aryan-looking Jews gave themselves away "with that look" in their eyes.

The Nazis were no longer a threat but some Poles were, albeit the unruly ones. We all believed that a Pole could smell a Jew a mile away.

A different and interesting story came from the man with the gun. He told us that he had been a communist before the war and that at the outbreak of the war, he had escaped to Russia. He had joined the Soviet Army, had been a prisoner of war briefly but had managed to escape and had joined a group of partisans. He said that he had never disclosed his Jewish identity to the Russians because he was afraid for his life. From the way he handled his gun—he kept cleaning it—I gathered that he had used it.

He was now totally disenchanted with communism and his only desire was to go to Palestine even if he had to crawl all the way on his knees, he said. He came from Lodz, his name was Sosnowski, and he was on his way home to find his wife whom he had married just before the war. I was to meet him and the new couple again, later, in Katowice.

We went to sleep around midnight. Disregarding the bugs, this time I did lie down on one of the benches. The night felt warmer than the previous one, or perhaps we were more adjusted. Next morning we did get up at dawn, and I was covered with bites from the insects. Because the fellow with the bulbous nose had evidently succeeded in getting a lift on his own, we decided to try again, this time each man separately.

I went to the same corner at which we had been dismounted by the woman sentry. This time there was another woman on duty, a girl actually, young and pretty. Drawing on my previous experience, I decided to play my game differently. I went up to her, straightened myself in military fashion, saluted, and assuming the most stern expression that I could summon, declared that I was an officer in the Polish reserve on my way to join my outfit in Krakow. Would the sergeant be kind enough to secure passage for me? She looked me over, told me to stand aside, stopped the first truck that passed and ordered the driver to take me. Such an assertive approach had worked before and it worked again.

This is the way I described the experience in my earlier book *Zloczów Memoir* (I was running away from Zloczów and was afraid of the tentacles of the NKVD): I was at the railroad station in Lwów trying to get to Przemysl.

> *I walked to the railroad station. . . a long uphill walk. . . . The walk exhausted me. I was cold and hungry. The station was filled with soldiers, sentries of NKVD everywhere, . . . There were several military trains.. . . I spotted one with a few passenger cars. . . . The windows were covered, but I could see lights inside. I made up my mind to take a chance. . . . I opened the door to a car full of Russian officers. I was greeted with yells: "Shut the door," and expletives. . . . I pulled myself up and said loudly: "Comrades, my name is Stefan Bulski. I am a reserve officer in the Polish Army trying to join my unit. . . ." After a moment of silence, one of the officers got up and made room for me on the bench.*

Back to the present, this driver looked unhappy but I pacified him

by pushing a few rubles into his palm. He then smiled and offered me the seat beside him in the caboose. He too kept a gun "on the ready" beside him, however I did not spot any liquor bottles. The rest of the trip to Krakow was uneventful.

Looking about and seeing little destruction as we approached Krakow, I thought of the damage to Lwów, particularly to its beautiful railroad station. There were few signs of war on the roads or in the cities and towns we were passing. The graves that I had seen on the roadsides between Lwów and Przemysl were not replicated. We reached the outskirts of the city in the early afternoon, where I said good-bye to the driver, who kissed me on both cheeks. I wondered what I would see in Krakow.

I would know soon; I began to walk, looking for addresses of people who might help me, which had been given to me in Przemysl.

I had known Krakow well from before the war. It was the most beautiful of all Polish cities, the ancient capital, dethroned by the larger, more centrally located city of Warsaw. It was said that Poland had a heart, a head , and a soul. Krakow remained the heart of Poland whereas Warsaw was its head. The soul of this deeply religious country lodged in the monastery at Czestochowa, where the medieval painting of the Black Madonna is housed. It was said that Poland started to sink as a power after the capital was relocated.

During the Jagiellonian dynasty, that began when a Lithuanian prince married a Polish princess and united the two realms from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, Krakow was the capital of Poland, and Poland was a world power, its borders reaching from the Oder in the West to the Dnieper in the East, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and included Lithuania, Belorussia, and the Ukraine. During that period Poland inflicted many defeats on the emerging Russia, and most probably that was when the hatred between the Poles and the Russians was born. Poland reached its apogee as a world power when the Polish King Jan III Sobieski rescued Vienna from the onslaught of the barbarian Tartar hordes in 1683. Thereafter, the increasing unruliness of the *szlachta*, the Polish nobility, made the country ungovernable, and it was finally partitioned among Russia, Prussia, and Austria. There was a paradoxical saying: "*Nieżadem Polska stoi* [Poland survives on disorder]."

Before the war Krakow had been a sleepy city; after ten o'clock one could hardly spot a person on the streets.

Krakow had not suffered any major damage, I soon realized, another sign of the precipitousness of the German retreat. The streets teemed with traffic: military convoys, trucks, horse-drawn wagons loaded with provisions, people rushing in all directions. It was bedlam!

Unlike in Lwów and Przemysl there were few military uniforms visible in the streets; I saw no Russian soldiers and only a few Polish officers. Did this indicate that contrary to Major Galitzyn's opinion, the war was coming to an end? I wondered.

A pleasant surprise—trams were running, with people hanging from doors like bunches of bananas. The clanging of the trams added to the deafening cacophony of the traffic. Krakow was no longer the somnolent city I had once known.

I was exhausted from the Przemysl–Krakow journey and apprehensive that my duodenal ulcer might bleed again in reaction to the strains I had experienced. After three diagnosed bleedings (and perhaps others that might have escaped attention) my friend Dr. Solomon Jollek had said that I had to be careful.

I needed to find a place to sleep and so I went to one of the addresses that had been given to me. It was the home of a woman named Tusia Wagner, whom I remembered as a very pretty child winning prizes at children's charity balls that had been organized by Lina back in the old times in Zloczów. Now a mature woman, diminutive but still pretty, Tusia was married to Felix Asch, a survivor of Auschwitz. They welcomed me with utmost hospitality. Their apartment contained a luxurious bathroom, and I happily took advantage of a warm bath to wash off the grime and rid myself of the vermin.*

After an excellent meal (I found out later that Felix was one of the kingpins of the "free" market), we talked for hours exchanging information about people from Zloczów. Needless to say the news was overwhelmingly bad.

I went to sleep in their apartment and slept through the night and

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* We were to visit the Asches in Australia in 1970 on one of our travels around the world.

through half of the next day, awakening in the evening. There was more talk then and more sleep that night. On the following day I felt completely restored and went out to look for a place to live. While the Asches could not have been more friendly, I did not want to overstay my welcome. Also I felt that I wanted privacy. And I wanted to prepare for the arrival of Lina and the children, whom I hoped to have join me momentarily.

There were many signs of "Rooms to Rent" on the doors of buildings, including some in the best sections of town. I noticed a handsome, stately looking house at Chmielna Street and decided to inquire inside. I was received by a lady of undetermined age. She gave me a searching look through her old-fashioned, rimmed glasses, and I must have passed the examination, because she said she had two rooms to let, and she showed them to me. They were large and well—even sumptuously—furnished. She next asked how long I planned to stay.

I was sure that she had spotted my *Lwowski* accent, so I decided to stay as close as possible to the truth, which is to say not too close. I said I was from Zloczów. Otherwise my story was that I had been rescued from a German POW camp and that I planned to return to my hometown where I had left my wife and two daughters after being inducted into the army. Zloczów was now part of the Soviet Union, and the chance that the landlady would meet someone from there was slim.

I told her that before I started my search for my family I had to rest and restore my strength, which I figured would take a week or two. Mrs. Majewska was not too pleased at that because she was interested in acquiring a permanent boarder. She said however that she would let me have the room for a couple of weeks, but I would have to move at once should a permanent tenant come around. And I was to pay in advance. I gladly accepted the terms. Breakfast was included in the deal, and the rental that she charged me was modest. After retrieving my suitcase from the Asches, and a day's rest in my new surroundings, I went out to look around on the next day.

As in Przemysl, I went to places where I had had prewar acquaintances, primarily pharmacies.

I stopped at several that had been our prewar clients, but saw no familiar faces until my last stop, where a man who said he was Mr.

Janik recognized me. When I asked about the previous owner, Mr. Gruenhaut, the man told me that he had been inducted into the Polish Army and the last he had heard of him, he had surrendered to the Soviets in 1939. Nobody had heard from Mr. Gruenhaut since he must have perished (he used the Polish word *zginac*) in the Soviet Union. That was a kind of code, hinting that the pharmacist probably had been one of the victims of Katyn.*

After Mr. Janik assured his colleagues about me, others in the store joined in the conversation, and there was unanimous consent that the killings in Katyn had been perpetrated by the Russians. Whenever I met with Poles, Yalta and Katyn were at the center of discussions.

Mr. Janik accompanied me into the street. We stopped at a small coffeeshop, where he confided that Janik was a false name, that he was Jewish and living under the assumed name (something I had suspected even before his admission). Mr. Janik said that as far as he knew, there were no other Jewish pharmacists left in Krakow.

Janik planned to leave Poland as soon as the war ended and head for Palestine. We parted, and I never saw him again.

He was mostly right about the fate of former Jewish owners or Jewish employees of Krakow pharmacies. (The majority of the pharmacies had been Jewish owned.) I learned that a pharmacist from Drohobycz, Leonard Seif, whom I was to meet later in Munich, and a Mr. Krulik who together with a Mr. Celermaier had rented the Dobrzanski pharmacy in Lwów before the war, had both been in Krakow about the time of my meeting with Mr. Janik. Mr. Krulik later emigrated to Brazil. He had been one of the best bridge players in Lwów and I had played with him occasionally at the Cafe de la Paix in Lwów before the war.

I went next to the center of town, the Plac Marjacki, where, Mr. Asch had told me, all the *Akzions* had taken place. Plac Marjacki is one of the most beautiful plazas in Poland. In one corner stands the Market Hall and across from it the cathedral that houses the famous

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* In 1939, the Russians massacred thousands of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk. For many years, the Soviet government denied that this atrocity had taken place. Presently Russians admitted the crime.

altarpiece carved by Witold Stwosz. I had heard that that had been hidden away somewhere in Germany, Stwosz having been claimed by the Germans as one of their own, newly named Vic Stoss. The Poles have always had trouble with their most famous people. The astronomer Nicolas Copernicus—Mikolaj Kopernik who wrote in Latin—was also claimed by the Germans. The composer Szopen—Chopin who lived and died in France—was claimed by the French, as was the scientist and Nobel Laureate Marie Curie. Jozef Korzeniowski—Joseph Conrad—is considered an English writer.

The plaza was teeming with people engaged in all kinds of transactions, the black market you'd have to call it—except that there was no intervention from the police. On the contrary, Russians in uniform eagerly took part in the proceedings.

To my delight I spotted a familiar face, a man named Steinwurzel, a native of Stryj who before the war had worked for the bacon factory in Zloczów. During the German occupation he had been the deputy commander of the Jewish militia in Zloczów, an unenviable position. Although like many others in similar situations, he did his best to help and was not a collaborator, he was not viewed positively by the Jews in Zloczów. During that horrible time, while serving in the militia, Steinwurzel had often warned us about impending *Akzions.*

Steinwurzel told me that he survived the war by hiding in the company of a good friend of mine, the engineer Kudish, also from Stryj, who had owned a tannery in Zloczów. Both Steinwurzel and Kudish had been participants in the continuous card game, a time killer, a blessed escape during those tragic times, which went on in our apartment during both the Russian and German occupations. Steinwurzel said that he and Kudish had separated after liberation and that he believed that Kudish was somewhere in Katowice.

We went into a coffeehouse. His wife had been killed by a German bomb in Lwów a few days after liberation, Steinwurzel told me and added that he had remarried. He invited me to meet his new wife next day at dinner.

When we did meet, we labored at conversation but had little more to say to each other. The new wife, who appeared older than Steinwurzel, spoke little. Steinwurzel asked about Lina and our daughters,

whom he had been very fond of. Otherwise we avoided talking about the past. As to the future, he said that he contemplated emigrating to Austria. That was the last time I saw him, but I did hear years later from Kudish that he had indeed made that move.

I heard later that, walking down a street in Katowice, Kudish came face to face with his wife, Nusia, whom he believed dead. She had survived on "Aryan" papers in Warsaw, and thought him dead, too. A story went around that Kudish was about to marry another woman when he ran into Nusia, but that lady, a friend of ours whom I shall not name, hotly denied the story to Lina.

Kudish eventually emigrated to South America, where he built a successful tannery. Later he moved to Ottawa, Canada. We all met years later in Florida. When I was leaving Przemysl, Josko Tauber had asked me to deliver 12,000 zlotys to a friend of his, a Mr. Alter, who was in Krakow living under the name Sosnowski. As I have said before, Sosnowski and Gorski seemed to be favorite names assumed by Jews. Alter had been a dental technician in Zloczów highly regarded for his skill. I understood that he, Asch, and Steinwurzel were the "kingpins" of the "free market" of Krakow.

After I could not find Sosnowski, I learned that he was traveling and arranging deals. I had his money with me when a pickpocket stole it from me in a tram. History was repeating itself. My mother, trying to help our neighbors, the Zwerdlings, had ferried some of their jewelry for barter in Lwów when she was held up, beaten, and robbed of the friend's jewelry as well as her own. Our rabbi advised us that according to the Talmud, we were not responsible for restitution because mother had been performing a good deed, but we repaid the Zwerdling family in full for the loss. This time too, having fortunately a few days later completed a deal myself, I was able to repay Sosnowski as well.

I believe that I am (mostly) not superstitious. However, the one superstition that I do believe is that good and bad events have a tendency to repeat. If you meet one chimney sweep, you will meet another. . . .

The fact of the trams running made life easier for me, as I had not yet regained my strength and could not walk as energetically as in the past. The one trip I described had ended in disaster, but on another I

had an exciting surprise. One day I noticed a man in the uniform of a Polish captain. It was a familiar face in an unfamiliar dress, but I knew the man at once. I pushed through the crowd and asked him whether he knew me. He looked and looked, and finally his face broke out in a broad smile. "Mr. Tennenbaum, of course. Am I glad to see you alive!" He was obviously too wary to ask about my wife and daughters. I at once assured him that they too were alive and well. I owed him a great debt, I said, and I thanked him for having sheltered the children during an *Akzion.* I hinted that if he now needed help, I would stand by him.

On a day in 1942 when Steinwurzel had warned us that an *Akzion* was imminent, I had despaired about the children. I had met the man now in front of me in a German government office where he worked as a Volksdeutsch. He was always decent; he seemed sympathetic so I told him about the imminent tragedy and my helpless predicament. He said, "Bring the children to my house."

We took both of our daughters to the villa that he and his wife occupied on Sokola Street, a few doors from our house.

The wife of the "Volksdeutsch" welcomed the children with open arms, and assured Lina and me that they would be kept out of danger. However, Edith, our older daughter, sabotaged the plan. She managed to slip away and return to the shelter where Lina and my mother-in-law, Bessie, were hidden. It was a "miracle," one of many that happened to our family, that the Nazi and Ukrainian search parties had missed the shelter in the first place, and did not follow Edith in the second.

The Polish officer laughed at my offer of help. "Mr. Tennenbaum, didn't you guess? Didn't you know that I was in the same position as you were? I only had more chutzpah." He, who had paraded in the arrogant high boots of the Nazis and had had an important sounding hyphenated Polish name, was a Jew in hiding!

The tram was very crowded, and it was difficult to talk or even to hear each other. The officer gave me his name, which I believe was Kora-Padlewski. He suggested I look him up at the military headquarters. I asked him to convey my thanks to his wife whom I remembered as an attractive, dark-haired woman who wore a conspicuous large crucifix on her chest. We shook hands as he left the tram at the next stop.

When I tried to look him up a few days later, I was told he had been transferred; the soldier at the desk refused to tell me any more. To my regret, I never saw Kora-Padlewski again.

There were several Polish newspapers in Krakow at that time. The war news was mostly a reprint of the official Moscow communiqués, but there was some cautious commentary about the situation on the Western and southern fronts. We discerned that the western powers were making more progress than the Russian communiqués allowed. Some people had access to clandestine radios and were listening to the BBC and its assessments of the war situation. According to these commentaries, the war was going to end within days.

As we gathered around the breakfast table in Mrs. Majewska's house, her Polish tenants still hoped for America to rescue them from the Russians, but the hope faded day by day.

I felt lost and lonely among these people. I lived with them, yet I had to conceal my identity from them. I too would have welcomed an American rescue, but otherwise their conversations pained and offended me. I was exposed to the continuous discussions among my fellow tenants, some about the war that was coming to an end, but there were two subjects which seemed to enflame them more: Russians and Jews. The two were linked together and were blamed for all the present and future ills that they expected would confront the new Poland. Hitler had killed *all* the Jews, said the tenants, but here they were occupying high positions in the new government. Just listen: Berman, Oczar, Minc, Staszewski, Werfel, Osubka-Morawski, Bierut, and so on. That some of these people weren't Jewish did not matter in the rhetoric. Jews or not Jews, these were all stooges of the Russians. They, the *moskals*, were the real government. The most prominent Russian to command the new Polish army was Marshal Rokossovski ,who suddenly had discovered his Polish birth. It was all said with bitterness mixed with grief, and "*Galgenhumor* [gallows humor]." The Russians were in Poland to stay, despaired the Poles.

I had to listen to all this talk, and I was occasionally called upon to comment on the Russians because they assumed that coming from the eastern part of Poland, I knew more than people from Krakow and vicinity. I told them what they wanted to hear, a habit that I had

developed during our days in hiding, when I had to placate our hosts. I said that the Russians were barbarians, and I predicted that they would find Poland unpleasant and would eventually leave. I did not believe this, and they too were skeptical. Again the words that I had heard before were spoken, [Nothing has changed] "*Zamienil stryjek na siekierke kijek.*"

It was late March, and contrary to the opinions of the Russian officers expressed only weeks earlier, it was obvious that the war *was* coming to an end. Practically all Poland was liberated, and the Soviet Army had made deep inroads into Germany. France was liberated; the Western Allies were also moving deeper into German territory.

Although the war news was good, I was depressed and longed for my family. I felt as if I were in a foreign country, the only difference being that I understood and spoke the language. It was time to bring my family from Przemysl. I did not feel strong enough to go to fetch them myself, so I went everyday to the place from where the trucks departed to find someone whom I could send to Przemysl to get word to my wife and family to join me. But it seemed that all the traffic was going the other way—west. I decided I had best go myself. I advised my landlady that I had received news from my wife, and was setting off to find my family. I paid her for two more weeks in advance. Mrs. Majewska was very friendly and wished me luck. I believe that at this point she started to suspect that the story that I had told her when I had rented the apartment, had not been totally kosher.

Although I was wary of my health and concerned about a relapse, the trip was uneventful. All went well. I was pleased that I had gone. Lina and I had a happy reunion, as if we had not seen each other in ages. The children too were glad to see me again.

We decided that the family should leave as soon as the weather warmed. The children by now were quite happy in Przemysl and were sorry to leave school again. But that could not affect our decision.

After the reunion with my family I was reluctant to return to Krakow by myself; however, after weighing the pros and cons for several days, we decided that I should return immediately to locate some source of income. Lina and the children were to pack and follow me shortly. There would be little to pack, our clothing was mini-

mal, and there was no way to bring along our furniture, whatever there was of it.

Henis decided that he would travel with Lina, but Grzesio and Misia decided to remain in Przemysl. There were several reasons that made them reluctant to move. Grzesio, a Ukrainian, although converted to Roman Catholicism, was not sure of his status as a Pole; at that time they were even thinking of returning to Zloczów. They were not sophisticated politically, and Misia, who had many contacts within the Polish community, might have been influenced by the talk going around among Poles, that Stalin would be forced by Roosevelt and Churchill to return Lwów and the rest of the Ukraine that the Soviets had absorbed, back to Poland. Many Poles harbored that hope, but I did not share their illusions.

My return trip to Krakow was uneventful. The Russian truck went straight through, there were few sentries, and none stopped us.

Back in Krakow, I went to look for Major Galitzyn, my most promising business contact. To my disappointment, I was told at Russian headquarters that he had been transferred to Katowice.

I decided that rather than await my family, I would not delay following Galitzyn to Katowice. With events moving so swiftly, I might miss him again. On the very next day I set off for Katowice; before I left, I again paid my landlady for two more weeks in advance in order to keep the apartment.

The trip that before the war had taken only a couple of hours or less by express, dragged on for a day and into the night. It was a nightmare that I will never forget. The car was crowded, and the corridor was filled with people standing, pressed together like sardines. I was fortunate; I had been early and had secured a seat into which I had practically collapsed. I told the woman who was in the seat next to me that I was returning from a Russian POW camp and that I was wounded. She shared this information with other fellow passengers, and I was warmly treated by them and offered bread, cheese, and vodka. The peasants in my compartment seemed to be amply provided with provisions.

The train made many stops to allow military trains to pass. By now the compartment had several more people standing in it, the overflow from the corridor. Everybody was smoking. I was offered a

cigarette, which I refused explaining that because of my wounds I could not smoke. The air was foul; the smell of human sweat, and of sausage, bacon, sauerkraut combined with the heavy smoke from pipes and cigarettes made with machorka* made me sick. I leaned on the arm of my neighbor and dozed off.

I was awakened by loud talk. A heavyset peasant was holding sway. Like in Mrs. Majewska's parlor the tenor of his peroration concentrated on Jews and *Moskals*, the derogatory term for Russians. Others talked but his voice boomed; he seemed to be known and respected. Pan Maciej, as they called him, was saying, "*Te parchy wylazły z kanalow i razem z moskalami chcą nas do kolchozow wsadzic*," defiantly. "*Ale z pomoca Matki Boskiej sie nie damy*" [These kikes crawled out from the sewers and together with the moskals would like to put us into kolchoses, but with the help of God's Mother we will not let this happen]." All murmured consent.

I was frightened but pretended to be asleep. No one bothered me. Finally the peasants too got tired, and there was universal snoring. When the trip came to an end, my neighbor woke me. I thanked her, told her that I felt much better. I left the compartment last.

It was close to midnight when we arrived in Katowice. The town was blacked out, and so together with many of the weary passengers, I lay on the floor of the station to try to sleep. Surprisingly the station was quite clean. Volksdeutsch with armbands, brooms, and buckets of water kept it so under supervision of Polish militia men armed with rifles and wearing Russian uniforms with the Polish eagle on the visors of their caps.

In the morning I went to look for lodging. Before the war on my visits to Katowice, I had stayed at the Hotel Metropol, so I went there to find a room. I did not have much hope but again I was pleasantly surprised and given a room at a very low price. Again, another surprise, the room was immaculately clean, and there was even a piece of soap in the washpan. I stripped, washed off the grime, and went to sleep. When I awoke it was bright daylight. I dressed and went downstairs, where I was told by a clerk that I had slept for twenty-four hours. I went to look at the town. Unlike Krakow, the streets

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* Substitute tobacco made from wet leaves, dried in the sun.

I found a restaurant where I had a decent breakfast, even eggs, for a very reasonable price, another difference between Krakow and Katowitce. After I got tired, I returned to the hotel and went to sleep again.

I was tortured by nightmares. In one, we had placed the children somewhere and could not find them. Our old cook, "blind" Hanka, appeared and disappeared. Mother was there, and so was father, but lifeless, as if surrounded by a gauzy veil. I'd wake up in a cold sweat. I had had these and other bad dreams before but the memory of that one dream in a lonely room in a hotel in Katowice was to pursue me for days. One symptom: before going out, I would check my arm to see whether the armband was there.

It took me a couple of days to regain my strength and equilibrium.



Samuel L. Tennenbaum
Krakow



Lina Tennenbaum
Krakow

Chapter Three
Katowice

Finally I was rested enough and went out to look around.

There were posted requirements for people to register for work. It seems that the regime in Katowice was sterner than in Krakow. The free-wheeling atmosphere prevailing there was not to be found here. Militia men were everywhere. Russian soldiers in armored cars and full battle dress cruised the streets. On some corners there were tanks.

I decided to register. However, there was a question in my mind: should I register under my real name or under the assumed name of Bulski, which I was using since my departure from Przemysl? Reason suggested the latter, but I kept in my mind that Lina loathed the name Bulski. Therefore I chose two places that were open for registration and registered in both, in one nearer to my hotel in my real name and in the other as Magister Stefan Bulski. In addition to the problem with the two names, one Jewish, the other Aryan, I also had to consider the importance in Poland of a university title.

Lina's dislike of the name Bulski had to be disregarded for various reasons. First, the experience in Przemysl, the discussions at Mrs. Majewska's and the shock and fear that I had experienced during my railroad trip from Krakow to Katowice, made it obvious that to live under the disguise was a distinct advantage. In my discussions in Krakow as with the pharmacist and others, I noticed that few if any had dropped their assumed names. Second, both Jews and Poles alike held a strong belief that the long arm of the Russian Secret Police, the NKVD, extended into Poland, and frankly I wasn't sure that I had been beyond their reach. Third, there was some talk that we who left the eastern part of Poland, now part of the 'independent' Ukrainian Republic would be reimbursed for the properties left behind. Four, I had to consider the importance of the professional degree and the prestige it carried in Poland, and therefore, although I registered under the assumed name, I retained the "Magister" in registration. When I registered under the name of Tennenbaum, I

entered my profession as a printer. (Way back before the war in Poland, even though the plant was owned by my father, I was a member of *Ognisko*, the printers' union.) Finally I was sure that sooner or later I would leave Poland and therefore, perhaps subconsciously, I hoped to be able to use my real name. This problem of a dual name was to pursue me for the rest of my stay in Poland.

I went to look for my friend, Major Galitzyn. In fact he was my only means of support. I was stopped at the gate by a sentry who requested my documents. I showed him my evacuation paper, and he went to look for Galitzyn. It took quite a while, over an hour, and I grew uneasy. What if my experience in Przemysl was to repeat itself, and I was to be seized and inducted into the Soviet Army? I was ready to leave, when Galitzyn himself appeared and led me into his office. He greeted me like a long lost buddy with a warm smile and embrace. The office was lavishly appointed with a magnificent large desk, carpets on the floor, and the inevitable large picture of Stalin behind the desk. There were smaller pictures of Molotov and Kaganovich. Also several photographs, including one of my host with Marshal Konev. He was attached to the marshal's staff.

Galitzyn called for refreshments and to my surprise, Halinka did not bring them. Reading the expression on my face, he explained somewhat lamely, that Halinka went to visit her family somewhere. After a few drinks however, he admitted that Halinka just disappeared, probably blending into the Polish surroundings. He asserted that he understood her action and did not intend to try to find her. But he also added, he had found a splendid German cook who satisfied all his needs. I asked no questions.

I arrived as it turned out, at the most opportune moment, fortunately not too late. He was to move forward again. He was ordered to close the operation in Katowice and to move to Germany. He was very excited about the idea of seeing that country, for which, as I had noticed before, he shared a mixture of hatred, fear, and admiration. But right now he had on his hand a large consignment of paper, which he wanted to dispose of on the "free" market and for which he needed my help. He repeated over and over again that he trusted me. To prove his confidence, he showed me orders of the day issued by Stalin and Zhukov. These were strictly secret.

Stalin said, "The German people are to be destroyed, all German properties and factories are to be laid waste."

Zhukov's order of the day read, "We will take cruel revenge on Hitler's cannibals. This time we will destroy the German breed once and for all." He added that the great leader Stalin's will would be carried out mercilessly. Stalin was again the great leader—what a difference with the talk during our first meeting in Przemysl.

Galitzyn swore me to secrecy. But the words got out, and I heard the same version later from Polish friends. On this issue they were in full agreement with the Russians. Within days, the "secret" orders became common knowledge. Perhaps it was intended that the secret be leaked.

His statement of confidence in me had initially surprised me, until after a while he conceded that he had been cheated a couple of times by other people with whom he was trying to do business. Since I had had the same experience in some transactions in Krakow, when I was cheated out of my share in the enterprise, even by good friends, I was not really surprised. But it did astonish me that these operators tried tricks with a Soviet officer. There was no trust to be found. We were swimming in waters that were infested with sharks. The war brought out the worst in humans—you could not trust anyone.

Galitzyn had to complete his sale within the next few days. I had no money, and I asked him for a few days of grace. He replied that he had to be prepared at a moments notice to move and advised me to hurry. Good advice, but what to do? I saw only the possibility of returning to Krakow and engaging the help of the few big operators on the "free" market there. Of course I realized, in that case, I would be left with crumbs. I had been in Katowice only two days and I did not know anybody, nor did my acquaintances in Krakow refer me to their friends here, if they had any.

I returned to my hotel room, wondering what to do. I was seated on the bed when there was a knock on the door. I got scared. The first thing that came to mind was that it was the long arm of the NKVD coming after me. I regretted that I had been foolish enough to register in my own name. Slowly, after a repeated knock, I opened the door.

There stood a man whom I had never seen before. Medium height, well dressed. He asked politely in Polish, "May I come in?" I nodded and offered him the only chair in the room. He took off his

hat, sat down, and looked me over carefully. "First," he said, "let me assure you that I am not Bezpieka." (Bezpieka, short for Urzad Bezpieczenstwa, was the equivalent of the Russian NKVD—the newly formed Polish secret police which in its short existence had already achieved an unsavory reputation.)

I did not reply.

After a pause he continued, "Do you mind if I ask you a few personal questions?" Again I remained silent. "Are you Magister Lipa Tennenbaum, the son of the owner of a paper box factory in Zloczów?"

I nodded confirmation; to my great relief, he obviously knew of me. He advised me that he had found my name and occupation listed at the registration office.

In the next few minutes a strange conversation took place. With a mischievous smile, he continued, "My name is Jozef Serog, the owner of RORI, and you, my dear fellow, were the son of gun"— (he actually used the Polish expression *skurczybyk*), "my fiercest competitor." Now it dawned on me! RORI was the largest factory in Poland producing cardboard boxes and our competitor for the pharmaceutical packaging business. My father's business was second in size in Poland in that kind of business.

Not waiting for my comments, he continued, "I know that your father's factory was confiscated by the Russians. Is your father alive? I never met him." Now I spoke my first words, "No, my father is dead." He said he was sorry to hear that.

He continued: Cieszyn, the town where his factory was located, was still in German hands, but it would be liberated within days. In anticipation of the event, he had traveled to Warsaw and made inquiries. He was assured by the present Warsaw government that his factory would be restored to him. Then he made the strangest proposition. He offered me a partnership in RORI. I was to manage the factory, and he would be free to travel around the country soliciting business. The unusual—incredible may be the better word, to say the least—proposition stunned me. Finally I stammered, "What makes you sure that the factory will be restored to you? And why me?" A long conversation followed.

As to the first, he was assured also by the authorities in Katowice,

within which the district Cieszyn rested, that the factory is and will be his. As to the second question, he heard about my father and me from several mutual customers. Only, he had expected me to be older. He then switched to his experiences during the war. He had been able to disappear among Polish friends and even travel to Belgium, the birthplace of his wife. He did not look like a man who had suffered hardships.

The Serog family was well known in Poland. There were three brothers; one of them owned RORI, another owned the largest of the family businesses located in Bielsko, making tobacco wrapping paper and tubes of the well-known brand "Solali," the third brother was our competitor in a way, producing metal boxes, but on a much larger scale and with a wider variety. The family, to the best of my knowledge, did not participate in Jewish activities, and I was unaware of their contributions to Jewish charities.

Our conversation covered many aspects. Both of our companies were purchasing paper for our products from the same sources. His knowledge of my father and myself was derived from conversations with the owners of the two large paper wholesalers in Poland, Alexandrowicz and Fleischer. I told him of my problem with dual names. He approved my decision that, if I should accept his proposition, I would go under the name Stefan Bulski, although he was personally convinced that anti-Semitism would eventually fade in Poland because there would be few Jews left, and also because there would be a wave of sympathy toward those who survived the slaughter. I did not share his optimism, but our disagreement did not spoil the developing friendship.

By then, I got over my shock at the proposition, and I said to myself, "Why not?" By that time I realized that I was not cut out for the free market operations. I am not claiming special moral inhibitions, none who survived this war could afford to be unduly moral, I just did not possess the necessary killer instinct to be successful at this time and under these circumstances. Since I was eighteen, I loved working in a factory and managing people. I was familiar with his business, and last but not least, Serog made an excellent impression on me. Aside from his impeccable attire, unusual after the war, it was his behavior. I told him that I had to notify my wife and that I had to

make an urgent business trip to Krakow. As he gained my confidence, I told him about the pending deal with the Soviet officer, and he offered his services. There was no need for me to go to Krakow. He assured me that he had good connections in the paper trade and that he could unload the merchandise right here in Katowice. He was elated that I had a family, and we talked until after midnight. He had a pass permitting him to be in the street after curfew. He promised to secure a pass for me.

This was the strange beginning of a business relationship and genuine friendship which lasted until I left Poland.

We agreed to meet next day. I was to complete the arrangements with Galitzyn. With all the confidence that I had in Mr. Serog, I still did not divulge the name of my contact to him. I also had to protect Galitzyn. Serog was to make all the other arrangements. It went without a hitch. That was my last deal with Galitzyn, but I earned enough money to keep me going for a while. Serog left the next day for Bielsko to be nearer Cieszyn when the town should be finally liberated. The excitement and the tension of the last few days had sapped my strength and even though I was anxious to see my family and inform Lina of my decision, I decided to rest in Katowice for a few days before returning to Krakow. It was mid April but still quite cold. Perhaps because I felt so weak, the cold weather affected me more than usual. Also I felt feverish, went to an open pharmacy and asked to buy a thermometer. They did not have any for sale, but they took my temperature. It was 38°C.

We started to talk, and I told the manager who I was, giving my real name. After the experience with Serog, I felt less constricted to divulge it. He was of course surprised, but was familiar with my father's business.

He took out a few boxes made by our factory in Zloczów and showed them to me. I asked him whether I could keep one as a souvenir, and he gave it to me. Unfortunately, I lost the box in my future wanderings. He also gave me two capsules from his private stock, Kogucik, a popular medication for headaches and colds in prewar Poland. A treasure nowadays.

I returned to the hotel and went to bed after taking one capsule. I slept soundly and felt much better the next day, so I went for a walk. I

went to look for Galitzyn but he and his outfit were gone. I never saw him again. Neither did I meet his girlfriend, Halinka, who had obviously decided to resume being Polish. While talking to the sentry, I noticed a familiar face. It was my old friend from Zloczów, Captain Goldberg.

Goldberg was the only Jewish Soviet officer who came to the holiday services in September 1944 after liberation. He professed the intention to emigrate one day and enter Palestine. He believed that one day Stalin would conquer all of Europe. I remember his dictum: "Where the Russian Army sets its boots, it will never get out again."

I shouted out, and he turned around. He saw me and came toward me with open arms. He invited me into his quarters. He too was promoted to major. He proudly showed off his bemedaled chest. I noticed the Chmielnicki medal, a fairly high decoration in the Soviet Army. I asked Goldberg if he knew who Bogdan Chmielnicki was, and he replied naturally, "A famous Russian revolutionary who fought the czar to free the slaves."

He was quite surprised when I told him that Chmielnicki never fought the czar because at that time the Ukraine was part of Poland, that he and his bands perpetrated the most appalling pogroms, and that a sea of Jewish blood was on his hands. I deflated his image of this hero as it had been presented to him by his Soviet mentors.

When I asked him whether he still dreamed of going to Palestine, he hushed me and warned me never to mention this matter again. He was a proud Soviet citizen. From his office he took me to his present house, both lavishly furnished. He was greeted at the door by a tall, blond woman who seemed to be in her late twenties, plainly but attractively dressed. Her greeting to Goldberg had a feel of familiarity. He greeted her with the German words, "*Guten Tag.*" She answered with the same words and looked at me askance.

He introduced me with a single word, "*ein Freund,*" "friend." Turning to me he said in Russian that she was his housekeeper and a wonderful cook. Her name was Olga. He took me into the dining room, and soon she appeared with a plate of sausage and two bottles, one with vodka and the other with a fine French cognac. All Russian officers seemed to be infatuated with cognac. She made a motion as if

to sit with us at the table, but refrained. Goldberg did not seem to be embarrassed at all. He asked her to join us at the table.

We ate and talked, Goldberg asking questions about people he met in Zloczów. I asked him what his plans, or rather orders, were and he said, just as Galitzyn had said the other day, that he was awaiting orders to move into Germany any day now. He confided in me that he would like to take his housekeeper but the army strictly forbade fraternization. However from what I had seen, these orders were not taken too seriously. It seemed that every Russian officer had local girlfriends, just as the Germans had during their occupation.

While talking, I remembered pictures of his wife and three children that he had shown to me back in Zloczów. I asked about them. He said that he had had no information about his family for over three years, and had no idea where they were, or if they were alive. They had escaped from the Ukraine, but that was all that he knew. Well, he had his German woman now. War is war.

I was reminded of the women, the marketants, as they were called, who used to follow the armies, serving as laundresses and prostitutes.

He hoped that he would be able to retain his desk job, he would hate to have to go to the front lines and face Germans again. Of all the Russians that I met, he had the healthiest respect for the Germans, as did Galitzyn to a lesser extent. In fact all the Russians that I knew did, but none as strongly as Goldberg. Obviously he knew that, as a Jew, his chances of surviving if captured were nil. When we parted, I jokingly remarked that he should enlist Olga, his "housekeeper," into the Soviet Army. He clapped his hands and said that this was a wonderful idea. Obviously he took my joke seriously.

We parted, he kissing me on both cheeks. He then whispered in my ear, "Are you really going to Palestine?" I never saw him again. I often wondered what had happened to him, and whether he became a refusenik. However I was to meet Olga again, but of that later.

I felt much better, but decided to stay another day in Katowice. It was late in the evening, April 12, 1945, when I returned to the hotel. The Russian radio was blaring news, and I heard the name "Roosevelt" mentioned. I paid no attention to the broadcast and went to sleep.

Next morning I paid my bill at the hotel and went to seek some means of communication with Krakow. I hoped that by that time my family was on their way to meet me there.

While walking I noticed that the flags on the public buildings were at half-mast. At a newsstand I saw the newspapers, black-framed headlines in boldest possible print, "Roosevelt dead. Harry S. Truman, President of America." I felt as if hit by a bolt of lightning. The first thought that came to mind was, "Assassinated!" And then, "By whom?"

At that time there were still three parties in Poland, the Workers (Communist) Party, the Socialist Party, and the Christian-Democratic Party. All three parties had their own organs. I bought all three papers. The papers were of small format, four pages, but small as they were, they carried more information than one was accustomed to find in *Pravda* or *Isvestia.* The stories did not vary greatly from one paper to another. Roosevelt died a natural death, and the successor was his vice-president, Harry S. Truman. I did not recall ever hearing that name before. All we knew about the election of 1944 was that Roosevelt had won a fourth term. As a matter of fact, I believed that the vice-president's name was Henry Wallace, a man always highly praised in the Soviet papers. Other American civilian names familiar to me from the Russian press were Harry Hopkins and Averell Harriman. But Truman? Perhaps his name had been mentioned, but I did not notice it, and I doubt whether others in Poland did.

Little was said about Truman in the papers this first day, except that he was a former senator from Missouri and that he had replaced Wallace as vice-president after the last election. Missouri—well, that was the country of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, where Mark Twain's stories took place and the mighty Mississippi River ran past. Was it still Indian territory?

With Galitzyn and Goldberg gone, I had no connection with any Russians anymore, and so I went to the pharmacy just to find someone to talk to. The pharmacist, who gave his name as Galicki, a common name, shook his head sadly when he saw me and whispered, "What is going to happen to us?" There were two women in the back-room, both crying. We all four sat together talking, wondering. A customer came in, and the proprietor went out to serve him. One of

the women, a heavy brunette, young but homely, suddenly turned to me, pulled up her sleeve and showed me a tattoo on her arm. She was from Krakow, was given shelter by a Polish family but was caught in a roundup in the street. A Polish woman denounced her as a *Zydowka*, and in spite of her denials and her *Ausweis* (credentials), she was sent to Auschwitz, where she was lucky. She was sent to the camp infirmary as a pharmacist.

I was in a hurry to get back to Krakow and said good-bye to my new friends, promising to see them again on my next visit to Katowice. It was agreed with Serog that I would wait for him in Katowice after Cieszyn was liberated.

On the way to the bus station where I hoped to find a truck to take me to Krakow, I had a strange encounter. I noticed the couple that came in late at the Jewish Center in Tarnów. They too seemed to be waiting for some traveling connection. I walked over to say hello. They both looked embarrassed, and the man said, "Who are you? We don't know you." I mentioned the meeting place and time in Tarnów, but he brushed me aside with the words, "I don't know what you are talking about. You must be mistaken. Leave us alone." They both turned around and left the waiting spot where I was standing.

In Tarnów, I now remembered, neither he nor the woman ever said a word. Rather strange because all the others talked. I noticed that he spoke with a pronounced German accent. Both blond. I thought, "Volksdeutsch? Why did they mingle with Jews? Should I call the police? To hell with them." I did nothing. Even today, years after this strange episode, I still wonder. Meantime trucks arrived.

I caught a Russian military truck and without any trouble was the same night back in Krakow in my rented apartment.

The Krakow papers did not add to my knowledge of the new American president, but they were full of stories about the late president, his life and his friendship with Stalin, and the high regard he held for the Soviet and Polish peoples. The Polish communist paper quoted intensively from *Pravda* and *Isvestia*, and also from American papers, the *Daily Worker*, *P.M.*, the *New York Times*, and a journalist named Walter Winchell. There was no question in my mind that the Russians genuinely mourned the death of Roosevelt.

At breakfast, there were two women present who had returned

from deportation in Russia. We talked, and the subject was the death of Roosevelt. All were in agreement that the event boded no good for Poland, even though one of the younger women who had returned from Russia remarked that Roosevelt was no great friend of Poland as judged by the Yalta agreement. All their hopes for an independent Poland were centered now on Churchill.

There was much less talk about Jews. I suspected, but had no proof, that some of the newcomers were Jews themselves. After we moved out I never saw any of them again. I often wonder what happened to all those people who were going in and out of my life like flicks in an old movie.

While waiting for Lina and the children, I went to look for my previous boss, Dr. Mittleman, the attorney with whom I had served for five years of my apprenticeship. I visited him on my last prewar trip to Krakow where he had lived since his wife died and had retired from practice. His daughter was married to a judge named Stern, and I suspected that they had converted, so perhaps they survived. However the present occupants of the apartment insisted they never heard of them. I did not believe them and I left.

A few days later Lina, the children, and Henis arrived from Przemysl. I went to the bus station every day or rather to the former bus station, now the place where the Russian trucks stopped. I met them and we took a tram to my apartment. I told Lina about my strange meeting with Serog. She was surprised but happy that we might again have some permanent abode. Mrs. Majewska greeted us very warmly. She hugged and kissed the children; she had tears in her eyes. After a few hours, we settled down, and she was able to set aside a couch for Henis. He only stayed one day and then left to stay with a family from his home town, Sassów, whom he found by himself. They lived on Starowislna 28 under the assumed name Gromadzki.

Next day as we went to breakfast, my mother-in-law was already up, engaged in the kitchen in a lively and friendly chat with the landlady. We did not stay long with Mrs. Majewska.

After a few days, Lina found out that a cousin of hers, Edmund Horowitz, now Horski, occupied a high position with the government. We went to see him. He was delighted to see Lina and promised to find us another apartment.

Sure enough, a few days later, we were assigned a furnished one room apartment at 9 Basztowa Street in the center of town. We moved out of the room rented from Pani Majeswka. When we said good-bye to her, she said that she was sorry to lose such pleasant tenants. Taking me aside she said, "You know, the other day I offered Basia [my mother-in-law] some bacon. She declined claiming that bacon was too fatty and did not agree with her." Then she said, "I started to add one thing to another and I believe now that you are Jewish. But," she added, "you are a fine family and I did not mention it to the other tenants." I admitted being Jewish and she kissed all of us good-bye, wishing us good luck. Her parting words were, "Life is not going to be easy for your people in Poland now." How prophetic she was.

A couple of days later, we were invited to the Horskis. We met Edmund's charming wife, Mary (Marysia) and their two young sons. They told us that they survived on "Aryan" papers in Warsaw and went through the Polish uprising hidden in a cellar where her younger son was born. Mr. Horski later lived in the United States under the name Edmund Hall, and has described his survival in a book published under the title, *Was I a Spy*? a very interesting story indeed. Edmund passed away a few years ago.

Edmund Horski was one of the many Jews occupying high positions in government agencies. Krakow, contrary to Przemysl, had already developed a substantial bureaucracy. First and foremost there was the secret police, Bezpieka, as they were called. The top man, so we were told, was a Russian NKVD officer with a Polish-sounding name. His deputy was a Jew whose name I forget, a lawyer, a prewar communist. There were other Jews in lower positions. Whether by design or accident, the Russians had given a lot of positions to the Jews. I myself believed that it was by design, in order to increase the already deep distrust of the native Poles for the remaining Jews. Anti-Semitism was rampant.

Among the few Jewish people whom I knew during this time, all mourned Roosevelt, but the conversations were about equally divided between discussions on the fate of Palestine and the transactions on the free market. It may be surprising to the readers of these lines that our interest in the progress of the war had waned. How contrary to

the times when we were under Russian and German occupation and the days that we were in hiding. Then we followed the progress of the armies on the battlefields, inch by inch, on our treasured maps.

That was the reason perhaps that the fall of Vienna one day after Roosevelt's death, created only cursory attention.

When we did talk about the war, we spoke about the ways we had survived and the future. Everybody had a story to tell, each story different, and everybody was convinced that he or she had experienced the worst. One thing we all had in common—we survived. I believe that at that time we still were unable to fathom the horrible dimension of the catastrophe that had hit the Jewish people. Nobody gave up hope entirely that somehow his father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter had survived and would come back. Alas, very few miracles happened. Occasionally some couples divided for years found themselves again. Some had already found other partners, and a decision had to be made whether to give up the present husband or wife or return to the former spouse. In our small circle of survivors, we know of at least two couples who had to make that choice. One stayed with the new woman, the other returned to the old. Some who remarried had a most difficult choice. Technically they had committed bigamy, but morally who could judge them? Nobody, but nobody who did not live in those times can judge or even understand the choices that people had to make.

I mentioned the Kudish family before. I use the name reluctantly because the other woman, left stranded, denied the story. As for the other couple, both physicians (the husband died a few years ago), there were nuptials. I was advised of the story by a third party who knew them well. I try never to report events unless I witness them. For that reason some names will remain anonymous. However during my stay in Munich and service with HIAS, as I have said before, similar stories came to light from time to time.

Somebody in the United States, a native American, once asked a question why we, the survivors, are so clannish. Are we? I don't know. But if we are, there are reasons that bind us, which with our best efforts we are unable to share with strangers. Sometimes when I am invited to speak to a group of Americans, I have the impression that they are willing to understand but that our experience is

beyond their comprehension. And you cannot blame them.

After a few days in the new apartment, the family settled. I returned to Katowice to await Mr. Serog's return from Bielsko. Before I went, we did some very necessary clothes shopping on the free market with the money earned in Katowice. We bought dresses for Lina, my mother-in-law, and the children, as well as shoes for all of us. I bought myself a decent looking navy blue suit of German origin. Alas, this latter acquisition proved to be a disaster. After I was caught in a downpour, the suit virtually disintegrated. It was *Kriegersatz*, paper fiber. Anyway I had to wear my prewar jacket, because the purchases almost exhausted our resources. This too precipitated our decision, and a few days later I took a train for Katowice. The trains were running although extremely crowded, but it was still better than the Soviet army trucks. The wagons were full.

The trip was déjà vu. The experience of a couple of weeks ago prepared me. Again, practically all the passengers were peasants carrying provisions. If anything, the compartments and corridor were even more crowded than on the previous trip. Fortunately in spite of the chilly weather, the windows were open, war restrictions having been lifted. I wedged myself into a seat between two corpulent women and immediately told them of my being a POW. I changed the story only slightly—this time returning from Germany and being emaciated from four years in captivity. I found that these stories were never questioned. Again I was treated kindly and offered food and cigarettes, which I accepted, but holding the cigarettes, as I told them, for later.

There was the same talk about Jews and Russians, but I noticed a little more care in the complaints. Whoever spoke turned around to look over the audience. If the Bezpieka was not present, its impact was felt. The train stopped less frequently and the trip lasted only half a day. It was a blessing to get out.

In Katowice, after a handsome tip to the manager, I settled back in the same hotel. However, here curfew was still enforced, probably because of the presence of many Volksdeutsch.

One day while walking in the street, I heard a tremendous roar, bullets ricocheted from the roofs of the building. It was obviously a German plane flying over the town. The roar disappeared in a matter

of seconds. I never saw the plane, and I had never before heard or seen a plane with such speed. Years later in the States, after I saw my first jet flash by, I realized that the plane must have been a jet.

(That was in Philadelphia where we were visiting our good friend, Sig Schotz. Sig explained to me that the roar we heard was from a jet. Later it was confirmed that Germany had indeed had jets by the end of the war, but it was too late, and the fact did not affect the outcome of the war.)

I needed to talk to people so I went to the pharmacy where I got my Koguciks. I was greeted cordially by the owner, who was playing cards with two friends in the back room. They were introduced to me as a Mr. Miller and a Mr. Huber. The conversation went on in German, a language that people usually avoided and that you could not hear in the streets. They were playing Preferance, a favorite game of the Polish gentry and clergy. So I guessed that they must be Poles. They switched to Polish when I joined the party. They asked me if I knew the game, and when I confirmed, they invited me to join. The game can be played by three or four people.

During the game a girl with an armband came in. The word *Niemiec*, (German) was penciled on the armband. She brought tea and some black bread. I asked about Maria, the girl with the tattooed arm, and they told me she had a day off. While drinking tea, tongues loosened, and I found that both Miller and Huber spent the war in Germany as Volksdeutsch. They were both Jewish, but right after the German Army entered Silesia, they volunteered for work in Germany. There they were never questioned or bothered. Miller worked as a pharmacist in Köln, and Huber as a waiter in the same city. Neither had to change his name. They used their real names. But they stayed away from each other except on rare occasions toward the end of the war. Both had no intention of remaining in Poland; they planned to return to Germany and settle there.

It was strange to hear such sentiments from Jewish lips. Before the war, they were totally assimilated, had nothing but contempt for the Poles, and in their homes only German was spoken. They were both bachelors, and I figured their ages to be in the early fifties.

I left before curfew, but was invited to return next day for another

game and more talk. Back in the hotel, I started to wonder. The two men and Maria whom I met in the pharmacy were Jewish, what about the pharmacist Galicki, a common Polish name. I had a classmate in *gimnazjum*, Galicki. Was this Mr. Galicki Jewish too? I did not ask, he did not admit, and I was never sure. Did we, the survivors, develop a complex, suspect every Pole who showed some heart toward us to be Jewish?

Next day we played cards all afternoon and discussed the military and political situation. Miller brought a German newspaper left behind by the retreating German army. Goebbels predicted that war between the Americans and the Russians was unavoidable. Both Miller and Huber believed it. It was obvious that their abode in Germany did not leave them unscarred, at least when it came to their political views. They did not believe that Roosevelt died a natural death, remembering General Sikorski's alleged accident.* Incidentally, I never met a Pole, then or later, who believed that Sikorski's death was accidental.

Maria was back. She never divulged to me her family name. She came in occasionally to the back room to kibitz the game. I asked what her plans were for the future. She responded, somewhat heatedly, that she was Polish, body and soul, and she intended to stay and work for a better Poland.

Her reference to a new Poland reminded me of Serog, but, paraphrasing slightly, "*Si duo dicent idem non est idem* [If two people speak the same, it is not necessarily the same]." Serog believed in a future democratic Poland. Mary's Poland was a communistic one. She still possessed the faith.

It was obvious that she was not too fond of either Miller or Huber. They in turn asked what my intentions were. I replied that

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* When the Germans overran Poland, Sikorski became prime minister of the Polish government in exile in England. Originally, he had good relations with Stalin. But Stalin broke off diplomatic relations with the provisional government in 1943, using as a pretext, Sikorski's request that the International Red Cross investigate the murders in Katyn, which the Russians claimed were committed by Germans. Soon thereafter, Sikorski was killed in an unresolved airplane crash at Gibraltar.

honestly, at that time, I did not know. I intended to try to create a new life in Poland, but that I had my doubts.

We were all in a state of transition. I reminded myself of the words of Henryk Sienkiewicz, from *Krzyzacy, The Crusaders*, "one thing has ended, but the other has not begun yet." Even though the war was still dragging on, for us it had ended, but peace had not yet begun. This feeling was to last until we arrived in Munich several months later—and beyond.

Miller, Huber, and I left together, and while walking in the street, we got a shock. Two youngsters passing us turned around and spat, saying words that we heard before and were to hear many times again, "Kikes! Look how many of them are still left!" How did they *know* that we were Jews? There was absolutely nothing in either Miller's or Huber's face or mine to show our Jewishness. We looked like peasants with drooping mustaches just like the former Polish prime minister, Wincenty Witos. The youngsters who had accosted us were no more than fifteen years old, so their acquaintance with Jews before the war must have been limited. Still they knew. Not in vain did the Poles brag that they could smell a Jew a mile away. Anti-Semitism seems to run in Polish blood.

However there were (are?) some Skrzeszewskas and Majewskas around in Poland. Later on, during my stay in Cieszyn, I was to meet a priest who refuted this concept of the contamination of Polish blood.

It was an unpleasant moment, but we shrugged it off. It probably reinforced my two newly discovered friends' decision to return to Germany, and for myself, in spite of temporary hesitation, I too felt that we must leave Poland.

The card game at the pharmacy became a daily routine. Several new people joined our group. These were native Poles, Galicki's acquaintances. Because there was only a single deck of cards, we took turns playing, and the others either kibitzed or were involved in unending political discussions. We took it for granted that the war would end soon, perhaps within days. There was an exception, a Mr. Piotrowski, a former schoolteacher, who refused to count out the Germans. He believed that the SS were building a retreat in the hills of Bavaria, where new weapons would be created to allow them to make

war indefinitely. I had heard similar rumors before in Krakow and in Katowice, and even Galitzyn and Goldberg made remarks to that effect. Piotrowski was an interesting person, well educated, an ardent listener during the occupation to clandestine Polish radio, and a fervent patriot. He hated both the Germans and the Russians, and made occasional sinister remarks about Jews. Obviously he was unaware of Miller's, Huber's, and my identity, but what about Galicki? His remarks were tame compared to the vitriol that I had heard in Mrs. Majewska's house or on the train. Piotrowski believed that Poland would be incorporated into the Soviet Union just as had happened with the Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. "These clowns, Osubka Morawski, Bierut, Mink, Berman, Ochab—members of the so-called Lublin Government—either Russians with assumed Polish names or Jews." The general opinion was that not a single decent Pole would lend his name to such a group.

The oldest member of our group was Mr. Marlinek, an invalid, his left foot amputated as a result of a wound suffered during the Polish Soviet War of 1920. He too hated the Russians with a passion. There were two others in the group, a priest—his name was Father Piotr or Pawel—who kept repeating that one had to put one's faith in God and the satanic communist conspiracy would perish from the face of the earth. There was another Pole, a spindly, very nervous man in his early fifties, a former railroad or perhaps post office clerk, anyway a former government employee, who did not express an opinion. He came only once.

One day the hotel clerk advised me that from now on, there was a new regulation that I had to obtain a permit from the militia to stay in the hotel. I went to the office for the permit. There sitting behind a desk was a familiar face. At first I could not remember where I had seen him, but he recognized me and stood up extending his hand, greeting me with "Hey, it's you!" It was Sosnowski with whom I had shared shelter in the Jewish center in Tarnów—the former communist turned Zionist, now turned communist again. He was the temporary head of the militia in Katowice. He did not find his wife or any member of his family, and lived with a Polish woman and her two children. He invited me to come over to his home in the evening, and I did.

Before I left, he signed the required permit.

He lived in a handsome apartment, which he had taken over from a Volksdeutsch, a fact that was conveniently not mentioned in our conversation.

Mr. Sosnowski, now Comrade Sosnowski, insisted on being called Comrade. He had found his faith again. He preached to me at long length that since the Russians had won the war singlehandedly—a version of history that now dominated the communist organ of the Workers Party—they would not have to defend themselves from the hostile world anymore, and true communism would prevail. The anti-Semites in Poland, the colonels and their henchmen, the "garbage" as he called them would be uprooted, and "you will see the beautiful world that we will build." I listened to this oration in silence. While we were talking, his lady companion brought over a tray, a tin of sardines, a heavy slice of bacon, and some sweets. After a few days of scarce food, I am not ashamed to say that I gorged myself. I stayed for a few hours, and when we parted, he said that I must see him again and that he would find a job for me in the government. I thanked him and told him that a job was waiting for me in Krakow. I was not going to disclose to him my real destination. I saw him a couple of days later in his home. Again a sumptuous dinner was served. I was careful never to enter into any political discussion with him. When I told Galicki about this encounter, he told me that the man's name was not Sosnowski, his real name was Moses Baum, and that he was a bad egg who spent a few years in jail, not for political beliefs, but for theft. I followed Galicki's advice and never saw Baum-Sosnowski again. Faces in—faces out.

The papers announced that the Soviet Army had started the final assault on Germany and that the Western Allies were also making progress.

I met a group of Jews in Katowice in the home of a certain Mr. Schwartz. It was Mary, the pharmacist, who introduced me to that group. Schwartz, who escaped the Germans in 1939 in Lwów, was deported by the Russians to Khazakhstan. He was separated from his wife and two daughters, who were also deported, but in a different group and to a different city. After the 1943 thaw, he managed to find his family and in August of 1944, he returned to Lwów. As soon as

Katowice was liberated, he returned and reclaimed his house which had been taken over by a Volksdeutsch, who fled with the retreating German Army. The story was not unusual. Later I was to hear many stories like that. Schwartz, before the war, was completely assimilated and before Hitler's ascent to power considered himself German. He spoke now a mixture of Russian and Polish, both badly. During the war and exile he had recovered his Jewishness and opened his house to Jews returning from concentration camps, from hiding, or from exile in the Soviet Union. This new group of people was fluid; every day new people showed up. The inmates of concentration camps were in search of their families, others were trying to find their own lodging and means of support.

Listening to the stories of the inmates of the death camps, I realized how lucky we had been in spite of our—what seemed to us at the time—insufferable ordeal, to have avoided that part of the ghastly Jewish experience. I leave it to those who lived through those times to tell their stories.* As bad as our experience was, as often as we looked death in the eye, it still pales in comparison with the fate of our people in the death factories.

But let us go back to the events of April 1945. Some of the Jews that I met at Schwartz's home survived in the forests. They called themselves partisans, and many carried guns. Many were forced to use the guns, not so much against the Germans as against the peasants—Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, and even Russians. This group did not talk much. There were women among them, but no children. Without exception, they all talked about Palestine as their destination.

Schwartz himself contracted tuberculosis in Russia. He was spit-

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* It is imperative to tell the truth, more so today, when there are revisionist historians who deny that there were death camps, and indeed deny that 6 million Jews died at the hands of the Germans and their henchmen. I am particularly incensed when I read sophisticated, searching, and politically motivated books and articles that try to turn the Jewish tragedy into an international tragedy, comparing Auschwitz with Dresden and Treblinka with Hiroshima. A very highly praised Jewish writer has even put the blame of the disaster on the Jews themselves. It angers me when people who weren't there write as if they had been witnesses.

ting blood. He also had a psychological problem. His given names were, by a quirk of fate, Adolf Herman, and he wanted to change them. He went to the militia but did not meet with sympathy. I gave him the name of Comrade Sosnowski and told him to refer to me. I do not know if he went or if he succeeded because soon afterward my stay in Katowice ended.

By the end of April, two world-shattering events took place. On April 27, the papers carried the news that Italian partisans had caught and executed Mussolini, and we had no time to recover from this news when big headlines announced that Hitler had committed suicide. The Polish communist organs gave the latest news with a question mark. They quoted Russian sources that denied Hitler's death, a Western double-cross was suspected. We Jews received the news with joy, regretting only that he had not been hanged. And so three of the five great actors of this war were gone before the war ended. Only two of the five who dominated the world stage during the last decade, Churchill and Stalin, remained. Of the two, Churchill was soon to leave the scene.

Hitler's death coincided with the communist May Day celebration, which I witnessed in Katowice. It was not the elaborate staging that took place during the Soviet occupation of Zloczów. There was a contingent of Russian soldiers, unarmed, a contingent of Polish soldiers, limping along, schoolchildren, and a group of coal miners in their plumed hats. All carried large posters of Stalin, Molotov, Bierut, and Osubka-Morawski. Other posters claimed undying friendship between the Poles and Russians, mixed with slogans such as, "Long live the Polish Worker's Party," "Let's build a Socialist Poland," and similar exhortations. There were few onlookers. I saw a group of women crying.

I left for a few days for Krakow to see my family and to advise them to liquidate everything—there was very little to liquidate—and to be ready to move to Cieszyn as soon as I sent notification that I had found a place to live.

In Krakow, another celebration took place. Spontaneously a large group of Poles, mostly women and old men, gathered in front of the cathedral, singing the Polish anthem and "*Boze cos Polske*," a hymn which was to become the defiant expression of Polish independence.

We lived nearby so I was able to watch this remembrance of May 3, the Polish national holiday before the war. Here too women were crying. I am sure that I knew what was going on in their minds. For Poland, the war which had begun in defense of Polish independence, was ending by turning Poland into a Soviet colony.

Next day I returned to Katowice, alone again.

Briefly, the press reported that Molotov had traveled to San Francisco to participate in the creation of a new world organization, the United Nations, which was to bring peace and stability to the world. Would the new organization be more successful than the defunct League of Nations?

Hitler's and Mussolini's deaths were the subject of our discussions at the pharmacy and at Schwartz's overshadowed other subjects. The question that we asked ourselves was: Why are the Germans still fighting? Some, following the communist line, thought that the announcement of Hitler's death was a ruse, but on the other hand, Mussolini's end, with all the gory details of his execution, was undeniable. We were all familiar with the name of Doenitz, Hitler's successor, the hero of the submarine war, but why he? Why not Goering or Goebbels, or Himmler? The pharmacist Galicki heard that Goebbels had committed suicide, but what about Goering? Did the Germans hold some hidden cards up their sleeves?

A day or so later, Serog returned from Bielsko. Cieszyn was finally free, the last Polish town to be liberated. He and I were to proceed there immediately. I said good-bye to all my friends in Katowice, and I never saw any of them again. Faces in—faces out.

We caught a Russian truck to Bielsko, halfway to Cieszyn. Serog paid our passage with cigarettes. He was well provided. Serog had family in Bielsko, and we stayed with them for the night. Next day we caught another truck to Cieszyn. In Cieszyn we were to resume for a while the semblance of a normal life.

Chapter Four
Cieszyn

Our trip to Cieszyn lasted several hours with the driver stopping to pick up passengers who paid with cigarettes, vodka, or rubles, since he refused to accept Polish zlotys. Serog was bubbling with enthusiasm in continuation of our discussion in the hotel in Katowice. He was aware of my doubts about the government promise to return the factory to him and wanted me to know that he had no doubts whatsoever. He was convinced that there would be an independent, democratic Poland. He was an unabashed patriot, and he was eager to live in it. He was thoroughly assimilated (possibly a convert to Catholicism—I didn't know) and brushed aside the possibility of emigration. He was coming home to retrieve his former life and was looking to a happy future.

"Come on," he said. "You are a Pole like I am, imbued with Polish culture. How could you live elsewhere?" I must admit his enthusiasm started to affect me. "Perhaps," I said to myself, "perhaps he's right."

He sure was right that I was intellectually a Pole, although I was a Zionist and familiar with Jewish scriptures and history as well. I had graduated from a Polish high school (*gimnazjum*) where Polish language and Polish history were the prime subjects. I had later briefly attended the Polytechnic in Lwów but had switched to the law school, where naturally emphasis was on Polish law and, not inconsequentially, canon law, to the point that I was able to hold my own in discussions of the latter with priests.

I remember one such occasion in the late 1930s. I was traveling to Krakow in the company of a priest at the height of the "love affair" between the Polish colonels, the ruling junta, and Hitler's Germany, and we became involved in a discussion of prophecies linked to future Popes. The next Pope to be was to reign during a very dangerous time for the papacy and for the Catholic Church. I said that I did not believe the prophecies, and the priest asked me why. I responded,

"Because I am a Jew." He was quite surprised at that; he had taken me for a Catholic and a Pole, and a well informed one at that.

Many of my generation and of Serog's generation of Jews were similarly educated and assimilated. This was particularly true for those who had lived in Galicja during the Austro-Hungarian Empire and had enjoyed freedom there, more freedom than the Jews living in the part of Poland dominated by Czarist Russia. This attitude of my peers was to be influential in their decisions to remain in Poland after the war.

I was thinking that it was too early to make plans. Anyhow during the last five and one half years, fate rather than our wishes had dictated our choices. How often had we had to change plans! Perhaps it was for the best to let time and circumstances steer us.

With me thinking these thoughts, we entered Cieszyn. My impression was of a charming little town built on hills centered around a lovely marketplace. Serog and I walked straight to the factory from the train. To my great surprise, several former employees greeted us with flowers. Smiling, Serog explained that on his way to pick me up in Katowice, he had sent word to some people he trusted that he was returning. Someone came forward to advise him that his house was free because the Volksdeutsch who had occupied it had fled.

He and I immediately moved to his house, which was in excellent condition. "It's exactly the way we left it," Serog told me joyfully. His sister, Mrs. Piotrowska, a lovely lady, who had managed to remain among friends during the war in Cieszyn, welcomed us. She had been left alone, never bothered by either the Germans or the predatory Volksdeutsch.

Mrs. Piotrowska prepared dinner for us, the first "civilized" meal I was to enjoy since the outbreak of the war. Just like before the war, we ate on fine china plates, with beautiful cutlery and linen napkins. A servant collected the dishes after every course. Perhaps these were silly thoughts, but they must have been important to me because I vividly remember the details.

I was given one of the guest rooms, and we went to bed early because we were exhausted from our journey.

We had arrived in Cieszyn on May 7, 1945, on the very day when

the Germans had surrendered to the Western powers. Our newspapers only reported the surrender two days later when the ritual was reenacted before the Soviet marshals.

The formal end of the war came as an anticlimax, since for us, the war had ended when we were liberated by the Russian Army in July 1944. When I left Russia for good on Christmas Eve 1944, that had been another signal of the war's end, as had been the report that Hitler was dead.

While the news of the war's formal end did not bring exultation, the capture of the leaders of Nazi Germany gave rise to feelings of joy and satisfaction. We learned that Goering, Ribbentrop, and other major Nazi figures were in the hands of the Americans. Particularly satisfying was the fact that our personal tormentor, the governor general of Galicja, Hans Frank, had also been caught. Goebbels and Himmler had committed suicide, we learned, but the others were to be tried for war crimes by an international tribunal.

The Poles claimed, that since Frank had ruled Galicja, a part of Poland, he should be handed over to the Polish authorities for trial. The Polish and Russian press hinted darkly that Hitler was alive and that the Western powers were hiding him. The papers claimed also that the Nazis were fleeing into the hands of the Americans, expecting good treatment from them.

This mixture of euphoria and disappointment soon subsided and gave way to more practical concerns.

Lina, my mother-in-law Bessie, our two daughters, and I had survived a disaster, the dimensions of which we did not fully fathom even then, and refused to face and accept for years to come. As late as 1963, rumors persisted that some of the people unaccounted for might still be alive. I myself pursued that illusion even after I arrived in the United States and persevered in trying to discover the fate of my father. I have saved two letters from the International Committee of the Red Cross, dated November 1, 1963, advising me that they have no information about him.

Meanwhile we were alive and had to attend to our pedestrian needs. We had to find a place to live, which did not take long. With the help of Mr. Serog, whose influence in Cieszyn was considerable, I secured three apartments, one for my family, another for Hrytz and

Misia in case they changed their minds and followed us, and a third for a friend, Mrs. Lina Beer as well.

My wife Lina had run into her namesake and Lina's sister, Jadzia, on a street in Krakow. We had been very friendly with Lina Beer and her late husband, who died in a car accident during the Russian occupation of Zloczów. Both Beers had worked in a meat processing plant. Their son, George, had been a playmate of my daughters, and I have a picture of the three children on the balcony of our apartment in Cieszyn.

The apartment was a comfortable five room flat on the third floor at Zamkowa Street, No. 49. I reserved for Misia and Hrytz, who had no children, a smaller but equally comfortable apartment in the same house with us. Lina Beer's place was a block away. All three apartments had been vacated by Volksdeutsch who had run away with the retreating German Army. They had taken the apartments from Jewish families that had been deported.

The apartment house bordered on the River Olza, which divides the Polish city from its Czech twin, Cesky Tešín. The two had briefly joined during the shameful and sorry collaboration of the Polish colonels with Hitler. In 1938, the Polish regime had ignominiously participated in the rape of Czechoslovakia and had been rewarded by the Germans with a tiny slice of Czech territory called *Zaolzie*. Ironically Zaolzie was to become one of the vital points from which the German offensive was launched that led to the swift conquest of Silesia. There had never been much love lost between the democratic Czechs and the autocratic Poles even before, although a few far reaching Poles foresaw the disastrous outcome of that policy.*

But that was all in the past. The Czechoslovakian state was now reborn, and the two cities were again separated, although linked by a small wooden bridge. At the time I came to Cieszyn, the bridge was unguarded, making this an open frontier. The only authority in Cieszyn was a temporary city government organized by local citizens, which attended only to local matters. There were no Russians in town, at least I did not encounter any. This entire situation was to change presently.

Again with the help of Mr. Serog, I sent word to Lina in Krakow

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* "Zaolzie" was revived as a battle cry for Poles when they helped the Soviets crush the Dubcek revolution in 1956.

to advise her that we now had a place to live and that I had also secured apartments for Misia and Hrytz, and for Lina Beer and her sister should they decide to follow us to Cieszyn. I urged her to come as soon as possible.

In the meantime, awaiting the family's arrival, I set about putting the factory into operation. It was much larger than our plant in Zloczów and contained much more sophisticated machinery, all German made. However I was acquainted with it from having studied manuals before the war back in Zloczów. We had been planning to modernize our plant, but the war intervened. I remember discussing the possibility of acquiring additional machinery with my Russian director, Narajewski, but he had only given me a look, which said, you're either stupid or naive. Of course I was neither and did not believe in the seriousness of my proposal.



The author's card, as manager of RORI.

(Narajewski, a Ukrainian communist, had been installed as the director of my father's factory after it was nationalized by the Soviets. He kept me on as the technical director and tried to protect me from attacks from both within and outside the factory. After liberation, he was promoted to the position of third secretary of the Communist Party in Zloczów. He and a former nemesis of mine, the corrupt communist secretary, Nazimov, had been instrumental in

returning to me the management of the factory after liberation in July 1944. However, I was soon replaced by a Russian war veteran.)

After the agreement permitting Jews to resettle in Poland was promulgated, Narajevski's advice to me had been, "By all means, leave. We are not for you and you are not for us." A devoted communist, but a decent and honest man.

In my early years in the United States, I was frequently asked about our lives under the Soviet occupation. When I replied that I had been miserably unhappy, depressed to the point of suicide, many indignant Americans would point out that the Russians had been benign considering what happened later under the German heel. I found this annoying and foolish. I was being asked which I preferred, heart disease or cancer.

(Some Russians I do remember fondly. Narajewski was one, he was outstanding. I was in daily contact with him. Comrade Sapuchina, a woman from Leningrad who held the important position of county industrial planner, was also a decent human being. Well dressed, modestly made-up, she hinted at her noble ancestry. In the labyrinthine make-up of the Soviet bureaucracy, she was my immediate superior, who had to approve production plans I submitted for our factory. Next, we had to submit the plans for approval to Lwów, to Kiev, and of course to the local party, none of which had the slightest idea of our production capacity or demands for raw materials. Comrade Sapuchina always approved my plans and, what was more important, supported me in my incessant problems with managers of other industrial plants, and with my nemesis in the party, Comrade Nazimova, and inside the factory, Chana Letzter. Another outstanding Russian was the elegant air force colonel, Spiridoff, who bought our bedroom suite which we had to sell and apologized for having done it.)

The personnel here in Cieszyn were intelligent and competent, a solid base of skilled labor, which had somehow survived the war. The level of education was also much higher than in Zloczów, where we had had to work with peasants. During the German occupation the factory had shipped products to Germany, as well as provide for local needs.

Our apartment was fully furnished, comfortable rather than

luxurious. There was a small library containing German classics and a large German–English dictionary. The previous owner had left behind a heap of German newspapers from the closing days of the war. He had been an elderly Volksdeutsch, I was told, an ardent Nazi with two sons in the SS. Nevertheless he had clearly been listening to the forbidden English broadcasts. I found several scribbled notes with quotes from Roosevelt, Churchill, and other English-speaking statesmen.

It was interesting to read in these newspapers the final outpourings of the German leaders, of Goebbels and lesser propaganda lights. Goebbels had been elated over Roosevelt's death. He thought that this would be the turning point of the war, and predicted, at this late date, a German resurgence and victory. He also predicted that the West would awaken and turn against mankind's greatest evil, the Bolsheviks. War between the West and the Soviets was unavoidable. The West would join with the valiant German people against the common foe, etc., etc. He gave promises of new and decisive weapons as well. However between the lines one could read despair.

It seems that the previous Volksdeutsch tenant had not put much faith in Goebbels' pronouncements. He had started to write his memoir after Stalingrad. Among his notes, I found references in English, to "Unconditional Surrender," and later in German, "*Nie, nie! das heisst Selbstmord.* [Never, never, it means suicide]." On another page, "*Was wird mit uns los sein?* [What will happen to us?]" Another, "*Meine arme Söhne.* [My poor sons]."

The final entry in the diary read: "*Wir haben doch niemanden Weh getan.* [We did not harm anybody]."

I suspect that the family had considered suicide before escape, since I found a large bottle with a skull and crossbones in the bathroom cabinet, which I threw out. All this made for interesting reading. As is my custom, I preserved the notes; alas, they too were lost or discarded in our later wanderings. I remember bringing the notes and at least one German–English dictionary to Munich, but when we packed for departure to the States and were advised to keep our luggage to a minimum, I left it behind.

As I became more and more acquainted with the Poles of Cieszyn, and indeed became part of its society, I noticed the difference

between the Poles in the east and the Poles of the west. Where the eastern Polish society consisted mainly, or almost totally, of the bureaucracy and military, here there existed a mercantile society, the majority of whose stores were owned by Poles. Perhaps it was the proximity of the Czechs and the influence of Germans. As I found out later, before its extinction, the local Jewish population had gravitated toward German culture and spoke German at home. This was true particularly of the older generation.

Until I became acquainted with Mr. Alfred Waldner, who was to marry Mrs. Beer later, I met no Jews in Cieszyn. After I had discussed it with Serog in Katowice and at his strong suggestion, I decided to remain "Stefan Bulski" in Cieszyn, *Magister* Bulski to be sure. If I was forced to forgo my real name, I had no intention of parting with my title. Furthermore, an academic degree was high coin in Poland. (I have managed to save a calling card from this period.) I was introduced to local society by my mentor, Serog, as an ardent patriot, who hinted of my work in the Polish underground, the scope of which could not be disclosed.

Serog always used the catchword *swoj* "our own" when introducing me. I winced internally at this introduction. It reminded me too much of the slogan favored by the Polish anti-Semites who called for the boycott of Jewish stores before WWII with the chant, "*Swoj do swego po swoje* [our own to our own for our own]."

During my six months in that city, nobody ever questioned my *Polskosc*, my being a Pole. Indeed I was several times singled out as an example of patriotic behavior. In this I was very much helped by my two daughters, whose behavior and progress in school was praised by their teachers and the parents of their schoolmates. Did I forget that I was a Jew or even try to forget it? The answer is an unequivocal *NO*. I still woke up every morning mechanically checking my wrist for the armband with the Star of David and the word *Jude*.

Serog, like my father, had little technical knowledge and even less inclination to be involved in the day-to-day operations of the factory. In the past, as he told me, he had left it to the foremen to run the plant. His former foreman, a Volksdeutsch, had become manager during the occupation and had run away with the retreating German Army, as had our Ukrainian manager in Zloczów, Mrs. Dackowa.

Serog's foreman had been despised by the workers, and the same for Dackowa, disdained even by her Ukrainian kinfolk.

Since the bulk of Serog's business before the war came from a single major customer, the Polish tobacco monopoly, the running of the factory, a fully automated operation, had presented no major problem. My father's business had been different. We had had to cater to many customers, representing a multitude of requirements and tastes, hence our operation, though smaller, had been much more intricate. Serog was happy to leave the management of the plant to me, duplicating a situation with which I was very familiar from before the war and during it, since I had been the technical director during the Soviet occupation and the manager even under the Germans, although I was described officially as a "technical worker and interpreter."

After a few days, Serog felt confident enough to leave me in full charge and went to Warsaw to solicit orders. It did not take me long to clean up the place and have most of the machinery in working condition. The fleeing Germans had left behind a quantity of paper and cardboard. Now all we had to do was wait for orders. Within a week or so, Serog was back with a substantial order, and we were off and running. Serog claimed to have obtained reassurances from some high bureaucrat in the just-forming Ministry of Industry that no thought was being given to nationalizing his plant. Serog remained in high spirits.

When he found out that I played bridge, Serog took me along to a cocktail and bridge party given by the leading hostess in Cieszyn, a Mrs. Helena Nowak. She owned a large apartment in the town square, and when we arrived, the house was full. It did not take me long to realize that the present crowd represented the cream of the society of Cieszyn. Serog introduced me to several people, I was to become quite friendly with two of them. One was the school principal, and the other a priest, Stanislaw Lewandowski, who taught catechism in the school. After having been in this company for a few hours, I realized that some of these people had openly or covertly cooperated with the Germans, something rather unusual elsewhere in Poland. But Silesia was different. Until the rupture of relations under Hitler, Cieszyn and indeed all of Silesia, had been very pro-German.

The events of the war were fresh in my mind, and many times I did come across evidence of deep rooted anti-Semitism, which, while not then directed at me, did come out during the unending discussions with eminent Poles about the future of the country. As far as the future was concerned, the Jews, the few that were left, were assumed by the Poles to have much more power than their number or influence warranted. As I mentioned before, the relatively large number of Jews in the government reinforced this false impression. I occasionally ventured to mention that it was the Russians who were in command.

After my daughters started to attend school, the school chaplain, Father Lewandowski, was always full of praise, pleased by their knowledge and understanding of the religion. The girls had been tutored and already indoctrinated by Misia, herself a schoolteacher, when we had been in hiding. Misia remained in high hope that they would eventually convert, a hope that did not materialize.

My initiation into society was a success, and Mrs. Nowak invited me to come next week to what was a weekly event. So next week I bought flowers and was on my way to the party when in the square whom do I meet? It was Lina, my two daughters, my mother-in-law Bessie, Henis, Misia, and Hrytz who had just arrived by bus from Krakow. Misia and Hrytz had changed their minds and decided to follow us.

Lina exclaimed, "How did you know I was coming?"

Red-faced, I admitted that I had had no idea that she was coming and was on my way to play bridge. She had evidently sent word, but I hadn't received it. She had also let me know that Misia and Hrytz had changed their minds and had arrived from Przemysl in Krakow to join us. Lina told me to go on to the party—one cannot disrupt bridge for anything. I excused myself just for a minute to run up to Mrs. Novak's apartment, which was right there and to make my excuses, and explain the situation. Mrs. Nowak said, "Please have your wife join the party." I thanked her but declined; there were the children and the others, and anyhow everyone was tired from the trip. We went to our new quarters. Misia and Hrytz, now Grzegorz Tyz, who had married in Przemysl, were pleased that I had provided for them. Lina and the children liked the new apartment with its separate rooms

for the two girls, for my mother-in-law, and for Henis. There was a maid's room and we hired a live-in helper within a few days.

Our lives took on a semblance of normality.

Ruminating about the future while still in hiding, I had expressed doubts that life for us could ever be normal again. Time would have to supply the answer.

Speaking for myself, I felt relieved; the danger of the war, the German terror, the fear and distrust of the Russians had passed; the frantic shuffling around from city to city in search of a permanent place to live had been resolved. Perhaps Cieszyn was not going to be our ultimate destination, but it was a convenient place to rest and regroup. I did not speculate too much about the future during the next several weeks, feeling most thankful for what I had.

Lina was not as complacent and satisfied as I was. She did not share my feeling that we were out of danger. She disliked the subterfuge of a life under assumed names; she particularly hated the name Bulski which she felt was "phony."

Just a few years ago in Chicago, I came across the name Bulski in some connection I can no longer recall. I never met the man and wondered whether he was a survivor whose name had come from the same source as mine, or whether this "Bulski" was genuine.

Serog, however, liked the name. He said that all the new Gorskis, Sosnowskis, and others with popular Polish surnames, made him and other Poles with whom he had been associated during the war and afterward, suspect. Bulski was at least original.

I believe that my daughters accepted this odd mixture of normal living and assumed identity as I had. They appeared quite happy, particularly after they started to attend school. One day, I hope, they will write their own stories.

Be it as it may, I settled down to a routine of going to the office, coming home for dinner, an occasional soiree of bridge, and a Sunday afternoon card game, Preferance, with Father Lewandowski and his friends. A movie theater had reopened and I believe that the first film shown was Gone *With the Wind.* This was followed by some old films of Charlie Chaplin and Deanna Durbin. To the best of my recollection, no prewar Polish films were shown, and it took a couple of months before the first Russian film appeared, shown however to

empty auditoriums. I believe that the title of one of the Russian films was *Chapayev, The Red Commander*, a story of Soviet heroism during the war with Germany.

In the reopened schools, initially the prewar curriculum was used, and the teaching of religion remained in the curriculum. Every Sunday after Mass, parents went to school to inquire about their children's progress, or lack of it, from the teachers. Our daughters performed exceptionally well. The principal singled me out to tell me how proud I should be of such exceptionally gifted and well behaved children.

Father Lewandowski became a good friend. With the school principal, we three played cards and conducted unending political discussions. I believe that as our relationship broadened, Father Lewandowski guessed that I was a Jew. He never came out with it directly, but he gave me hints. One time we spoke of the importance of saints who facilitated the work of the apostles and other early missionaries. The majority of the early converts were heathens for whom it was easier to shift from the belief in many gods into a belief in saints than it would have been to accept monotheism. I linked the extreme veneration of the Virgin Mary in Poland to this. Father Lewandowski, who was liberal especially for a Polish priest, did not disagree with me. Indeed to many Poles the faith in the Virgin appeared more ingrained than the faith in Jesus. A startled or frightened Pole was more likely to exclaim, "*Swieta Mario*" rather than invoke the name of Jesus.

Father Lewandowski asked me how come I knew so much about saints, unusually so for a layman. I told him that one of the first books my mother had made me read was about the martyrdom of some female saint. To this Father Lewandowski replied dryly, "You had a smart and provident mother."

I grew quite fond of Father Lewandowski, at first because he always spoke highly of our daughters, but soon beyond that, when I realized that he was a thoroughly decent human being. I never heard even a hint of the anti-Semitism so prevalent among Poles.

Some of our conversations were quite esoteric, silly almost, given the precarious position of Poland in 1945. We did not know that there would be a Poland even, but meanwhile we argued about poets. He

became quite agitated as we discussed the relative merits of the Polish poets of the nineteenth century. For him, Zygmunt Krasinski was more important than Adam Mickiewicz because he had articulated the pessimistic prophecy (and a retrospective historical assessment) that Poland was the Christ of Nations and would always be martyred. When I pleaded for the more optimistic and redemptive Mickiewicz, he dropped his argument and asked me with a warm smile whether it was because of Jankel, the Jewish cymbalist depicted so sympathetically in Michiewicz's greatest epic, *Pan Tadeusz.*

The Serog family was soon enlarged when Mrs. Serog, arrived from her native Belgium. Almost at the same time Mrs. Piotrowski's son and daughter-in-law, Kurt and Nuna Pollak, arrived from Krakow where they had survived the war. My wife and Mrs. Piotrowski opened a bric-a-brac store in the center of town while Misia and Lina Beer established a similar enterprise nearby. Jadzia, Lina Beer's sister, also joined our circle, arriving from Warsaw where she had survived the war on "Aryan" papers. Both she and Lina Beer were blond and blue eyed and Lina Beer in particular was a very pretty lady. Both women died recently. We were to become very friendly with the Pollaks, the friendship lasting for many years in America.

Kurt had a friend, Alfred Waldner, who had survived the war in Auschwitz and to whom he introduced to Lina Beer. The two were soon married and with them too, we sustained a lasting friendship.

Two apartments in the house where we lived were occupied by childless couples. Our relationship with these neighbors was pleasant. After my family arrived, they liked to visit us and play with our daughters. One neighbor, a Mr. Chrobok, was a Volksdeutsch, who chose to remain in Poland rather than retreat with the Germans. He kept trying to convince me that he had been forced into the ranks of the Volksdeutsch and that the larger ration cards were an important inducement. He did not appear to see the contradictions in his arguments. Mrs. Chrobok became very friendly with my mother-in-law. Since the Chroboks appeared to be accepted by the Polish community as harmless people who had behaved decently during the German occupation, I became comfortable with them.

The other couple were a consumptive-looking photographer with

a narrow sad face, Marek, and his very attractive, much younger wife, Wiska. I cannot recall their last name.

The months of June and July passed uneventfully, but the end of July and the beginning of August brought new political developments that were to decide the shape of the postwar world. Of this we were not aware at the time, but the events shook us out of our complacency and forced us to make decisions about the future.

On July 25, 1945, Churchill was defeated in a British election and replaced by an unknown socialist named Clement Attlee. On August 6 of the same year, an atom bomb was exploded over the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

The explosion of the atom bomb did not evoke any particular commotion, but Churchill's departure did, with a vengeance. In the part of Poland where we lived, few, in any one, understood or conceived of the political and military changes that the atom bomb and the release of atomic power would bring to the world. But throughout the war, Churchill had been the beacon of hope of the oppressed, and his was the voice for which we listened religiously.

Only one newspaper identified an "Atomic Bomb" in its headlines; to the others it was just a "huge" bomb capable of destroying a whole city. Anyhow the story was played down in both Russian and Polish newspapers, and the subject soon disappeared. But Churchill's dismissal continued to be widely debated both in the press and in private conversations.

Roosevelt was a distant figure. His promises of a new world order that America would help establish after Hitler's defeat, seemed far removed, almost abstract. In contrast, Churchill had spoken of victorious battles, which would speed up our liberation, echoing sentiments that spoke much closer to our dreams. Referring to Roosevelt, a friend quoted a Russian peasant saying, "*Czar daloko, a Pan Boh wysoko.* [The Czar is far, and God is high]." Churchill's departure was especially mourned by us Jews, because we considered him a great friend of our cause in Palestine.

Three months after the war in Europe ended, there were officers from Anders' Army began to trickle in from England. I met these men at Mrs. Novak's bridge parties. All loved the game, which they had learned in England. Many were strongly pro-British, viciously

anti-Russian, and mildly anti-American. They all drank heavily. They were without exception virulently anti-Semitic.

I remember a Captain Starczyk, who still wore his British uniform, his chest was covered with decorations. He had taken part in the battle of Monte Cassino, he said. He was very pessimistic about the fate of Poland, and had come back to Poland only to fetch his family. He planned to return to England. He was unable to shed any light on the reasons for Churchill's defeat in the election. Churchill's successor, Attlee, was a socialist and that was all that he knew about him. He did not care for socialism—period.

These Polish war veterans who had fought in the war alongside the British, who had distinguished themselves in the battle of Monte Cassino, differed from us in their perception of the respective roles played by Roosevelt and Churchill during the Crimean Conference that produced the Yalta Agreement. We widely assumed that it was Churchill who had supported the agreement, because the Curzon Line had been the brainchild of an English diplomat, Lord Curzon. American foreign policy and President Roosevelt had to have been influenced by its large Polish constituency, we believed. Some Poles remembered the influence that Ignacy Paderewski had had on President Wilson during WWI and saw parallels. President Wilson had actively supported Paderewski, who became the first Prime Minister of a restored Poland after the end of WWI. (Unfortunately, the distinguished pianist turned out be a poor leader and had resigned soon afterward.)

The current veterans' version was that it had been Roosevelt who had sided with Stalin on the subject of future Polish frontiers; local Poles reacted first with disbelief, and then with anger and indignation to this. The Polish underground papers that had circulated during both the Russian and German occupations of the disputed territories had blamed *both* Roosevelt and Churchill for the surrender at Yalta to Stalin. Perhaps they were right.

Our discussions became heated and long lasting, and even Serog lost some of his optimism. We came to agree that Stalin had evidently always had his way in negotiations with Roosevelt and Churchill; now Stalin would be dealing with two political unknowns, Truman and Attlee. That Stalin would have a freehand in Europe and would

come to rule all of Europe was inevitable. It was only a matter of time.

News came about a conference going on in Potsdam among the three leaders. We thought it significant that once again Stalin had the conference held on his territory, that he never moved away from the protection of his army and the NKVD. According to underground sources, "Potsdam sealed Yalta."

I found myself in a peculiar situation. On the one side I played a Pole sharing the fears "for our country"; and on the other side, I knew that I was a Jew. I realized that I was really quite indifferent to the fate of Poland. I was like an actor participating in a play on the stage, and then again a spectator at the same time watching the play from the audience.

It was not only Churchill's defeat, Potsdam, and other international views that prompted me to start rethinking the future. There were subtle internal changes as well. It was high time to look around.

The first contingent of the Polish secret police, the so-called *Bezpieka*, arrived in Cieszyn. Its first move was to install guards at the Czech border, on the bridge on the Olza that linked the Polish and Czech twin cities. The Czechs also posted guards on their side. Until this time, neither side had enforced a strict border. However, anyone in possession of a new special border pass could still cross. I obtained mine easily as a factory manager, and later secured others for Lina and Henis. Misia and Hrytz had had no interest in visiting Czechoslovakia.

Before deciding on our next stop, Lina and I made some exploratory trips to other cities. We were searching for information about the West. I went to Bielsko, an adjacent and much larger city, where I found a few people from Zloczów, including my oldest friend, member of my *gimnasjum* Four Musketeer band, Ignac Herman.

Ignac and I greeted one another very warmly. He and his entire family had survived by passing as "Aryans." Ignac came from a totally assimilated family; two of his brothers and his younger sister had converted to Catholicism, and the latter had married one of the most violent anti-Semites in Zloczów, former Lieutenant Kubricht. Ignac's older sister had married a Mr. Zwerdling who had earned a well

deserved ugly reputation as a lackey of the SS murderer, Wartzok. Ignac, however, was married to Gina Beer, whose father had been very orthodox. Gina was a semiprofessional singer and had appeared in Zloczów with our amateur group in a show, the *Dritte Seider Nacht.*

In addition to the few Zloczówers, I met three other natives of Bielsko, who had spent the war years in Zloczów and had now returned home.

One was a Mr. Hoffman who later was to marry the former Clara Rosen. Her son, Roald, who took his adopted father's name, received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1981.

I also met some people who had returned from Germany. Some had been liberated from death camps; others had worked in Germany under assumed identities, as Poles or, in two instances, as Volksdeutsch. The Bielsko Jews passed easily in Germany because many of them, particularly the older generation, spoke German at home, and considered it to be their primary language.

Ignac and his family had determined to remain in Poland. Others were thinking of emigration, but where to? Various ideas were tossed around. Germany, the cursed nation, land, and people, emerged in these talks as the best temporary haven for Jews as a transient stop. The part occupied by the Americans seemed to have the most promise.

Only fifteen years earlier, Germany had been considered to be the safest place in Europe for Jews. Two years later, it had become the most dangerous place for Jews, from where Jews ran away, or tried to. In the last five years Germany had become the slaughterhouse of Jews. Now, barely three months after its surrender, some Jews were contemplating seeking refuge in Germany. True, the Germans were not now masters of their house, but how could one be near them, meet and talk to them? A topsy-turvy world. No, not possible.

How about Czechoslovakia then? Before Munich, it had been the most democratic nation in central Europe. Its future was too uncertain; it was likely to become communist too. France then? Lina and I spoke a passable French. No. France was still in turmoil, and it was quite possible that the communists would seize power. We did not plan to run away from Russian communists to fall into the hands of

French ones. Italy seemed promising, being closest to the route to Palestine. But there too, as in France, communists, having killed Mussolini, seemed to be having an upper hand. Nobody trusted the British, particularly now after the ouster of Churchill, who had been considered a trusted friend of the Jews. No European country seemed safe.

Lina made her own efforts to scout other possibilities than Cieszyn for the remainder of our stay in Poland. She wanted to find a city with at least a few Jewish families, where we could live openly as Jews. She went to Lodz and Wroclaw (Breslau), where many of the remaining Jews seemed to have concentrated. She came back disappointed with the caliber of the people she found there. I believe that in her state of mind—she constantly felt in great danger as a Jew—no place in Poland would have suited her.

Let me reiterate that all these places under consideration were in any event meant only to be stopovers on our journey to Palestine. We would go to Palestine as soon as the British lifted their siege. From what we were beginning to hear, a siege it was.

In Bielsko, I was invited to a meeting of Zionists. Actually the word "Zionist" was a misnomer at that time; every surviving Jew, even those assimilated before the war, as well as many former communists, had become to some degree Zionists. Somebody said that an underground route to Palestine existed; it was guided by men and women who had come from Palestine to lead people back. I tried to establish contact with them, but it never happened.

Someone else complained bitterly how few had taken the route to Palestine when the way had been open. This provoked many vehement objections and clarifications. The route was never open; the Balfour Declaration was never implemented. The British had changed their minds after WWI and had actually curtailed immigration, had limited it to a trickle and had even stopped it from time to time, even after Hitler had seized power in Germany. Someone who said that he was a revisionist blamed the British policy on the only Jewish High Commissioner of Palestine, Herbert Samuel, whom he called a Jewish Anti-Semite. Someone asked about the Mufti, whom Samuel had appointed to his post. His pictures had appeared in German newspapers often in company of Hitler and other Nazi leaders. He

had been a war criminal according to then current parlance. The general opinion was that the British would shelter him, find him sanctuary among the Arabs.

There was an unusual consensus. People who might have disagreed before the war, General Zionists, Socialist Zionists, Revisionists, were all in agreement that some kind of a national home for Jews in Palestine, and only in Palestine, was essential if Jews were to survive as a nation. Someone said that he had been a communist all his life, anti-Zionist, but having seen communism in action in the Soviet Union, he had changed his mind.

Many people at this gathering were middle-aged; many had had a good education and had felt accepted in Poland before the war. Several said at the close of the meeting that yes, they wanted to get to Palestine, but meanwhile for the "time being," they would try to remain in Poland. My path never crossed any of theirs again.

Late in August, I made my final trip to Krakow in response to an edict urging citizens to register their claims for war reparations. On the basis of my prior experiences with the Russians, I assumed it was a sham, but since I didn't know for sure, I decided to put in my claim. The matter became complicated because I had to register my claim in Cieszyn as Bulski, but acknowledge that I was the heir of my father, Leon Tennenbaum. The way out was to apply officially for a change of name, which I did in Krakow; with Henis and Henis's friend, a Mrs. Gromadzka, serving as my witnesses. The clerk in the Wojewodztwo (district office) in Krakow was very difficult, required a slew of documents and justifications, as if it were not obvious. Bureaucracy plus anti-Semitism! The majority of Jews who assumed Polish names did not bother with legalities precisely because of such attitudes, which went way back. Already in prewar Poland, it had been very difficult to affect a name change. (A Jewish medical student in Zloczów named Szmata [rag] was only allowed to assume a more agreeable name when he converted to Catholicism.)

I gave up my efforts to change my name officially because I assumed that we should leave Poland way before the bureaucratic process ground to a satisfactory completion. I registered my claim in the name Tennenbaum as well, and I registered my claim again with the U.S. State Department a few years after I arrived here.

Henis had to have a reason for living in Cieszyn, so I listed him as an employee of RORI. However, he spent much of his time on the street looking out for Jews and bringing them to our house over for a chat and meal, where Lina and her mother made them welcome.

These refugees brought news, some from the other areas of Poland, others from the Ukraine and Russia. A few had already traveled to Germany. They reported the most astounding fact that the German mark had been reestablished as the official currency of Germany. What had been deemed valueless only a few months ago had become the most sought after item on the black market. When smuggled into Germany, it could be sold at a value many times over what it cost in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

Other news was mixed; some good, some bad. Anti-Semitism was rampant in the large cities of Warsaw, Lodz, and Wroclaw, where Jews were often accosted by youth gangs. Jews had disappeared in smaller cities. As a consequence, there was a siege at the consulates recently reopened in Warsaw, with people waiting at the American consulate for days, hoping for entrance visas. Other popular consulates were those of the South American countries and Canada. For those like us, who had run away from Russian communism, it was clear that the Russian-sponsored Polish communists were tightening their grip on Poland. In the main cities, rowdy Russian soldiers were intimidating the population while the Polish government merely looked on.

We also learned that the British were indeed constricting Jewish immigration to Palestine, confirming what we knew already.

The good news was that there was no anti-Semitism in Czechoslovakia; a few of the refugees planned to find a home there, possibly in the part regained from Germany and now free of the Sudenten Germans.

Others said Germany provided good opportunities. Life in the American Zone, particularly in Munich, was much better than in any area of Poland or any of the other countries mentioned, and safer.

However these were in the minority; the vast majority planned to go to Palestine. America was a dream, but its small immigration quotas made it an impossible dream.

The "normality" of our life in Cieszyn tempted us a bit to stay, at

least for a while; certainly no other place in Poland sounded better. Still discussing the matter with my wife, I decided that it was time to make another move.

One early fall day, almost on a whim, I took a leave from Serog, crossed the border, and took a train from Tešìn to Prague. The difference between the trains in Poland and the Czech train was unbelievable. I bought a second class seat. The car was immaculately clean! It was not crowded! Nobody stood in the aisles! Nobody paid me any attention except for the conductor who came merely to cancel my ticket. In my recent trips in Poland I had never seen a conductor and must have been one of a very few who had bothered to buy tickets.

The road between Tešìn—the Czech name for their part of the divided city—and Prague is picturesque. I had a window seat, and looked at the passing scenery. Time went by fast, within a few hours I found myself in Prague.

All this was like a dream, like the prewar time.



Edith and Selma on balcony in Cieszyn.

Chapter Five
In Search of a Haven

I came to Prague uncertain about the next step we would take, and uncertain about a country I had never visited before, but generally optimistic. Poles did not like the Czechs. Czechoslovakia had not enjoyed a good press in Poland. Educated Poles admitted in private conversation to an inferiority complex, even envy of Czechoslovakia. Except for Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, the foreign press hardly ever mentioned any Pole, while the names of the Czech President Edward Beneš and its Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, the son of that country's first president, were well known. As a statesman, Tomaš Masaryk (the father) had been extremely successful, while his Polish counterpart, Paderewski, had failed. Czech products—their cars, the Tatra and Skoda—were highly sought after; their spas, Karlsbad (Karlovy Vary) and Marienbad(Mariánské Lázne) enjoyed world renown. Few Polish products were preeminent in world markets (except Polish hams), while the Polish resorts Zakopane and Krynica were considered provincial.

My mother had been enthusiastic about Karlsbad, returning perennially to drink the waters said to cure gallstones. We had also passed through the country on our way to and from Vienna in 1937, and had been impressed with the politeness of the Czech custom officers when compared with the rudeness of the Polish ones; and with the efficiency of the restaurant service on the train. That was before the Anschluss and before that country was sacrificed on the altar of an illusionary, ephemeral faith in "Peace in Our Time."

The old Polish legend says that the three Slavic tribes, the Poles, the Czechs, and the Russe's (future Ukrainians, not the future Russians), were descendants of three brothers, Lech, Czech, and Rus, who had come from the East and had settled on lands occupied previously by aborigines, probably Germans, whom they called Niemcy, the mute ones, presumably because of the different languages. (Polish, Czech, and Ukrainian languages have enough similarities that

speaking one makes others comprehensible. Of the three, Czech is the most difficult because of the paucity of vowels.)

In spite of the alleged kinship, the three nations have not shared much brotherly love throughout history. We had lived in the part of Poland where the majority were Ukrainians; I had many Ukrainian friends and close acquaintances among the Ukrainian lawyers. I was well aware of their sentiments.

The Ukrainians hated the Poles, because throughout much of their history they had been ruled by them. The Poles and the Czechs were mutually contemptuous of each other. The Poles considered the Czechs cowards—Szweiks, from the hero of the well known Czech novel, *The Good Soldier Schweik*, by Jaroslav Hašek. (This is one of the two best books about WWI, the other being Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front.*)

The Czechs, having developed a mighty industry and being imbued with Western culture, looked down on the Poles as living in the Middle Ages, culturally and economically. And, as mentioned previously, the *Zaolzie* affair had further exacerbated the feelings between the two countries. Also, the Czechs were always sympathetic to pan-Slavism, whereas the Poles hated the idea.

For me, for us, the remaining European Jews, what mattered most was that the Czechs were not considered to be anti-Semitic. In this they differed from both the Ukrainians and the Poles.

The pogroms instigated by assorted terrorist regimes were staged always in the Ukraine, where they found fertile soil. When Bogdan Chmielnicki led his uprising against the Poles in the seventeenth century, the majority of his victims were Jews, entire Jewish populations of cities "liberated" by Chmielnicki's Cossacks were slaughtered. After the end of WWI, Simon Petlyura's Ukrainian bands continued the tradition of murdering Jews. To its credit, Poland, for much of its independence from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, had accepted Jews expelled from England, France, Holland, and Spain. This changed later and, after Poland regained its independence in 1918 (and with it a large share of East European Jews which came to constitute over 10 percent of its total population), it became violently anti-Semitic. Later on Polish patriots equated Jewishness with communism. The foremost Polish writer, Stefan Zeromski, exclaims in

his play, *Uciekla mi Przepioreczka w proso:* "Precz, Zydzi, komunisci [Away with you Jews, Communists]."

People say that Polish anti-Semitism was the reason that the Germans built their worst death camps in Poland. The lives of my family were saved by a brave, decent Polish woman, but she was an exception. There were others like her, but the sad truth is that traveling disguised as a Pole, I heard many a real Pole chastise Hitler for not having finished the job of killing Polish Jews. This stigma will be difficult for Poles to erase.

The Czechs have enjoyed little independence during their existence as a people; before WWI they had been ruled by the Austrians. Still, their land, particularly the city of Prague, often gave refuge to Jews expelled by other Western countries, including Germany.

After Czechoslovakia gained its independence in 1919, many Polish Jews studied medicine at the University of Prague, having been prevented from studying in Poland by the strictly enforced *numerus clausus* (admission quotas). Their diplomas were stamped *gueltig nur für Ausland,* [valid abroad only],", i.e., not in Czechoslovakia, but students had not planned to return to Poland anyhow. After WWII, these diplomas enabled their recipients to practice medicine in America after going through the process of nostrification, however.

So I entered Prague with a modicum of optimism and I was not disappointed. In the vicinity of the railroad station, I found a room in a respectable hotel, where the only identification requested was my permit to be in Czechoslovakia. Few people, particularly Jews, possessed any documents, and the ones that they carried were, as often as not, forgeries of whatever they were supposed to represent. My border-crossing pass (if not the name on it) was genuine, sort of. My interpretation of genuine was generous, because all the pass really allowed was for me to cross the bridge linking the two Cieszyns. However it served the purpose, being a document; the Czechs were not fussy.

As soon as I was established, I went out to look around and was immediately struck by the number of smiling faces about me. This was so different from Poland, from my first impression of Krakow where people were somber and had walked stealthily, I thought. In

Prague streets, Czech girls walked arm-in-arm with Russian soldiers, which would have been anathema in Poland. In general I observed an attitude of friendliness and warmth toward the Russians. It should not have surprised me. Before the war, the Czechs had been the friendliest of any mid-European nation toward the Soviet regime, and had most ardently espoused pan-Slavism.

Next I went in search of food and discovered that the fare in the restaurant was meager. Obviously the food situation here was worse than in Poland. Since my escape from Zloczów, my duodenal ulcer had flared up, and from time to time the pain was quite severe. I ate mostly milk or cheese, and that I was able to find. There was also plenty of beer, and I had some of that, although I shouldn't have, as it increased my pain briefly.

After stilling my hunger and feeling better (ulcers cause "hunger pains"), I resumed my exploration of the city. To my great surprise, the industrious Czechs were already running sightseeing tours of



Sightseeing: Prague, 1945.

Prague, so I decided to take one next morning. I have a photograph taken on that occasion.

We saw a few signs of the war, but Prague had evidently escaped major damage. The guide, a woman, spoke slowly realizing that many of the passengers on the bus did not speak Czech. There were a couple of Russian officers in the group and she answered their questions politely in Russian.

We were given a lesson in the history of the city which differed from what I had learned in school. The three brothers, Lech, Czech, and Rus were not mentioned. Evidently Prague was founded in the ninth century on the Vltava River, which is traversed by a bridge marked with the Star of David still intact. Prague is the seat of Charles University, the first university of central Europe, where classes were held in German, a language more accessible to foreign students than Czech. However sensible and pragmatic, such a thing could have never happened in chauvinistic Poland and testified to Czech liberalism. The guide pointed out the royal palace, the magnificent Hradcany castle, and what was the oldest Gothic cathedral in that part of the world. The trip ended in the main square, Vaclavske Namesti, where a couple of houses showed signs of severe damage from artillery fire. The guide also told us about defenestration, the peculiar way in which the residents of the city rid themselves of unwanted rulers. These unfortunates were thrown out from the windows of the castle to their deaths. (Such a fate also befell Jan Masaryk, the son of the founding father of prewar Czechoslovakia, whom the communists deposed in 1948 and are believed to have pushed to his death from a window.)

The bus was full. I spotted two men who looked to me like Jews. Don't ask me how I knew, but I was right. We exchanged names and histories. One man who called himself Matusek was from Stanislawów, near Zloczów; the other was from a small town in Romania. We spoke in Yiddish, which we would not have dared to do in Poland. Matuszek said that he was running away from Krakow because of a pogrom in which several Jews were killed only a few days ago. Since he had not actually been in the pogrom, I decided to suspend judgment until I received some confirmation.

(Not until I returned to Cieszyn, did I learn that there had indeed

been anti-Semitic riots not only in Krakow, but also in other Polish cities. The worst in Lublin after the provisional Lublin Government had left, where Jews had been murdered.)

Matuszek told me about a coffeehouse where Jews congregated. We agreed to meet there the next day, and indeed next morning I went there. That coffeehouse, whose name I don't recall, was located on a side street not far from Prague's main street, Vaclavske Namesti.

Matuszek introduced me to a few people, a couple from Poland, a Lithuanian, and a Russian. We knew him to be a Russian, although he did not admit it. He spoke only broken Yiddish and no Polish, although he claimed to be from Pinsk. We helped him by taking him at his word. He was a man in his forties.

One of the Poles and the Lithuanian had traveled to the American Zone in Germany. They had been to Munich and Frankfurt. They said that in both cities survivors of the concentration camps and others had managed to organize committees intent on helping Jews restore their lives. Also, American/Jewish civilian organizations were active, prominently the Joint Distribution Committee and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (known as the Joint and HIAS). Compared with Poland, life in these cities was wonderful for Jews, since the Germans did not dare to raise their heads. Both men planned to return to Germany, but they first intended to get back to Poland. They planned to buy German marks, which were the accepted currency in Germany and were worth many times their value in Poland. And to think that we could have acquired German marks in bushels after the war for practically nothing.

All these people planned to leave Poland and Czechoslovakia for the West, as soon as they could.

Inevitably the discussion switched to the subject of Palestine, and without exception, everyone present declared Palestine to be his ultimate goal. They confirmed what I had already heard in Bielsko: There were evidently routes from Munich to Italy, and from there Israeli agents smuggled Jews into Palestine, defying the British blockade. The Yugoslavs were also helpful. In the midst of this conversation, I was seized by a sudden spasm of severe pain and had to return to my hotel. When I returned to the coffeehouse the next day, Matuszek and the others had gone on their way, I was told. I met

one of these people, Mendel Leiter, later in Munich. He had gone back to Poland where he had found his wife, who had survived Auschwitz. But I am running ahead of my story.

The news about Germany was exciting and promising, and I decided to return to Cieszyn to share it with Lina. I crossed the border back to Poland without any difficulty, my border pass sufficing to placate the guards.

I found Lina in a bad mood and anxious. Cieszyn had become a major crossing point for Jews escaping Poland and going West. Some of these refugees were in poor condition. Henis had been inviting many of them to our apartment, and Lina had been offering them temporary shelter and food. Lina was afraid that inevitably this activity would compromise our disguise.

Another, less serious problem had arisen concerning my mother-in-law. Our housekeeper had asked why *starsza pani*, [the old lady]," did not go to church on Sunday. Lina had replied that her mother suffered from painful arthritis and could not go out. The not very bright woman had seemed to accept this explanation, which was inconsistent with Mother's other activities, but Lina saw these as warnings. We had to make a choice: either live more plausibly as Poles, or leave Cieszyn and Poland at once. Living as Jews in Poland for even a short time was not an option.

One cheery bit of news was the children's progress in school, which was excellent. They were particularly happy now; they had a new companion to play with, Lina Waldner's son, Jerzyk (now Dr. George Bear, a cardiologist).

It was now the beginning of September. News came that the Japanese had surrendered to the Americans and that WWII was finally ended. It caused only a small ripple of excitement in us. Japan was far away, both geographically and from our minds. Some of my Polish acquaintances expressed the hope that America would now be able to pay more attention to Europe, especially to Soviet/Polish problems. The communist Polish press gave the event large headlines that stressed the Russian contribution in ending the war in the Far East. Unabashedly they claimed total credit for the Soviet Army, which had just entered that war theater, and they hinted that it had taken only a few days for the Soviet Army to accomplish what the

Americans and British had been unable to accomplish in four years. The fact of the atomic bomb and its effect on the outcome of the war were scarcely mentioned.

I had little time now for my card games and talks with Father Lewandowski and even less for the bridge games at Mrs. Novak's. However I could not afford to break off relations altogether, not until we decided to leave Poland for good and had set the date.

At one of the bridge games, an event took place that gave me the push I evidently needed. During refreshments, when the game was interrupted, the unavoidable political discussion took place. A Mr. Kubiak, a man in his late fifties, was a writer who before the war had contributed to several Polish newspapers. He started off by asserting that the addition of Mikolajczyk and Stanislaw Grabski to the Lublin Government meant nothing because that government was run by Jews.

I had known Stanislaw Grabski, who had been my economics' professor at the law school in Lwów. He was strict but fair, unlike some of his colleagues, in his grading of Jewish students in spite of his known anti-Semitism. (If one could grade anti-Semitism, one would rank him as less rabid than his brother, Wladyslaw, who had been Prime Minister before Pilsudski.)

I had actually had a pleasant experience with him. Final examinations were oral, with the professor facing groups of four students. Grabski's first question to my group was, "Do veto powers exist in Poland at present?" The veto powers of the *szlachta* (noblemen), any one of whom could thus block the majority, had contributed in a major way to the demise of the country in the eighteenth century. There was no szlachta and such veto powers no longer existed. Hence, this was a catchy question. I was sitting in the fourth seat, and each of the three who had preceded me had answered in the negative, which was correct. However I said, "Yes." It happened that on my way to the examination I had glanced at a note in the Polish/Jewish paper *Chwila*, which said that the Minister of Finance had the right to veto expenditures that were incompatible with the general budget. I must say that I always managed to remain composed during examinations (or interrogations), whether at school or before agencies like the Russian NKVD or the German Gestapo. Since Grabski had been

Finance Minister, he was very pleased with my answer. To my delight he did not ask me any additional questions on that round, and in subsequent rounds he called on me only when he was dissatisfied with the answers of my colleagues.

Mr. Kubiak named the usual names: Berman, Minc, Oczab, Werfel, Bierut, Osubka-Morawski, and some others were Jews, he said. They ran the government. He finished his peroration with "Too bad that Hitler did not finish his job." This was too much. I said that neither Bierut nor Morawski were Jews. I said perhaps some of the Jews had been coerced to cooperate with the Russians. I said also wasn't it better to have Polish Jews in charge rather than Soviet commissars.

The discussion became very heated; at one point our hostess took me aside and whispered, "I am surprised at you, Magister Bulski. You are such an intelligent and knowledgeable man. How can you defend the Jews?" The fact that she called me by my full name and title showed her displeasure since usually she addressed me more intimately as "Pan Stefan." I was terribly disappointed in her; she had never expressed anti-Semitic feelings before.

That was my last visit to Mrs. Novak, although I still kept occasional company with the school principal and Father Lewandowski. Either they had not heard of the altercation at the Nowaks, or they did not mention it to me. I realized that at that time I was interested mainly in my own fate. I believe other Jews felt the same. I felt detached from the overall political issues that had once engaged me so profoundly. I cared about the politics of Palestine, because I hoped to rebuild my life as a Jew there. My two Polish friends and the other people I've described were delving into the past, pondering the future of their country; they seemed more altruistic, less focused on their individual destinies. They had not experienced the assaults and dangers on their persons that I had, and evidently had no need to redefine and reintegrate shattered selves.

In one of my last meetings with the principal, he said that he placed his hopes on a war between the United States and the Soviet Union, which had been predicted by Goebbels. When I pointed out that such a war, were it to happen, would be fought most likely on Poland's territory, he said that this was a price that he would be willing to pay for a free Poland.

But he also said that hopefully there would be no war, that if America took a firm stand, the Russians would succumb to a mere threat. America's new bomb with its devastating potential made America nearly invincible. However should Stalin refuse to give in, he was willing to accept a devastated, if free, Poland.

He actually believed in the possibility of such a scenario, but he stood alone. Other Poles despaired that America would not confront Russia. The contrast with what I had seen and heard in Prague could not have been more striking.

Winter was approaching, we decided that it was time to move. I went to Czechoslovakia for the second time. I stayed in Prague for one night, moved on to the Sudetenland and to Karlsbad, where I looked up the guest house where my mother used to stay. The landlady remembered her and wept when I told her that mother had died of typhus in the ghetto. She invited me to remain in her house, and I accepted her offer of lodging under condition that I would pay. I assumed that she needed the money. I was glad to have found a place because all the major hotels had been taken over by Russian army personnel, who strutted about in their long *shynels* (military coats), drinking the waters. Well, that is the way the world turns. The commissars had taken the place of the Kaisers and the Kings. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

There was not going to be any space in postwar Europe for the once mighty aristocrats of old, I thought. My landlady and I spoke about this; she said that she was sad that the old glamour was probably gone forever. But just the same, she had a warm spot for the Soviet soldiers who had liberated her country. I found out from her that the American Army had been in Pilzno, the famous Czech beer center, but had pulled back, leaving the city to the Russians. She did not know why this had happened. and I couldn't imagine what the reasons had been either.

Germans served as waiters and household help in Karlsbad and had been made to wear armbands stenciled with the word "German." Now the shoe was on the other foot. But I did not witness any mistreatment of Germans by the Czechs.

I decided that Karlsbad would be my jumping-off point for the next step, the trip to Munich which I would undertake in the next

several days. But I would return home first for a few days' rest.

My third trip into Czechoslovakia did not go smoothly. I was stopped on the train by the Czech militia and threatened that I would be pulled off and returned to Poland. I pretended to cry and said that I was on my way to find my brother who had been deported to a concentration camp in Germany. After a brief discussion, my two captors let me go albeit with a warning that if they caught me again, they would put me in prison. I left the train in Prague, shaken.

I was contemplating what to do, how to secure some kind of a document justifying my presence in Czechoslovakia. A thought occurred to me to visit the Polish liaison office. It turned out to be a most foolish idea. I should have remembered my previous experiences with Polish authorities.

The Polish consulate was located on one of the narrow streets near the big bridge. The office was on the main floor.

After a brief wait, I was shown into the presence of the consul, a short, stocky man, around fifty years old, with a stern face. A military type. He asked my name and the purpose of my visit. I felt uneasy; I gave him my assumed name; I told him that I was trying to get to Germany to find my brother. He gave me an ironic look and murmured, "*Ah, jeszcze jeden* [another one]." He meant "Jew." He said that he was going to arrest me and deport me to Poland, and moved to call someone to come in from an adjoining room. The window was open and without hesitation, I jumped through it and ran. I kept running until I was out of breath and on the other side of the bridge. I caught a streetcar and returned to the hotel. I realized that traveling in Czechoslovakia had become more hazardous, and deciding to forget further exploring, I got on with my plan to get to Munich.

I reached Karlsbad without a problem, West of Prague no one policed trains. I showed my ticket to a conductor and that was that. In contrast to Prague, food was readily available on the train; there was actually a restaurant car for travelers in first and second class.

On the train I became acquainted with some fellow Jews who were traveling west, also aiming for German and the American Zone. Most had made the trip before, some several times. They all carried sacks full of German marks. They mentioned that trustworthy guides

were available to guide one across the boarder. There was no question of attempting a legal crossing.

In Karlsbad I asked my acquaintance, my mother's former landlady, for help. I told her of my desire to get to Germany. She said that she knew of some guides who would take me across. She warned me to be careful however; many people had been robbed by the guides, and abandoned in the woods that separated Czechoslovakia from Germany.

I considered attempting a crossing on my own (with or without a guide) or alternately joining others who had crossed earlier. I decided on the latter course. By word of mouth, five men, unknown to each other, met at a coffeeshop. Unshaven, we did not look like trustworthy people. We decided to cross on the following Sunday, Sundays being considered safest. I was comforted to hear once more that the border was lightly guarded and that Czechoslovakian guards were sympathetic to Jews. I speak fluent German and considered that that might come in handy were trouble on the German side happen.

There were several crossing points near Karlovy Vary. Selb and Eger (Cheb), villages near the major German city of Marktredwitz (see map), were considered safest. It was early October. We crossed the border by night near Selb without incident. We simply walked through a wood. We reached the railroad station at Marktredwitz, which had been completely destroyed. There was not a single building left undamaged. It was cold, and I was shivering in my prewar coat, now shopworn. The group decided to separate. With one other man, I found an empty wagon, and we climbed into it to spend the rest of the night. Tears were running down my cheeks, I was so cold and shivering. I had some bread and cheese left, fortunately, and we ate, which helped some.

In the morning my comrade and I left the railroad station for the highway, which in contrast with the station, was in good condition. However I saw that that was because it had been repaired recently. Huge holes had been filled in. Traffic was light; I did not see any military convoys or American soldiers, to my disappointment. Neither were there any German policemen to be seen, which was fine with me. Several trucks passed us loaded with passengers, mostly women with children. They ignored us.

Unkempt, unshaven, in dirty clothing, we looked like tramps and decided that no truck would stop for us. Perhaps each man alone would do better. Reluctantly, we parted, and I walked up about a kilometer, where I stopped and began to signal passing vehicles to please give me a lift.

A truck finally did stop. The driver looked me over carefully and asked where I was coming from and where I was going to. Without hesitation I said that I was from Pomerania and was going west hoping to find my family, from which I had been separated during the war. I said that I had been a prisoner of war. His reaction was a brief, "Ach so." He looked at my civilian clothing and nodded with understanding. I was obviously coming from the East; that seemed enough to convince him.

However he consulted briefly with an older woman seated next to him in the cab. Evidently she had said yes, because he turned to me and said, "*Kommen sie mitt* [Come along]." I had mentioned Pomerania to cover my eastern German accent. Obviously they believed me. It was easy to fool Germans. A Pole or a Jew would have been much more suspicious under these circumstances. The driver, who was the only man on the truck, appeared to be in his seventies. But he looked sturdy and behaved with authority.

In the back of the truck were a few young women and three children, two boys and a girl, around ten years old. The woman in the cab started asking me questions. "*Wie war es im Osten?* [How was it on the eastern front?]" I was vague in my replies but one of the other woman said, "*Ich verstehe, sie können nicht alles erzaehlen* [I understand, you cannot tell us all]." She assured me that I could trust them. They too were running away; they had been through hell; all of the women, young and old, had been raped by the Russians and had barely escaped with their lives. They showed me scars on their faces and arms and legs from having been beaten. One woman was laying in the center of the truck covered with a blanket. The others said that she had been gang-raped repeatedly and was now bleeding and had a high fever.

It was difficult not to feel compassion. Yet I did ask myself whose fault was their misery? Not one of them said anything derogatory about Hitler. On the contrary, the woman whom I guessed

to be in her early twenties said: "The Americans are stupid. Instead of joining with us against the Russians, they joined the Russians against us. Well, Roosevelt was a Jew. The Americans will regret it." I was careful not to show any reaction, but the others still hushed her quickly.

They opened their bundles, and bread and sausage appeared, which they shared with me. Dead tired, I fell asleep and did not wake up until we had reached the outskirts of Munich, where I saw my first American soldier standing with two unarmed German policemen.

The American was young, tall, and handsome. He wore a smartly cut uniform topped by a short coat; Polish, Russian, and German soldiers had worn long heavy coats that made them look both clumsy and threatening. The youthful soldier carried a short rifle and had a pistol strapped to his left side. He wore also an armband with the letters "MP" stenciled on it. One of the Germans asked where we were from and where we were going. He gave me an understanding wink. I presumed that he took me for an escaping German P.O.W. The American looked away and waved us through. They did not search the truck.

For the next few miles to Munich we traveled with some military traffic, although there was less than I had expected. At checkpoints, the driver had me lie down and pretend to be sick to avoid questioning.

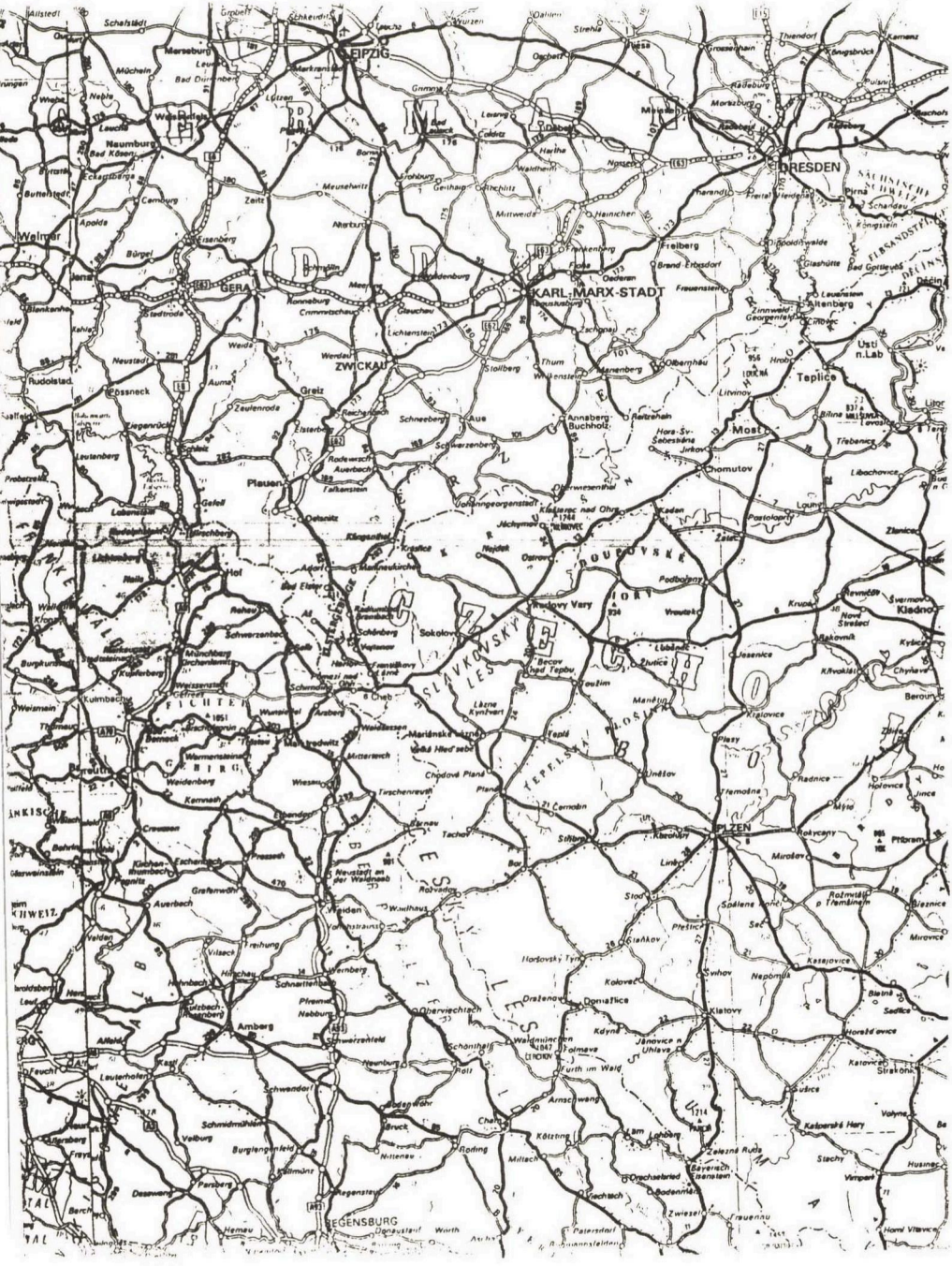
We were halted again outside Munich, but were waved through immediately. I had gotten so accustomed to being questioned, searched, scrutinized, bullied over the last five years, that it was almost a shock to be treated decently. We drove to the center of the town. I said good-bye to my fellow travelers, and thanked them for the help they had given me. They were not planning to stop in Munich, but were traveling farther west. I wondered how many SS men, how many murderers, German speaking Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians, had escaped from the Allies on the very route I had taken. My new friends had embraced me as a German, had asked no questions, but offered me their full support, evidently unconcerned about whatever deeds I might have committed.

When I descended from the truck, I felt slightly faint, and was unsure on my feet. I had no clear plan; no idea of where to go and whom to turn to.

I looked about and saw only ruins. The street was a thoroughfare, heavy with vehicular traffic, mostly military trucks. Nobody paid any attention to me as I stood forlornly leaning against a lamppost. Finally I made up my mind.

Remembering what I had heard in Prague, I turned to a policeman and asked him if he could direct me to the "Jewish committee." He answered very politely, almost obsequiously, "*Sie meinen das Museum* [You mean the museum]." He told me to take the tram, so and so many stops, he said, and he also described the building. I thanked him, followed his instructions, and in about fifteen minutes reached the museum.

The large entry hall was a beehive of activity; the prevailing language was Yiddish. I noticed some people with armbands stenciled with the words "Central Committee," and I asked one of them in Yiddish what was I supposed to do to register to remain in Munich. Also in Yiddish, he asked me where I had come from, and how had I survived. He himself was from Wilno and had been a partisan in the forest. He was very surprised when I told him that I had left a wife and children still in Poland, and advised me to register the entire family now. He turned me over to a man sitting behind one of several desks, who said that he was from Warsaw. He had a numbered tattooed on his left forearm. He filled out registration cards for myself and my wife, and said that regardless where I had come from, I was to register as having come from Dachau, which stood for all concentration camps. I said that I was a lawyer when he asked about my prewar occupation. He inserted the title Doctor in front of my name, but smiled and said that while many people claimed to be doctors, lawyers, and engineers, he was skeptical about such claims. I assured him that I was a lawyer indeed and said that I had documents to prove both my identity and education. He said that it did not matter, the only thing that mattered was that I was a Jew and a survivor. When I told him that I was hungry and felt weak, he took me next door and served me coffee and white bread. It was real coffee, the first that I had had since the outbreak of the war. The white bread tasted delicious. He watched me eat with a benign smile. After I stilled my hunger, we went back to the registration room, where I received an assignment for a temporary residence in a suburb of Munich, Pasch-



The border between Czechoslovakia and Germany

ing (Pasing). He took me outside the museum and advised me which tram to take to begin with and where to change.

I reached my destination late in the afternoon. After the destruction of Munich, the suburb Pasching looked like an oasis of tranquillity. Handsome villas and neat houses lined clean streets. The apartment to which I was assigned had belonged to an SS man, who was under arrest by the Americans; he had served as a guard in the Dachau concentration camp. His wife, Frau Gretchen Knoebel, who looked to be in her twenties, was a mousy young woman of medium build. She had a freckled face; her head was adorned by a braid of straw-colored hair twisted around and anchored with pins on top of her head. She was very frightened but calmed down when I assured her that nothing was going to happen to her.

The apartment consisted of two small rooms and a kitchen. After a while a small, pretty, ash-blond girl, three or four years old, came out of the bedroom and hid behind her mother. After I declined to take her bedroom, Frau Knoebel made a bed for me on the couch in the dining room. Fully dressed, I fell down on the makeshift bed and fell asleep.

My first day in Germany fell on October 23, 1945; it was ten months since I had left Zloczów.

Chapter Six

Munich

I slept until my landlady knocked on my door. She had been afraid that I would never awaken. She served me a meager breakfast of ersatz coffee and bread, apologizing that it was all she had. I undressed, shaved, and took a shower, which to my surprise had warm water. I told her that I wanted to go to the museum that housed the Jewish Committee, and she gave me directions, which involved changing trams. These ran often, but were crowded with people, some clinging outside reminding me of bunches of grapes.

The trams passed through streets with signs in German and in English, the latter pointing to military installations and UNRRA. Here and there an intact house remained standing. Most were burnt-out shells. Still from the darkness of rubble people emerged; some were obviously living in these ruins.

I found the museum, where the man to whom I had spoken on my first day in Germany recognized me and asked me to sit down, and to have breakfast, an invitation that I gladly accepted. I was still wobbly, and I was hungry in spite of the German landlady's offerings. The man took me next door, where I was given a substantial breakfast of eggs, bread, and real coffee. These were powdered eggs, the German waitress told me, for the first time in my life I found out that eggs could come in powdered form.

After stilling my hunger, I returned to my newly found friend. I asked him what were our people doing, and if there was a possibility of earning a living. With a smile, he responded that the majority of people were on the "open" market, dealing mostly in various currencies. The mark was the legitimate currency. However, he added, as a survivor, I belonged in a special category. I was now a refugee, a DP, a displaced person, and as such, I was eligible to receive benefits, including food coupons, which would assure that we did not go hungry. Furthermore, in the few reopened restaurants, refugees received priority, and did not have to wait in lines. It was all very strange to me.

He also said that, although some survivors remained in Munich, many preferred to remain in the barracks of the former concentration camps. That was incomprehensible to me. He said that the circumstances of our survival, which I had described to him briefly, were very different from those of others and that I should consider myself fortunate. The people who were liberated from the camps had suffered great devastation and needed time to recover from their ordeal. It was pathetic perhaps, but they evidently needed the security of supervised quarters. Since I had not been in a concentration camp, I could not come even close to comprehending.

My mentor showed me some pictures of death camps that appeared in the German press, which were terrible. While I had heard a few stories from former inmates in Poland, very little of what he showed me had appeared in either Russian or Polish papers.

He strongly advised me to go back to Poland at once to bring back my family. He said that it was reckless to leave behind a family, a family that had so miraculously survived. It was rumored that the Soviets would soon close the borders tightly and that no one would be able to leave the territories under their control. I recalled similar stories when we were getting ready to leave Zloczów for "resettlement" that proved to be false. However this time could be different. In these fluid times, one could not afford to take chances. Furthermore, there was a difference between leaving territories from which the Soviets wanted us to go, from which they practically forced us to go, and fleeing territories to which we had been assigned, with the objective of "going over" to the Americans.

I did not need encouragement to join my family, or rather in having my family join me, and I meant to make haste. But I had to look around first, put some plans in motion before fetching my family.

I already made up my mind not to go to a refugee camp, so I asked my friend how one went about obtaining an apartment. From what I had seen, judging by the scope of the destruction, finding private lodgings would be difficult. He replied that this was so—especially within city limits which was well-nigh impossible—unless I was able to obtain a job with the Americans, or with an agency attached to the American occupation forces. There were two such

Jewish agencies active in Munich, the Joint and HIAS. On my trip to Prague, I had heard about the Joint, and I knew from before the war that most Jews traveling to America had gone with the help of HIAS. In the crowd in the museum, I had noticed a few men in American uniforms with the Joint insignia, but none from HIAS.

The man speaking to me had been civil, but I sensed some subtle change in him, as I continued to ruminate about my plans to take care of my family myself. Suddenly, he said, "Now I do believe you. You *are* a lawyer. (Was it my demeanor that made him change his mind?) Please don't blame me for my skepticism; so many tell such lies when they register with us." He confided, "I sometimes wonder whether only the riff-raff survived."

I said that in my wanderings to date, I had met many educated, civilized Jews who had survived the war, The riff-raff—well undoubtedly some of them had survived. In general, it probably was true that the more hardened among us fared better than the soft intelligentsia. And undoubtedly some had become hardened by their experiences.

My interlocutor, whose name was Slepak, he said, became increasingly effusive. He said that it was difficult to realize how abusive some people had become. "People do not ask, they demand." Dropping the riff-raff motif, he said that he found dealing with Hungarian Jews particularly difficult. Most of them were religious, most demanded amenities he was in no position to give. He said that he didn't even get paid for what he was doing; he was a volunteer. He was holding on because he felt that after the terrible disaster that had struck our Jewish people, we Jews should stick together. But he remarked sadly, "Circumstances make some people act like animals."

I asked him if he were so disenchanted, why hadn't he quit. He had been a Hebrew teacher in a high school in Wilno before the war, Mr. Slepak said. He had escaped to the Soviet Union when the Germans were closing in on Wilno in 1941. He had joined the Soviet Army; after that army had invaded Germany, he had deserted and had come to Munich.

While we were talking, as if on cue, a man with a beard and sidelocks came barging into the cubicle, shouting and demanding to see "the manager." "I must have kosher food. It must be certified by a rabbi. I do not trust you. I am sure that what you give me is *trayf*."

Red of face, he yelled and shook his fingers in Mr. Slepak's face, undeterred by my presence. Slepak tried to pacify him, assuring him that the food came straight from America and that it was surely kosher.

The man calmed down and suddenly started to cry. "Look," he said, "I survived in hiding, eating only bread, some vegetables, potatoes. I do not want to become a *trayfniak* now."

"See what I mean," said Slepak after the man left.

Other applicants came in and demanded his attention, so I said good-bye to Mr. Slepak and went to the main hall of the building. It was crowded, and I could hear all languages of eastern Europe being spoken: German, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian. The prevailing language was Yiddish, spoken however, with regional intonations and accents. On that particular day, judging from the speech, the majority of people in the hall were Lithuanian Jews. They seemed to be running this organization, if one could call such a makeshift arrangement an organization.

There was a steady stream of newcomers.

Several new arrivals showed the telltale bulges under their coats; they were carrying guns, suggesting they had been partisans or had hidden in the woods. There were a few women, but I saw no children on this first day.

I stepped outside, into an autumn chill in the air. My worn coat offered little protection. When I had bought the coat in the good old days, it had been custom made and had fit like a glove. I had lost so much weight that I could not button it snugly, so I had girded the coat with a military belt.

I decided to leave the museum for now, and started to walk toward the city. I crossed a bridge. The museum building I had left and the houses surrounding it had been an oasis in a landscape of burned and bombed shells of houses. What I saw was a sea of ruins. The Polish cities that I had seen, Krakow, Bielsko, Cieszyn had been hardly touched by the war, and I had not seen any major damage in Czechoslovakia. I had not seen Warsaw after the war which people said had been almost completely destroyed. On my way into Munich I had passed some smaller towns that showed signs of having been bombed. What I saw here was almost total destruction reminding me

of Zloczów when I had entered it after the Germans had withdrawn. What was different here was that the streets had been swept clean with no sign of garbage anywhere. In the midst of the destruction, some houses pockmarked by shell fragments showed signs of being lived in. People were rushing about in all directions, mostly women with children, most shabbily dressed although there were a few notable exceptions. I wandered around for about an hour. Aside from the destruction, in feeling, the city and crowds reminded me of Krakow with its hustle and bustle.

I suddenly felt faint, so I returned to the museum for another meal. The crowd had diminished; I did not see a familiar face.

After I ate and rested, I decided to return to Pasching.

The landlady made me some ersatz coffee, and I went to sleep. I slept soundly and awoke next day refreshed and much stronger.

It was time to take Slepak's advice and return to Cieszyn to fetch my family. But, refreshed as I felt, I decided to remain in Munich for another couple of days to continue to rebuild my strength and to make provisions for their coming.

The museum seemed to be the hub of Jewish activity, so I returned there. As always, I hoped for some familiar faces from home, but I saw no one. The place was even more crowded than on the previous day. Slepak introduced me to some of his colleagues at the committee, whose official name was the *Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria.* They already had their round seal, a reflection of their life in the Soviet Union, I thought with some amusement, where every organization had had to have a round seal, where the round seal was essential.

When the Soviets had nationalized my father's factory in 1939, the director had immediately ordered a round seal. The seal was so important that when it was not secured in the safe, Narajewski had carried it in the sleeve of his boot. Often Soviet documents were imprinted with seals that had no connection to organizations using them. Anyhow Russian military paid no attention to documents issued by civilian authorities, whoever they claimed to be.

The Central Committee had given me a certificate overprinted on a letterhead of the Joint Distribution Committee.

The members of the Central Committee complained bitterly that

there was no important American Jewish representative in Munich. A young military chaplain named Abraham Klausner, whom they called a Tsadik, had alone secured provisions for them from the American Army.

However, besides Rabbi Klausner, there were other American Jewish servicemen, eager to help, many of them German Jews by birth. One name in particular was mentioned—that of a physician, Dr. Kurt Elias, who was head of the American military hospital in Munich.

It was a cold day, but it was warm in the museum so I decided to spend the day there. I also needed the food. When I had received my registration certificate, I had also received a food allocation, i.e., food stamps, which were stamped by another office, "*die Betreuungstelle fuer ehemaligen KZ-Insassen* [Distributing Agency for Former KZ Concentration Camp Inmates]."

My registration number for that agency was 162180; Lina's number was 206292. I had received her number in absentia, the numbers seemed to be high, given my estimates for the total number of overall survivors.

A news item that worried us very much and was much discussed by the Central Committee was an order issued by General Eisenhower; it mandated the repatriation of all refugees to their native countries. Being Jewish was not recognized as a separate nationality by the American military authorities, and the fact that Jews refused to go back to Poland was incomprehensible to the officers of the American Army. In the past, while the war was still going on, the American Army had forcibly repatriated Russian POWs. I still remembered, from way back in Przemysl and later on in Krakow, the sorry picture of these pitiful wretches, hungry and beaten, led in chains by their former comrades, who claimed that they were traitors because they had allowed themselves to be captured. I shuddered, remembering how I had escaped being sent back to Poland by the contemptuous Polish consul in Prague.

Thanks to the efforts of Rabbi Klausner (I was told), the repatriation ordered by Eisenhower was countermanded by President Truman. Still, the members of the committee remained uneasy about the situation.

After evaluating all that I had seen during these few days—the difficult living conditions, the oncoming winter, and the warnings about the Jewish riff-raff—I decided to leave Munich as soon as possible and suggest to Lina that we spend the winter in Cieszyn and leave Poland only in the spring.

I went to say good-bye to my landlady and warned her not to let anybody else in during my absence, assuring her that I should return soon. I left my requisition form with her.

I did not tell her where I was going, and she was too frightened of me to ask questions. She was surprised when I gave her some extra money and told her to use whatever food I was leaving behind.

Again I went to the museum, and I asked around whether there was any transportation available to the Czech border. I was told that trains were running once a day, and if I hurried I might catch the one due today. Unfortunately when I arrived at the main railroad station, the train had already left. A German railroad man who took me for a fellow German, advised me to be early next morning because, "*die Juden besiegen die Zuege and nehmen alle beste Plaetze* [Jews are occupying the trains and taking all the best seats]." I returned to Pasching disappointed.

My landlady was surprised to see me but as usual asked no questions. I went to sleep and asked her to wake me at 6:00 A.M. I had bad dreams and woke up often. In the morning, I was on my way.

When I got to the station, a crowd was waiting already; Jews stood conspicuously apart, segregating by their own choice this time, but contrary to what the German had told me yesterday, there were only about twenty of them. They were watched by the hundreds of Germans also waiting for the train with a mixture of interest and apprehension. I joined the Jewish group.

A few German policemen kept the Germans in order in a queue forming in front of the expected door openings of the railroad cars. The Jewish group was left alone, but eventually one of the policemen very politely suggested that we line up in front of the first car where, he said, there would be plenty of seats for everyone. Not a single German joined our line. There was on the station a single American with an MP armband, who looked bored and paid no attention to us.

When I asked a fellow Jew where to buy tickets, he laughed and

said ironically, "The price of tickets is the very least the Nazis owe us." The train came; we settled in three compartments in a second-class car.

Second class meant upholstered seats. Third class had wooden benches. Before the war there had also been a first class with still wider seats.

Once we, the Jews, were settled, the German policeman let some Germans occupy the remaining compartments of our car. His behavior toward us mixed obsequiousness with fear and, I suspected, hatred.

The group in my compartment were all Polish Jews. All were on a "business" trip, strangers to one another with two exceptions, and talk was about what would be easy and profitable to bring back to Munich. All agreed that German marks were the best bet and easiest to carry.

When I said that I was going back to bring over my family, all grew silent. Someone then asked me to tell how we had managed to survive, a husband and wife with children! It turned out that not one of them had a family, and each had lost spouses, parents, children. I told them that I too, had lost my parents. People had tears in their eyes and we asked the question I was going to hear over and over again, "How are Jews ever going to rebuild their lives?"

Everyone had ample food, and we soon shared it—a part of a healing ritual?

The railroad stations that we passed were in shambles but the tracks seemed in good shape. We stopped at some stations to stretch our legs, and while we stepped out the floors of the cars were swept clean, over again after each long stop. In Regensburg, two would-be passengers, Germans, entered our compartment, but one of our group, Staszek, yelled, "'*Raus*," and they withdrew quickly. The group laughed, and someone remarked something to the effect that the shoe was now on the other foot.

I had introduced myself by my full name, but the others offered only their first names, all Polish sounding. There was Staszek, two Wladeks, a Tadek, and so on. Two of them knew each other, and seemed to be in some form of business partnership.

We arrived near the border at Marktredwitz late in the evening.

My new friends, most of whom had made this trip several times before, took me to a Jewish center, a couple of rooms in a half-destroyed house not far from the railroad station. We slept at this center on military cots with blankets or on the floor to avoid the vermin. There were no evident lice but the place swarmed with fleas.

We remained at the center on the next day into the evening. We discussed the best point of crossing into Czechoslovakia. To go to Prague, Cheb, or Hof were preferred over Selb, where I had crossed; Selb was considered too far out of the way. However, I preferred it because it was closer to Karlsbad where I had the acquaintance, my mother's former landlady, who I thought might help me.

The night of our crossing was cloudy, a light snow was falling. The consensus was that this would facilitate our attempt. We split into groups of two or three. In my group was Staszek and one of the Wladeks. Staszek was the youngest, still in his twenties, and he seemed also to be the toughest; he carried a gun. Wladek, the other man in my group, appeared older; he was emaciated and marked on his arm with the concentration camp tattoo. He claimed to have been employed in the camp, working in a military factory as a skilled mechanic. Staszek had come from Wilno, Wladek from Tarnobrzeg.

We crossed the border at Selb, simply walking straight ahead, and arrived on the Czech side without a hitch. We bade good-bye to one another. Later in Munich I saw Staszek frequently. He had become a major operator on the "free market." I learned his full assumed name, Stanislaw Kobylak then. I lost track of Staszek at some point; I heard that he had been able to flee to Palestine. I did meet him years later in Israel.

I did not detour as I had planned to Karlovy Vary, but stayed at the station, because I was anxious not to miss the train to Prague. I admired Czech efficiency. In Poland, trains were always hours late if they came at all.

In Prague, I caught a train to Cieszyn and was home next day. The train from Prague to Cieszyn runs along a river and passes through beautiful countryside. However, I slept most of the way.

Lina and the children greeted me with love and anxiety. I told them about my trips and what I had seen and done in Munich. I suggested at the end of my tale that perhaps we should stay in Cieszyn

for the winter. I gave my reasons for my suggestion: the absence of cohesion among Jews and the difficulty of finding an apartment. Lina immediately and strongly vetoed the idea. The decision was made to leave for Munich within a day or so.

Our home had become a way station for people escaping Poland; a bridge adjacent to our house and visible from our windows was the crossing point to Czechoslovakia. Lina and Henis had approached Jews on the streets and had invited them for a bite or tea, and had watched them cross to safety. All this had to become known to people in town. Henis had run into a man from his native village Sassów (where Lina and I had been married). This man, whose name was Klein and who later came to the United States and became a millionaire builder, had recognized Henis. Lina felt that our passing as Poles was becoming hopelessly compromised. She wanted to leave at once, because she felt that for Jews, life in Poland was still difficult and dangerous and would never improve.

In anticipation of leaving, she had already liquidated virtually everything. She had left her store to Mrs. Piotrowski; she had discharged the housekeeper; she had packed our belongings. With a heavy heart, I left behind many books, papers, newspaper clippings, but kept and packed in a separate suitcase some documents, photos, and the memoir that I had kept during the war. (Unfortunately, some of these documents were lost in subsequent trips.)

In my absence there had been an incident, another complication that might cause trouble in the future, which fueled my wife's wish to leave Cieszyn as soon as possible. As I mentioned before, Lina Beer and Misia operated a store selling odds and ends; in addition they were buying German prewar marks, which had good value in the currency black market for resale. Lina Beer borrowed my wife's crossing pass, and went with Kurt Pollak to the other side to exchange the marks for dollars. Kurt and Lina Beer were caught by the Czech police and held. Lina's sister, Jadzia, and Lina's future husband, Alfred Waldner, went to Czechoslovakia to try to rescue them.

Jadzia and Alfred succeeded in bribing the guards. Lina Beer and Kurt Pollak returned safely. However the Czech police had confiscated the crossing cards. Lina, my wife, went at once to the police and claimed that she lost her card. She obtained a duplicate, but wor-

ried that the first card might turn up. Since the crossing cards had no photos, Lina Beer had claimed to be my wife.

Yet a third complication was an event that should have been comforting, should have induced us to remain in Cieszyn, but had the opposite effect. While I had been away, a delegation consisting of Mr. Tomaszek, the former temporary principal, Mrs. Nowak, and a few others, had come to our house and had told Lina that at a meeting of the school council, I had been suggested and unanimously approved to be the council's candidate for school district chairman.

I was surprised to hear that Mrs. Nowak had been in the group, given my altercation in her apartment with Mr. Kubiak. However, my wife said, she had been as friendly as the others, had kissed Lina, and had asked her to influence me to accept the nomination.

Lina declined at once with the excuse that the family was moving to Wroclaw, where I had been given a high government position. The delegation was disappointed; they still insisted that they planned to talk to me and persuade me to change my position.

I believe that two reasons guided the group's choice; first they genuinely liked me, and second, Mr. Tomaszek was being replaced by a permanent principal, a stranger to Cieszyn, a Mr. Fomynfan (a funny-sounding name even at that time when so many funny sounding names were in circulation). The group hoped to have me act as a counterweight to the new man, who was a Russianized Pole and devoted communist. They were naive and still believed that the communists would allow anyone not their own man in any position of power.

I was firm in saying "No," and committed myself irrevocably to the move. I went to see Serog and advised him of our decision. I asked him to tell the employees at the plant and the crowd at the Nowaks that we were moving to Wroclaw. I also said my good-byes to the school principal, and I reiterated that I was offered a "high position" in the court in Wroclaw. I thanked him for his and the delegation's trust in me, but said that my decision was irrevocable.

I went to say good-bye to Father Lewandowski. He was not fooled by my fairy tale. He said straight out, "How are matters in Munich?" and asked whether I was not afraid to move to a country which had committed such terrible crimes against the Jews. This led

to mutual openness, and we had a long talk. I told Father Lewandowski that Munich was only a way station on our odyssey to Palestine. He asked me whether I trusted the British and mentioned their betrayal of Poland at Yalta. I said that I didn't but that we put our hopes in America. Father Lewandowski was sorry to lose my daughters as pupils, whom he praised highly as exceptionally gifted and well behaved.

He was worried about Poland's future—we spoke about that—and asked my opinion. He said that the new principal had already decided that teaching religion in school would be prohibited. I told Father Lewandowski about my experience in the Ukraine; the Russians had been unable to eradicate religion there and would be unable to do so in Poland. As for the general situation, I was afraid, as he was, that all of Europe would fall under Soviet domination. On this somber note we said good-bye.

He wished me luck; we embraced. If he is still alive and happens to read this book, I want him to know that I remember him very fondly.

Before we left Poland I made yet another trip to Bielsko where I wanted to advise the Zionist group about the situation in Munich. However they had dispersed, mostly to Warsaw, Lódz, and Wroclaw, where, I suppose, most of them remained until 1956. Among the group had been Mr. Hoffman, who had married Clara; it was her son who was to win a Nobel Prize. I took this opportunity to say goodbye to my prewar best friend, Ignac Herman, and to his wife, Gina. (Ignac died of leukemia in Poland. Gina was able to visit us in the States in the 1970s.)

The very next evening after my return, the Serogs gave an elaborate farewell dinner for us; Kurt and Nusia Pollak were also present. This time Serog did not try to persuade me to stay; he knew our minds were made up. Besides, he himself was becoming less sure about the future of Poland. He was quite confident however, that he would be able to hang on to the factory.

At Lina's advice, I did not try to dissuade him. She said that Serog did not have or was not able to see or comprehend our experience with the Russians in Zloczów in 1939. Sadly this was true. It was repeated in later years in America. Serog and others and later

Americans could not imagine that Russians had behaved as we described.

Soon tears were shed, good-byes said, wishes expressed, "We hope to see you, some day, again." We never did see the Serogs again. However, Kurt Pollak, a taciturn man, listened intently to my comments about Germany and the situation in Munich.

I would like to digress to mention a curious episode that happened to Lina while I was in Munich. One day she had a visit from two people from Zloczów.

One was Lonek Brandes, the son of my father's partner, the bad sheep of that family. The other was Daniel Bockhaut, whose father had owned the largest hardware store in Zloczów. Daniel had been a member of my "kvutza" during the short time I had been a member of the Hashomer Hatzair. Both of us had parted from the "Shomer," disillusioned with its far left orientation. These two fellows could not have had more diverse backgrounds. Bockhaut had been a hardworking man in his family hardware store. Lonek had never done an honest day's work in his life. Both men were a few years my senior.

Lonek told Lina that Daniel and he had met in Russia, to which they had managed to escape during the German onslaught. Currently they were conducting business within Russia and had crossed the new Polish–Russian border several times. That by itself was not news. It was common knowledge that the border was not as tightly sealed as it had been before the war and that adventurers were taking advantage of the situation by traveling to Russia to sell to eager customers goods from the West.

That Lonek was participating in this enterprise also came as no surprise to me. For 100 rubles, he had sold to one of the first naive Russian soldiers who arrived in Zloczów a watch without a movement and with no hands.

There were few people in Zloczów to whom Lonek had not owed money. Once when both Lina and I were in Lwów for a seminar and I left her to attend to some business for my father, Lonek had approached her with tears in his eyes pleading that his wife needed an operation, but they had no money. Lina, even though she had been warned by me, could not resist his tearful pleading and had given him

all the money she had. Of course, the story of the wife's illness was fabricated.

Lonek could be convincing. Several times in the past, I myself had given him money in Lwów when he had pleaded that he needed it for the railroad fare home. My mother too had been a frequent soft touch.

Lonek told Lina that he had some important issues to discuss with me; she guessed that he wanted to borrow money. She told him that she had very little money before he had a chance to request it; she said that she did not expect me back soon. The two men stayed only one day, and both fellows left. The tragic part of the story is that we never heard from them again. I suspect that they made one crossing too many and were caught; or that they were shot and killed trying to cross. Or perhaps they ended up in a gulag.

Lina was already packed, not that there was much to pack. Furthermore we did not want to provoke too much attention by carrying excess luggage when we crossed the bridge for this, hopefully, last time. We had four suitcases; I carried two and the other two were carried by Lina. Edith and Selma had some small packages to carry. We set out the next day after Serog's party on our next leg of our journey. We'd gone from Zloczów to Przemysl, to Krakow, to Cieszyn. Now to Munich. So far we had crossed two borders. Those returning from Russia had longer journeys, but we had small children, which complicated matters.

Once safely on the Czech side of Cieszyn, we caught the train to Prague and arrived there without any trouble. We carried our boarder crossing passes, but were never forced to show them. We decided to stay in Prague a couple of days to rest and to visit the sights of this beautiful city. My family loved Prague. Our next step was Karlovy Vary.

I went to see Mrs. Hrdlicka, my mother's landlady in the days when mother had taken the "waters" in this world-famous resort. Would she accommodate us for a couple of days before we crossed the border to Germany? When I had seen Mrs. Hrdlicka on my first visit to Karlovy Vary, she had been very happy about being liberated from the Germans by the Russians. This time she was much less enthusiastic. She could not take us in, she said, because her villa had been requisitioned for Soviet Army veterans. She complained that

they had turned the place into a pigsty. We parted, and I went to look for another place to stay.

It turned out to be difficult because all the hotels and many smaller villas were occupied by Russians. Finally I found a farmhouse where we rested for the night.

Next day I went out to look around, but practically the only people in the streets were Russian soldiers, marching stiffly while sipping the waters from tall glasses through glass straws.

I brought my family to show them the resplendent hotels, the Grand Hotel, Pupp, and the Hotel Imperial; all were indeed fully occupied by Russian officers. My mother, a yearly visitor to Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad before WWI), had told us stories about the luxurious interiors of the hotels, but we were not allowed inside to see for ourselves. Russian military personnel enjoying the waters in Karlovy Vary carried no sidearms, but the entrances to the hotels were manned by armed sentries. As we were looking at the faded facade of Pupp, an older Czech came over to talk.

I told him that we were Polish Jews running away from the Poles and trying to get to the American Zone in Germany, on our way to Palestine. He nodded in sympathy, adding that the Czechs had suffered under the Germans with the Sudeten Germans throwing their weight around. He then asked where we had come from originally in Poland, and I told him that we had come from the vicinity of Lwów. He used to be a waiter at a smaller hotel, he said, but he had always liked to come to Pupp for a glass of Pilsener, the famous Czech beer, which he shared with friends that worked there. "Ah," he said, "it is all gone now." When we told him that we had to leave, he looked around cautiously and whispered, "Last year this place was '*nur fuer Deutsche*' and now it is like this." It sounded almost like the Polish saying, "*Zamienil stryjek na siekierke kijek* [Uncle changed from an ax to a stick]." Had the Czechs already become disillusioned with their friends, the Russians?

He continued, "The same is going on in Marienbad." Karlsbad and Marienbad were the two twin spas frequented by wealthy middle class people, including many Jews. Karlsbad was favored by people from Galicja; Marienbad by Jews from Warsaw. Karlsbad was supposed to offer cures for stomach illnesses, whereas Marienbad spe-

cialized in the so-called women's problems. The Czech man rushed away as we went to look for a place to eat.

On a side street, we found a small restaurant and had lunch. The food was better than in Prague. The waitresses were Sudeten Germans wearing armbands with the word "German" stenciled on them. They were not harassed, since there were no Russians in the place; surprisingly some people even left tips for them.

The farmer in whose house we spent the night recommended a guide in Cheb (Eger), and offered to take us there and help with the children and luggage. We accepted his offer. The trip took a whole day. To our pleasant surprise, we found in Cheb a large group of refugees, among them friends from Zloczów, Dr. Jollek and his wife, Sonia. There was also a young fellow from Zloczów, Fenster, who was attached to the Jolleks, and helped them with their luggage. Fenster now lives in Israel.

The guide turned out to be a gaunt Sudeten German with the "German" armband, who said that he would take us to the other side for a price of five marks a head. He told us to leave the luggage in his house and that we should find another place to wait for him. Then he disappeared.

After a while, our farmer who had not yet gone home, came running to warn us that the guide had turned us over to the Czech authorities. What happened next, I described in my earlier book, *Zloczów Memoir*.

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 relative benevolence of Czech authorities, Lina and I decided to try to reclaim our luggage. 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 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!"

When we returned, some of the group had gone ahead, and it started to rain and snow, and it was dark. The rest of us including the Jolleks and Fenster, decided to cross on our own. The wet grass and slush made the walking difficult. We had to stop every few hundred yards to give the children and ourselves a rest. The suitcases felt as if they were filled with stones. But finally we noticed the border markings and after a few more minutes we were in Germany. We had crossed the Rubicon.

Lina and I never returned to Poland or visited Russia in spite of our wide travels abroad. Our two daughters, Edith and Selma, went to Zloczów, and also to Przemysl and Krakow in the summer of 1990. They found my father's factory practically intact, still producing items similar to what we were making before the war. Some people remembered us and fondly recalled the good old days.

When I was a young student at *gimnazjum*, my favorite books were about travels, and I had dreamed about foreign lands and places. I never dreamed about the kind of traveling we did during and after this terrible war.

Chapter Seven

Jews Find a Haven—Germany

As we came out from the woods, we saw a road with signs pointing to various towns. One was Selb, which I remembered from my first crossing; others pointed toward Arzberg and Marktredwitz from where, I had heard in the museum, trains were already running to Munich. The single policeman at the crossroads paid us no attention; in fact, we had the impression that he was avoiding us. There was no American sentry.

I approached the German and asked him whether trains were running and how often. He seemed surprised at my fluent German. He replied politely that there were trains on a twice-daily schedule and that they were overcrowded. He added with some hesitation, "*Fuer Juden ist immer Platz* [For Jews there is always room]." This was the first time that I was identified as a Jew openly by a German. I thought that the policeman was watching to see my reaction. I thanked him and asked how far was it to the station and how to get there. He said that there was a peasant nearby who for a few marks or cigarettes would show us the way. I still had cigarettes from Munich. I did not smoke, but everybody carried cigarettes, the currency accepted by all.

I went in the direction indicated and found myself at a neat cottage. I knocked and went in. Women and children and one elderly man were seated around the table.

I spoke to the man and told him what I wanted. For cigarettes he was willing to take us to the train. However he had room for only some of us on his horse-drawn hay wagon. He would refer the others to neighbors. The group split up. My family and Henis went with the peasant. The children and my mother-in-law were holding up very well, but the march through the woods in rain and sleet had taken their toll on all of us, and we were happy to be seated at least. We were in Marktredwitz in half an hour and boarded the train to Munich that happened to be standing in the station.

We had no trouble finding seats in the "Jewish" compartment,

i.e., a compartment reserved for Jews. A man and two women occupying it were surprised to see children, whom they embraced and to whom they offered candy. Too tired to talk, we fell asleep, and woke up only in Munich.

We took a tram and stopped at the museum, where we dropped off Henis. "My" apartment was too small for all of us, and he was to find his own lodgings. We took another tram to the apartment in Pasching.

The expression on Frau Knoebel's face was one of sheer terror when she saw all of us. Again I had to calm her and assure her that we had no intention of taking over her apartment and would be moving on after a short rest. I am not sure that she believed me. She gave us several military blankets, which we spread on the floor of the living room, where we all went to sleep. In the middle of the night, I awoke with the worst nightmare that I had had since the end of the war. In my dream I heard the bootsteps of Germans at our window. Lina and I were frantically trying to hide the children in a closet. I awoke covered with sweat. It took me a long while to fall asleep again.

When I awoke next morning, Lina was still sleeping. I heard voices and laughter from the bedroom, where Edith and Selma were playing with our landlady's daughter. It was an eerie awakening after last night's nightmare.

We breakfasted on the provisions we had brought, sharing the food with Frau Knoebel and her daughter. After breakfast, we left the children and my mother-in-law in the apartment, and Lina and I left for the museum.

My friend, Slepak, was gone. I was told that he had left with a group for Palestine. They had embarked on a secret, underground track, whose existence I had heard of. His place as a receptionist was taken by another Lithuanian Jew, Moskowitz. I explained to him that I had been in Munich before and that both I and my wife were already registered. Evidently this was now a common pattern; others had gone back and forth. People were coming and going all the time. In fact, he himself did not expect to remain in Munich for too long. I needed an apartment for my family, I told him. He advised me to go to Deggensdorf, a former concentration camp now serving as a

refugee center for Jews. I said, "No, no camps for me." He said that in that case we would have to separate temporarily in some fashion because he had no apartment available at present. We were not happy with this but had no alternative. We decided that the children and my mother-in-law would take a second apartment while Lina and I would remain with Frau Knoebel. Henis was nowhere to be seen, nor did I see the others with whom we had crossed the border.

I spotted a familiar face of my acquaintance from Prague, Mendel Leiter. I went over to say hello to him; he was with an attractive blond woman whom he introduced as his wife. She had survived as an "Aryan" in Poznan, where she had worked as a secretary to a German civilian construction company under the name Stanislawa Letynska. Leiter had assumed the same surname under which his wife had survived and now called himself Marcel Letynski. Lina joined us, and we all had lunch at the cafeteria in the museum.

Letynski told me that he had made quite a bit of money by exchanging German marks. He planned to make one more trip to Poland to buy more marks and wouldn't I join him? I declined, explaining that first I must establish my family. But I had a friend, I said, who had come over with us and who, I was sure, would be glad to join him. He said that he would be glad to take my friend, but he could not wait because "a day lost was money lost." I met with Letynski a few more times but he left soon for Frankfurt and I lost track of him, so no deal was ever struck.

A day or so later, I received an assignment from the committee for another room, located in the city of Munich. A couple of days later we transferred the children and my mother-in-law to that apartment. While Frau Knoebel was obviously relieved, her daughter was sorry to see my children go.

After a couple of days, Henis too showed up. He had found an apartment with another refugee from Poland, not far from the place where my family were lodged. We all acquired Ausweises (personal documents) and ration cards. We ate at small restaurants. where Germans always made room for Jews. We returned to the museum to see if we would find the Jolleks, or others from Zloczów, or some of those whom we had met in our journeying in Poland and Prague. I mentioned to Moskowitz that Slepak wanted me to meet with an

American captain, a Dr. Kurt Elias. "How fortunate," he said. "Elias and another American lieutenant are in the building at this moment conferring with some members of the committee."

I waited for a few minutes. Two American officers, a captain with medical insignia and a lieutenant who introduced himself as Gruenberg, came out from an adjacent room. I stepped over to the captain and introduced myself. "Oh yes," he said. "You are the lawyer Mr. Slepak mentioned to me."

We adjourned to still another, less crowded room. We found a quiet corner. In obvious deference to the American uniform, the crowd moved away from us, and people lowered their voices.

Captain Elias was in his forties, a handsome man, well built, slightly on the heavy side with a round friendly face and a ready smile. Gruenberg was taller than Elias, a redhead with a freckled face who looked younger than his thirty years. I spoke with Elias in German. "Tell me all about you," Elias said. "I understand that you managed to save your wife and children." He and Lieutenant Gruenberg listened intently to my tale, Elias translating for Gruenberg. Both men had tears in their eyes when I finished.

The encounter with Kurt Elias was to be one of the most important in my life. It was he who in due time encouraged me to come to America, rather than try to get into Palestine.

Elias said that he and Gruenberg were trying to found a branch of YMHA in Munich, explaining what the letters stood for and the goals of the organization. He said that he was disappointed that so few refugees were interested. He found their level of education low, and their manners and behavior below his expectations.

He asked me to join. I said, "Yes," but admitted that I had other priorities. I needed to find an apartment and some way of earning a living. Elias said that he would help me with the former and perhaps the latter as well.

HIAS, an American immigration organization, founded in New York City in 1903, had opened an office in Munich which was headed by a military chaplain, Rabbi Bloom. He was a nice fellow, Elias said, but he was totally lost in his job. Perhaps I could be of use to him. I expressed interest, and Elias suggested that we leave imme-

HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY
H I A S

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY.
CERTIFICAT D'IDENTITE.

Certificate of Identity, Issued by HIAS in Munich.

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY
CERTIFICATE D'IDENTITE

NUMBER) 22
NO.)

Place and date of issue) Munich (Germany
Lieu et date d'émission)

PHOTOGRAPH AND SIGNATURE OF BEARER
PHOTOGRAPHIE ET SIGNATURE DU TITULAIRE



Signature

Valid from) 1-4-46 to) 1.7-46
Valable du) au)

Name) TENNENBAUM, LIPA
Nom)

diately for the HIAS office. We drove in Elias' jeep to HIAS headquarters, a small three-story building at Möhlstrasse 26.

Like the museum, the HIAS building was entered through a large



After having been accepted at the HIAS, the author (left) with Lieutenant Gruenberg, Dr. Elias and unknown.

hall filled by a noisy crowd, occupying benches set along the walls, or walking around talking and evidently arguing in several languages, with Yiddish predominating. A dark cloud of smelly cigarette smoke from cheap tobacco hung in the air and mixed with the odor of human sweat. The crowd quieted down at the sight of the two American officers. A door opened to an inner office, and a man stood, calling out names. The crowd surged toward him, and he spread his arms holding it back, allowing only two persons to enter at a time. When he saw us, he made a passage through the crowd to enable us to enter.

We entered a room with several desks occupied by two women and another man in addition to the man at the door. We went in with the two people whose names had been called.

Elias asked the man at the front desk for Chaplain Bloom. He left his desk and knocked at a door to another office, and he then opened the door and admitted us into a small room, evidently Bloom's office. Bloom was there; he rose, came forward with outstretched arms to greet Elias. Elias introduced the lieutenant and me to Bloom and explained in a few words the purpose of our visit. Bloom was enthusias-

tic, saying that he could use all the help that he could get. He spoke in heavily accented Yiddish.

He was delighted to learn that I was a lawyer, and the fact that I spoke several languages was a godsend. He himself spoke only some Yiddish and understood even less Hebrew. He indicated how little Hebrew he knew on his finger.

I had been hired on the spot; now I had a job, a position even, with an American organization, HIAS.

We went back to the larger office where the two officers were involved in heated arguments with two DPs. Bloom asked the DPs to leave for a few minutes, which they did reluctantly, and Bloom introduced me to his crew. I met Igo and Sonia Sudarski, a married couple. She was a striking redhead. The others were a Mr. Friedman and a Miss Lester, the latter being the only one to speak some English. All wore English military uniforms. By this time I had learned to distinguish American from British uniforms which were of similar style, except that the English material was much coarser. Bloom's uniform was American, his jacket was longer, less jaunty presumably in deference to his dignity as a chaplain.

Bloom said that next morning he would take me to UNRRA headquarters to enroll me as a member of HIAS, which was accredited to UNRRA. He pointed out that the arm patches on his uniform and those of his staff carried both UNRRA and HIAS labels.

Angry voices from the hall grew in volume. We decided to leave and let the employees continue with their jobs. Sudarski motioned me aside, and he said that he wanted to talk to me some more about the situation at HIAS and about Rabbi Bloom. We spoke in German and in Yiddish. Elias offered to pick me up at UNRRA after I received my accreditation and to take me to the City Council in order to find an apartment. As we were leaving the hall, I heard a man mutter in Yiddish, "You see! If you have an American friend, you do not have to wait. I bet you he already got a visa to America." Others nodded vigorous agreement.

Elias would not let me take the tram, and he and Gruenberg took me all the way to my apartment in Pasching, where I told Lina the good news. She was pleased. We were eager to be together with the children and Mother.

On December 1, 1945, I went to the City Council with Elias and obtained an assignment to an apartment confiscated from a Nazi, a certain Mr. Braun, presently detained at Dachau awaiting trial. The apartment was located on the third floor, at No. 19 Thierschstrasse. It consisted of four room, a kitchen and other usual facilities. Allegedly Hitler had once lived in the adjacent building, No. 21. Except for pockmarks on the walls of the buildings, the street showed little damage. The name of the German who helped us find the apartment was Heinrich Loeffler; he lived in the same house on the second floor.

Lina signed the receipt for the furniture that was there, and we moved in on December 2, 1945. We were to remain in this apartment for five months until our departure for Bremerhaven and from there to America.

We collected the children and my mother-in-law from their apartment, in which they had stayed for a few days only. I have no recollection of this second apartment, which I had visited briefly only once, having been busy running around, and getting the job with HIAS.

Henis moved in with us.

We collected most of our belongings from Frau Knoebel's apartment, leaving a couple of suitcases to be picked up later. Frau Knoebel was happy to have her apartment back, but was also apprehensive that the Jewish Committee might assign her another border. She was sorry, she said, to lose such a "*nette Familie*" (a nice family). The previous border had been "*nicht nett.*" She hinted that she had been forced to sleep with him.

My feelings toward her were ambivalent. On one hand, I was unable to feel much compassion, thinking that her husband had been a warden at Dachau. She kept telling us that her husband was a young man who never hurt anybody. She said that she herself, before these "*schlechte Zeiten*" (evil days), had had Jewish friends. Perhaps she believed that I had political influence and would be able to help her husband.

A few days later when I went to pick up the suitcases left in Frau Knoebel's care, I noticed on the kitchen chair the jacket of an American uniform. Mrs. Knoebel looked quite relaxed, and I asked no questions.

Later on, after we started to eat in the UNRRA cafeteria, we met her in the company of a young and handsome soldier. She always greeted us warmly.

A couple of days after we moved into our apartment at Thierschstrasse, we had a visit from a number of Germans, tenants in the same building. They came, they said, to greet us and welcome us. They were all professional people, a couple of teachers, a doctor, and of course, Mr. Loeffler. It seemed to me that they had been briefed by Loeffler, that we were both lawyers and treated us deferentially. Germans have this exaggerated respect for titles, as do Austrians, more so than the rest of Europeans.

The neighbors said they were so "*entzueckt*" with such "*nette*" family. They hinted subtly that they hoped to use me as a protector in the event of some unpleasant inquiry into anyone's past. My mother-in-law served them tea, and after about an hour all left, except the doctor, Klaus Diebold.

The doctor had brought with him a wrapped parcel and asked me very politely whether I would mind if he left the parcel in our care. Surprised, I requested to know what the parcel contained. It contained paintings, he said, which had been in his family for generations. I asked bluntly why, if they had been in the family all this time, did he now want to hide them. Were they by any chance originally the possessions of some Jewish family? He denied the implied accusation indignantly. He opened the parcel and showed me on the back the original dates of acquisition, which did go back to the nineteenth century. Still I hesitated; finally I agreed but advised him that we would turn over the paintings should any official agency demand it.

I knew that a lot of what we called *szabrowanie* was going on. *szabrowanie* was one of the new words coined in Poland after the war. Former inmates of concentration camps and other individuals would enter German apartments and take away anything that pleased them.

In Krakow, Katowice, and smaller cities, empty apartments left behind by Germans and Volksdeutsch who had run away with the retreating German Army had been invaded by Russians and some Jews who helped themselves to anything of value. I did not believe then and do not believe now that that kind of behavior should have

been condemned. And I remember German soldiers accompanied by Ukrainian hoodlums invading our apartment and taking away anything that caught their fancy while we watched helplessly. I am sure that many Americans will find this reprehensible. "Well," as my acquaintance Staszek had said, "the shoe is now on the other foot." We had been innocent victims; most Germans had dirty consciences. The raiders of German apartments rationalized that whatever they took could not atone even in a small part for German crimes.

Let me make my feelings clearer. I personally could not approve of such actions, but could not blame those carrying them out. I know a few people who started their fortunes in this way. Some *szabrowniks* had joined with Russians to have the protection of their pistols. Many carried their own weapons. The times were governed by a moral turpitude. But was it not the Germans who started it all?

With me, the staff of HIAS consisted of five employees: Igo and Sonia Sudarski; Miss Lester, a former schoolteacher; and Friedman who said that he had met my wife and Henis in Cieszyn. They had sheltered him before he had crossed over to Czechoslovakia.

Igo spoke openly to me after only a few hours' acquaintance. Bloom was not the man for the job, he told me. Instead of sitting down, studying applications and processing them as quickly as possible, he carried them about in two heavily loaded briefcases, doing nothing himself and not letting the staff do anything. In consequence, the staff were subjected to daily abuse and insults from the applicants for not handling their cases. I had witnessed some of this when I had come for my interview. Under the guidance of Rabbi Klausner, Igo said, the Joint was doing a much better job. Many of the people who had applied to emigrate to the United States through Joint had already had appointments with the American consulate. Igo hoped that with my help we would be able to expedite matters. I was not surprised to hear Igo's complaints, since Elias had warned me about Bloom's shortcomings before I had taken the job.

Igo Sudarski was the senior member of the staff, the first to have been employed by Bloom. Igo's uncle, a Dr. Sudarski, was a member of the Central Committee, which gave Igo some clout. He and I decided that we would confront Bloom in a friendly way; there was no reason to upset him.

We entered Bloom's office, and I started by asking him what was my job. Bloom looked perplexed and replied that he assumed that Igo had broken me in. Igo then asked him why we were lagging so far behind the Joint. Bloom started to complain that he had had no cooperation from his superiors in America, and that the American Zionist hierarchy was not really interested in getting people to the States. (He may have been right, but it was irrelevant.) Neither Igo nor I had any idea of a connection between the Zionist hierarchy and HIAS, which we thought was a charitable organization facilitating Jewish immigration to America. I recalled that Slepak of the museum committee had told me that Rabbi Klausner, the head of the Munich Joint office, had also complained of lack of cooperation from the Jewish community in America.

I have never met Rabbi Klausner and am repeating here conversations from the 1940s. Slepak thought that Klausner must have been a very important man in America. He had been important in Munich; we credited him with the revocation by General Eisenhower of a earlier decision to repatriate Jews to countries they had come from regardless of their wishes. After I arrived in America and asked about Rabbi Klausner, I realized that nobody knew him. Evidently whatever he had accomplished in Munich, he had done on his own, without the help of American Jews back in the United States. He was a young man then. During my five months with the HIAS office in Munich, not a single Jewish American civilian ever came to see us.

Bloom complained further that Joint had a bigger budget and a large staff, which included several professionals from America whereas he had to work with amateurs, no offense meant. We told Bloom that we were quite confident that we could handle the job. "Look," I told him, "I am a professional, too. I have handled matters as a lawyer and as a manager. Just hand over to us the applications, and we will take it from there." After more talk, he finally agreed to relinquish a number of applications to us with the admonition "be careful."

The trouble with Bloom was that he did not speak Yiddish fluently, could not communicate with the people he was to help, and anyhow did not understand them. He had quaint notions about the current situation. Bloom had never been to Europe before.

I have no doubt that Bloom undertook his assignment with the best of intentions; he believed strongly that he was doing a tremendous job. (He was even endangering his future by remaining in Europe; it would be difficult for him to find a Rabbinate back home should he remain much longer in Germany, he said. This baffled us—why should it be like this? This question was to be answered eventually.)

Meanwhile he hadn't grasped the difference between a jail and a concentration camp. He kept repeating that he worried whether former inmates of concentration camps would be admitted to America as American law forbade criminals from entering the country. We clarified the issues for him. Bloom was correct in one respect; we had a small staff and only one staff member had even a slight command of English.

However within a few days of our coup, the office started to run smoothly. Igo and I handled the applicants; Miss Lester helped with the English language; Sonia filled out the applications; Friedman controlled the traffic, not an easy assignment.

In my earlier book I wrote, "The designation 'Polish Jew' was a misnomer. We were as different as the regions from which we came. . . . Accent, behavior, dress, cultural background. . . . were the tip-offs to origin." I learned that people coming from different countries were just as diverse. We had to handle people from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Germany, who differed in many ways among themselves and had only this in common: They all were Jews, survivors of the slaughter.

Just as there were great differences between Jews from country to country, the survivors we met also differed greatly, depending on the way they had survived. Survivors are not a homogeneous group. Those who came from the concentration camps—from death camps like Auschwitz or labor camps like Lackie near Zloczów—differed from each other and the rest of the survivors; those who had been hidden by gentiles, those who had lived under assumed Aryan names, those who had hidden in the forests and finally those who had returned from the Soviet Union, had been molded by their experiences in many ways. I have friends in all these groups; their subsequent lives, world outlook, interests, child-rearing practices, were all shaped by the way they had survived.

These certain regional, class, and philosophical distinctions that had disappeared during the German domination over Europe and our lives were reemerging.

The easiest people to deal with were the Jews from the Baltic countries, the most difficult, the Hungarians and Romanians. When it came to arrogance, the German Jews were in a class by themselves. Fortunately, they were in the minority. Even though Igo and I spoke fluent German, they treated us with barely concealed contempt.

The trouble with Hungarian Jews was that they were orthodox in religious practice and expected to be treated with reverence and given priority. Right after being liberated, many put on again the black garb, let their payess and beard grow, and looked upon us as heathens. Often we were admonished for not wearing yarmulkes while working for a Jewish institution. When we asked what our working bareheaded had to do with filing applications for emigration, the answer was that it had. They spoke Yiddish exclusively to us. Among themselves, they spoke Hungarian, so that we could not understand. At least that was the way we saw it. Many of these folk claimed that they were rabbis and had therefore priority in obtaining visas. After checking with Bloom we learned that members of the clergy did indeed have priority. But what were we to do with so many rabbis, some authentic, some fictitious, all of whom claimed priority?

We agreed among ourselves that Igo, a Lithuanian Jew, would deal with Lithuanians and DPs from the Baltic countries, I with Polish, Hungarian, and Czechoslovakian Jews. We also devised a ploy as how to deal with German Jews. After one couple was overheard muttering to themselves, "*Die verfluchte Ostjuden sind ueberall* [These damned Jews from the east are everywhere]," we assigned them to Sonia. Sonia stared at them with her beautiful eyes, pretending not to understand their complaints, even though she spoke good German, since her family had been landowners in Memel, a German enclave in Lithuania.

Eventually we settled into a routine. I was handicapped at first because, although the Sudarskis, Miss Lester, and Friedman wore uniforms that gave them the necessary aura for dealing with the unruly applicants, I wore my civilian clothing. Early in January of 1946, a full month after I had joined HIAS, the ever-tardy Bloom finally took

me to the UNRRA headquarters in Pasching, where I obtained both a permit and an issue of a uniform, plus my driver's license.

I had driven a car way back before the war when my father had acquired a Buick, which, because of the condition of the Polish roads, was more in repair than in use. HIAS had a single car, a Mercedes, which was assigned to Bloom and came with a German driver, Karl. He was an old cantankerous Bavarian, a native of Munich, who used to drive a taxi before the war. The Mercedes still wore camouflage colors, but the insignia of the German general to whom it had belonged during the war had been covered with paint. Since Bloom was the only person authorized to use the car, he had to carry the applications to the consulate himself. He was always late. He was the most disorganized person that I have ever known.

In the museum, they had a set of New York City telephone books. The Brooklyn volume was most in demand, because that was where many DPs had relatives. I found the address of my mother's uncle, Friedman, in Brooklyn, 596 Linwood Street, and I wrote him a letter.

More people arrived from Poland, among them the Zloczówers Yetka Geller (née Zwerdling) with her husband, Grisha, and their daughter, Szoszana. They had lost their second child, a little boy, discovered in hiding with a Polish family by Germans and murdered by them.

Grisha's nephew, Buma, had married a former employee of my father's factory, the pretty Dina Galatzer, and they also came. They all settled in Deggendorf, the former German concentration camp, now a camp for refugees.

We celebrated New Year's Eve, ushering in the year 1946 with the Sudarskis at a dinner in the Deutsches Theater Kaffee, a restaurant located near the main railroad station. The station had been destroyed but the restaurant located in the basement had suffered no damage. This restaurant became our favorite, Jews were admitted ahead of Germans waiting in a queue.

The weather turned cold. I obtained a military parka while Lina and Henis sold deutsche marks for dollars, and we all went to the thriving free market, where we equipped everyone with adequate clothing and shoes.

One day early in January there was a knock at our door. An unexpected knock was no longer an ominous sign, but I still reacted with a slight shock. However, I opened the door, and there stood Kurt Pollak with his wife, Nusia.

We greeted them with joy and surprise. I've said Kurt was a fellow who mostly listened in silence and said little. He had listened to the talk at the good-bye dinner given to us in Cieszyn by his Uncle Serog.

The conversation had planted some seeds. After carefully weighing my arguments against Serog's, they decided to follow us to Germany. Since our departure two months earlier, the political situation in Cieszyn had changed considerably along the lines I had feared. A substantial detachment of the Bezpieka was in town, the bridge through which we had crossed into Czechoslovakia was watched much closer. In the factory, a communist had been sent by the Communist Party to assume the post of bookkeeper, but also watchdog. There had been several arrests; a couple of officers of the Anders Army, who had returned from England, were detained. One bit of pleasant news was that the detestable Mr. Kubiak, whose diatribe at the bridge party at the Novaks had hastened my decision to leave Poland, was in prison, accused of having collaborated with the Germans during their occupation of Cieszyn.

Kurt informed us that the Waldners (the former Lina Beer), Lina's son, Jerzyk, and Lina's sister, Jadzka, had been with the Pollaks in the same group while crossing the border. The Waldners also decided to go on to Deggendorf. The Pollaks wanted to stay in Munich, provided Kurt was able to find a job. They already had obtained an apartment through the committee. I told Kurt that I was sure that he could get a job at HIAS; we were shorthanded and were having difficulty finding suitable people.

Next day I took Kurt to see Bloom, who hired him on my recommendation. We assigned him to help me and Igo interview applicants. A few days later we were assigned a jeep. Kurt, who was an excellent driver and had driven a car during the war, took over as our official driver, once he had been supplied with a passport, driver's license, and UNNRA permission to wear a uniform. Since my driving was stale after seven years, Kurt gave me some lessons.

With the addition of Kurt to the staff, our processing of applications became more and more efficient. We tried to keep Bloom out of the way and were generally successful, but occasionally he erupted. One day he worried that many applicants gave assumed names. He said that only an American judge could permit a name change. This bit of legalism blew over.

One day there was a terrible commotion in our waiting room. Commotions were not rare and Friedman was usually able to handle them without our or Bloom's intervention. This time there was so much noise that we all ran out of our offices into the hall, where a crowd was beating a man with fists and chairs, shouting, "Kapo, kapo." Someone had recognized the man as a kapo from Buchenwald. We succeeded in calming the people but not before the man, who was bleeding profusely, was thrown out in the street.

Before he had been recognized, he had given his name as Jankowski and said that he was from Pinsk. A couple of years later I saw him in New York on the street. He recognized me as well and disappeared into the crowd. I never saw him again. Presumably there are others like him hiding in America or Canada. They avoided Israel, where hiding would be almost impossible.

As had happened in Cieszyn, our apartment in Munich soon became a center for other refugees. Many people came and went, including a couple of Zloczówers who showed up unexpectedly.

One was Marek Parnes, a good friend, one year ahead of me in *gimnazjum.* Before the war I had played bridge with him, with Bruno Hessel, a medical student, and with the Olesnicki brothers, Ukrainians. Bruno was the son of a prominent lawyer; his father had once visited our apartment during the German occupation. Bruno had married a girl from Przemysl; both perished in the Holocaust. Marek had married a classmate of Lina's, Frydka Thieman; she perished, but Marek had survived as an "Aryan." Merek's visit lasted about an hour. We had managed to save many photographs; he asked for pictures of Frydka, and we gave him all we had. I never saw him again. He settled in Israel where he died, I heard, in the early 1950s.

Another visitor was Meier, a former print setter in our factory, who had survived in the Soviet Union. He has written a book about the Holocaust, based on stories he had heard from other people,

which unfortunately contains many inaccuracies. When people write about events that they have not personally witnessed, there is always that risk. Meier had been an ardent communist before the war, working at the well-known printing establishment of Zuckerkandel, the source of practically all the crib sheets in Austria and Poland. He was tried and sentenced for his communist activities, and discharged from his job. Bruno's brother, Jasio, a covert communist himself, came over to plead for a job for him in our factory. Reluctantly and against the wishes of my father, I did give him a job in the printing department of our factory. However, before I hired him, I called him in and explained to him that we had never had any problem in the factory and that I expected him to behave. He gave me his solemn promise.

Only a few days later, the foreman of the printing shop came to me complaining that Meier was spending much of his working time preaching communism to the employees. Furthermore, he was a poor worker, and his compositions had to be examined for errors. I called Meier in again and read the charges to him. He denied everything at first; then he reversed himself and swore not to transgress again. However he soon broke his promise. Finally under the pressure from my foreman, I discharged him. I should note that our shop was unionized under the auspices of the union *Ognisko*, and that I myself was a member.

There was a sequel to this story. After the Soviet invasion, Jasio Hessel, in company with his cousin Felo Rosenbaum, had come out of the closet, and without official approval from the Russians announced that they were "nationalizing" our factory. Meier requested to be reinstated in the factory as a print setter, but he was unanimously rejected by the *profspilka*, the union. He next took a job with the other printing establishment, the former Zuckerkandel shop, but I heard that he was universally disliked and ostracized.

We did not discuss the past when he came to visit us in Munich, however he hinted to me that he was completely disillusioned with communism. We saw him again years later in New York, where he had become an orthodox Jew.

Both Dr. Elias and Lieutenant Gruenberg became frequent, practically daily, visitors to our home. Elias who had two children back home in the States, loved Edith and Selma. Both officers brought toys

and candy. Another frequent visitor was the German clerk through whom we had obtained the apartment, Herr Loeffler. I had many political discussions with the Americans and with the few Germans whom I met socially. These discussions were interesting and complimented each other in several ways.

I was eager to learn about life in America from the Americans and wanted to grasp their outlook for the future of Europe. From the Germans, I wanted to hear their version of life under Hitler and learn about their hopes for Germany's future.

Elias and Gruenberg came from totally different backgrounds. Elias had escaped from Germany after Hitler came to power and had created for himself a comfortable life in New York. He was a physician living on West End Avenue in Manhattan, which he described as a German enclave. Gruenberg's parents had escaped from Russia and settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and gone to work in the garment business. His father had become a small-scale manufacturer, and the family had moved out from the East Side into the more comfortable middle-class Bronx. Gruenberg disagreed with his father's political views and was a member of the Communist Party. He proudly told me that he had been a member of the Lincoln Brigade and had fought in the Spanish Civil War.

I did not understand then much of what I was told about New York City neighborhoods and their social differences. I did realize that, although both were Americans, each had a distinctly different view of life in America.

Elias loved America, and had high respect for its institutions and way of life. He felt that coming to America was the best thing that had ever happened to him. He said frequently that in America anybody can accomplish anything he sets his mind to. Gruenberg, on the other hand, was dissatisfied with American life. He had little regard for its authorities and would have changed its institutions; for him, the Soviet Union was the model that he hoped America would grow to. It was easier for me to grasp Elias's views because of the common language, and Elias's effusive personality. Gruenberg was taciturn; we did not share a common language; it was a matter of sensing his thoughts.

There were however issues and personalities on which they did

agree. Both worshipped Roosevelt; both had been disappointed with Roosevelt's selection of Truman as his running mate, particularly so since that choice resulted in Truman's accession to the presidency. Elias would have preferred Harriman, Gruenberg, Wallace, both names familiar to me from the Soviet press. Gruenberg was particularly worried that Truman had come from the South (another issue that I did not then understand), and that he might break up the close relationship that Roosevelt had built with Stalin, whom Gruenberg held in high regard.

That Gruenberg had been a member of the Lincoln Brigade and was proud of it puzzled me, because that group had been described in the prewar Polish press as a band of adventurers, servile to the Soviet Union. Gruenberg in his turn was surprised by my dislike of the Russians and my hatred of the communist system. When I tried to describe to him my life under the Russians, he listened intensely, but I doubt whether he really believed me.

Gruenberg and Elias also agreed wholeheartedly that they were eager to return home to America. Neither was a Zionist. Elias was sympathetic to Zionism and felt that it would be best if the majority of the survivors of the European tragedy was able to settle in Palestine. But neither he nor Gruenberg saw it as a possibility in the near future; both of them felt that England would never relinquish its hold on Palestine.

Elias was not an ardent admirer of the Russians, but he said that the only help that the Jews of Germany received had come from the Communist Party. His own family had been assisted in their escape by a communist.

They were divided on the future of Germany. Gruenberg felt that it would become communist eventually; Elias' opinion was that America would not let that happen.

I became acquainted with another American of German- Jewish origin, Leopold Hauser, a member of the American intelligence service, the CIC. He had retired from the agency a short time after I had met him, because of his disappointment with the way the Nazis were treated by the service. He felt that the treatment was too lenient and that Nazis who had held prominent positions during Hitler's regime, including even members of the SS, had been freed from detention.

The denazification process (it was the first time that I had heard this term) was a sham. I knew nothing about any of this matter, and at that time I was not interested.

Hauser (the name I knew him by, but suspected that it was not his real name), claimed that the Russians and to a lesser degree, the French, took the denazification process seriously. The British treated Germans accused of war crimes (another expression that I learned from him) lightly; the Americans were almost as casual. Some American generals sympathized with the Germans, he said, because of shared hatred for the Russians. In one respect Hauser took a different line from Elias; he did not trust the Russians either, but he liked the way they treated the Germans. Gruenberg agreed with Hauser. Hauser worked as a volunteer with the Joint and HIAS, and I suspected that he had joined to make sure that Nazis and other undesirables were not hiding among the Jews and trying to get into the American consulates and through them to America.

Bloom came to me with a request. HIAS needed a resident physician to verify that the applicants for visas were in good health. I thought immediately of my good friend, Dr. Jollek, and Kurt and I went to Deggendorf to see Jollek and to offer him the position.

After talking it over with his family and friends, Jollek declined my offer to move to Munich. He was happy in Deggendorf; he felt that he was needed there. As always he was doing a yeoman's job, offering much needed medical help to the inmates of the camp. However he had a friend in the camp, a Dr. Siunek Glasner, whom he would recommend for the position. Kurt and I met with Dr. Glasner, a short rotund fellow, and with his attractive wife, Melita. They had no children. They were very excited about the possibility of moving out of the camp, Siunek accepted the position, and I said that we would try to find a job for Melita with HIAS.

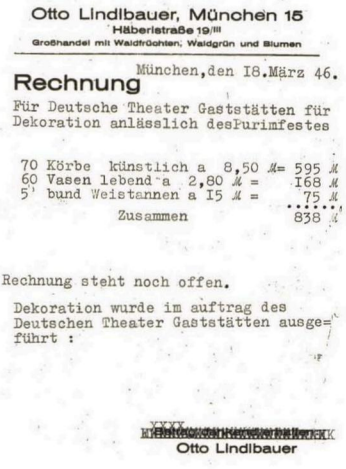
We returned to Munich and told Bloom what we had done. As usual, he agreed. Glasner was soon established as the resident physician, and Melita became a receptionist.

Now we had a full crew; life became much easier for me. I studied English by myself by various means; I listened to the U.S. Army radio station to accustom my ear to the sound of the language. I memorized vocabulary. I had brought over from Cieszyn Berlitz

textbooks Polish/English and German/English. I also brought an excellent Langenscheidt German/English dictionary. I carried a pocketbook edition to the office, but used it little because we spoke mostly in Yiddish with our applicants or in the languages of their countries of origin. None of us spoke Hungarian which may have been one of the reasons why we disliked Hungarian Jews so much. We continued to communicate in Yiddish with Bloom, with Dr. Elias in German, and with Lieutenant Gruenberg in sign language. But I had learned enough English to be able to "speak" it at the Purim and Passover holiday celebrations that I arranged.



The author with Lina, Selma (right), and Edith (left) at the Munich zoo.



Otto Lindlbauer, München 15
Häberlstraße 19/III
Großhandel mit Waldfrüchten, Waldgrün und Blumen

Rechnung

München, den 18. März 46.

Für Deutsche Theater Gaststätten für Dekoration anlässlich des Purimfestes

70 Körbe	künstlich a	8,50 ℳ =	595 ℳ
60 Vasen	lebend a	2,80 ℳ =	168 ℳ
5	bund Weistannen a	15 ℳ =	75 ℳ
	Zusammen		838 ℳ

Rechnung steht noch offen.

Dekoration wurde im auftrag des Deutschen Theater Gaststätten ausgeführt :

Otto Lindlbauer

Receipt of the Purim Party in Munich.

Chapter Eight
Normalcy Again

For the fourth time since liberation our lives took yet another tentative step toward normalcy. The first time had been still in Zloczów, where we had begun our recuperation from the ordeal of hiding for sixteen months—and that period had lasted six months. The second phase, which lasted four months, had been in Przemysl; I had escaped, and the family had joined me after a short time. The third time had been in Cieszyn. We considered briefly that it might be the culmination of our search for a permanent place in Poland; this did not last, and after six months of hesitating, we left Poland for good.

Now we were in Germany, in Munich, the birthplace of Nazism. For us as for the other Jews with whom we spoke, remaining in Germany permanently was not an option. Palestine was closed by the British for the time being, but that was where we hoped to wind up—some day.

The major difference between this phase and the previous ones was that we were now out of the reach of the secret police organizations of the Soviet Union and Poland. We did not send our daughters to school; we just could not face their attending a German school.

I again suffered a mild hemorrhage. Dr. Elias told me that it was not serious but advised me to take a few days off and to stay in bed. HIAS was by now quite well organized; for a while the office could function without me.

In addition to my having written to Uncle Itzig, I had also written to my friend, Sig Schotz. I asked Sig among other things, to contact Uncle Itzig and to advise him of our survival. I also asked Sig to notify relatives of Yetka Zwerdling Geller and her husband, Gershon (Grisha). Every one of us survivors was anxious to find a relative in America.

In the middle of February I received the first letter from Itzig, forwarded to me through the National Refugee Service in New York

and relayed further by an army chaplain, Rabbi Lipman. The letter was brief.

The fluent German of Uncle Itzig's letter came to me as a surprise, considering that he had left Austria at the end of the nineteenth century. He still used the Gothic script, which had practically disappeared from Germany after WWI. I myself was familiar with it, because when I was in Rzeszów in 1917 German was mandatory in the third grade, and my old-fashioned teacher had preferred black letters. Also some of my German contacts during the Nazi period had used it.

I became aware that he had not yet grasped the enormity of the disaster that had befallen the European Jews. Uncle had asked me in his note to describe in detail all that had happened to the family. I wrote back and waited for his reaction. I gave him an address c/o UNRRA to avoid delays in future correspondence.

It was comforting to know that we had established communication with America. The quota set by President Truman at 200,000 refugees was high, but it still required an invitation and an affidavit of support from someone in the United States to obtain a permanent visa. Most of the refugees who had relatives in America received affidavits but a few received letters discouraging them from emigrating to the states because, they said, the country had just come out of the grip of a depression, and the future was doubtful. Jobs would be reserved for returning veterans. I myself saw several such letters, and I helped some of the recipients to emigrate to Australia or Canada instead.

I helped the Helbraun family from Zloczów to get to Australia. Mr. Helbraun, a wealthy owner of a petroleum business before the war, was also a very religious man. He, his wife, and sister had arrived on a resettlement train from Zloczów and, as was the case with practically all new arrivals, stopped at our home in Przemysl. Lina served them food, including doughnuts baked by Misia, who had used bacon fat. Before Lina had a chance to warn him. Mr. Helbraun seized a doughnut and ate it with obvious relish. When Lina told him about the fat, he replied calmly, "According to Jewish law, when you are in a Jewish home, you are not supposed to question kashruth of the food. What you serve me I do not know, and I do not want to

know." He finished eating. Years later my wife and I visited Sidney, Australia, where Mr. Helbraun came to visit us in the hotel. He refused even a soft drink, claiming that he would not eat in hotels, afraid of their disregarding the strict rules of kashruth.

Hearing about the letter from my uncle, Dr. Elias spoke to me again, trying to persuade me to emigrate to the United States. He brushed aside my objections and insisted that America was the country for me. He was confident that I would learn English in no time and soon become very much at home. I still remember his words, "Sam, I can see you in America. After one year you will buy your first car, and after two years you will buy your first house. And I will cure you of your ulcer."

He told me not to worry about my ignorance of the English language and helped me by explaining the idioms, some of which had been giving me trouble. He advised me to read the *New York Times*, particularly its editorial page, which he said was written in perfect English. In addition to learning the language from the pages of the *Times*, the paper would guide me in understanding the politics of the country when I became an American citizen and acquired my voting rights. I was to follow the endorsements in the paper to be sure to vote for the right people. He advised me against letting my daughters study English in Germany; it was unnecessary. I should wait until we arrived in America and enroll them in school. "You'll be amazed how quickly they will pick up the language. In six months they will speak it as if they had been native born." I followed his advice.

Purim was approaching. Elias asked me to organize a Purim celebration in a restaurant in Munich. By that time I had recovered from my last bout with my ulcer, and I gladly accepted the challenge.

I was to be the master of ceremonies and be introduced by Dr. Elias. By that time I was able to muster some English, but the program would be conducted in Yiddish. The problem was to find talented people to enhance the program.

With Kurt's driving me in our jeep, we visited Deggendorf, Landshut, and other camps where Jewish refugees were concentrated. We were lucky. We found a singer, a Miss Huber (an assumed name), and a pianist, Poldek Singer; both claimed to have performed before the war. A chaplain to be recruited by Elias was to conduct the

reading of the Megilah. I ordered printed invitations and programs from Anton Steigenberger, the printing shop in Dachau, flowers and decorations from Otto Lindlbauer in Munich, and menus from Heinrich Fahrner in Munich; I rented a piano from Freidrich Radile, also of Munich. The celebration was to take place in our favorite restaurant, Deutsches Theater. (In our wanderings I lost many important documents, letters and photos, but by a quirk I managed to save receipts from the above mentioned companies.)

I was all ready to go but then came some setbacks. . . of a sort.

The American Army started to demobilize in a hurry, and Gruenberg came to say good-bye. He embraced us all. His parting words spoken only partly in jest were, "See you in the Soviet U.S.A." Obviously all of Igo's, Kurt's, and my arguments had not broken his communist faith. He believed that from WWII had emerged two genuine heroes, Roosevelt and Stalin. Roosevelt was dead, and so the hope for salvation of the world lay with Stalin.

My family and I had liked him a lot; he was always so cheerful. We had agreed to meet in New York, but it did not happen, and I never did see him again.

Elias's turn came a few days later. He announced that he too was to be discharged and planned to catch the first available plane home. Unlike Gruenberg who left on the day he received his orders, Elias spent a few days winding up his responsibilities in the hospital. We had a long talk. I had received a second letter from my uncle, who, while promising help, had not mentioned our coming to America as an option. I read the letter to Elias and confided that I hoped that an invitation to come to the United States might still arrive. In any event we did not want to be a burden or indebted to Uncle Itzig. Between Lina's business activities, my salary, and the sale of some jewelry that we had managed to salvage, we had saved approximately $1,000, which I now entrusted to Dr. Elias. He was to give the money to Uncle Itzig to pay for steamship tickets, if matters so fell out. Dr. Elias promised to discharge my mission.

After Elias and Gruenberg left, I still had to stage the Purim celebration, which went over splendidly. There were about a thousand people present in the hall, including many American and British servicemen. I was introduced by Bloom and delivered a

speech in Yiddish after a few short comments in English. Although this was supposed to be a happy event, there were more tears than smiles. Singer played some Chopin; Miss Huber sang familiar Jewish songs that were greeted with applause, especially "Yiddishe Mame." Chaplain Lang, who officiated, urged me to arrange another celebration for Passover.

With all his faults, Bloom was a good fellow, who cared about us a lot. One day he came in with a happy announcement: All members of the staff in recognition of their services, would be granted Corporate Affidavits from HIAS, meaning that HIAS would take the obligation for supporting us in the event that we would not be able to support ourselves in America.

This was splendid news, removing much of our worries for the future. Lina, however, was upset that we would have to move again so soon. We had just been able to "catch our breath," to relax after having wandered around for months.

Civilization had returned for us in Munich for the first time since September 1939. There were two reliable newspapers, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the *Neue Welt*, which kept us informed about what was going on in the world. There were theaters and movie houses. The first play that we saw, *Our Town*, was written by the American Thornton Wilder. Watching, we thought of our parents and friends lost in this savage war.

American westerns and old German comedies made before Hitler were being shown in the movies, as well as war stories. The latter were shunned alike by the Germans and by American servicemen. However after the veterans were replaced by new recruits, I noticed more Americans at the screenings. I surmised that the young soldiers were anxious to learn what their predecessors had experienced.

We became acquainted with American movie heroes, Henry Fonda, John Wayne, and others. We remembered Clark Gable from before the war. The great surprise was Marlene Dietrich, the famous German actress, who had escaped from Hitler's Germany in spite of the fact that she was not Jewish. We saw her in a war story; she was greeted with whistles from the Americans in the audience, which we understood was a sign of admiration. (In Europe, whistles were signs

of derision.) Among the actresses in other movies were Lillian Gish, whom we did not like because she always cried in her pictures, and Bette Davis who emoted and whom we did like. German subtitles made the pictures easy to understand.

We preferred lighthearted comedies. The Germans favored westerns, perhaps because they evoked the books by the German Karl May, one of the world's most prolific writers about the Wild West—a country that he had never visited. I had been an ardent reader of Karl May.

We saw several art exhibits, one featuring drawings by Albrecht Dürer. A zoo was open, and we visited it often with the children; I bought a camera and have a picture from a visit to the zoo.

Going out to dinner was a great pleasure. In cold weather we would spend the whole day in the Deutsches Theater Caffee where the manager and the waitresses became very friendly as we tipped them well, unlike their German clientele. The burghers of Munich were known for their tightfistedness, but, to be fair, at that time they did not have much to give.

On some days we would come to the café for breakfast, stay through lunch, and remain for dinner. There was music, and the place was warm. Mostly we ignored the German customers, who pretended not to see us. We were still on food rations and used up all our coupons for the week in a single day in the restaurant. At home, where my mother-in-law cooked, we obtained what we needed on the "free market." Henis, who had moved in with us and was like a member of the family, became acquainted with a military cook who supplied him with gallons of delicious ice cream. All of us, particularly the children, delighted in it. It was the first time since the war that we had tasted ice cream.

One time we ventured to the famous Munich Bürgerbräukeller where Hitler had begun his career with an attempted coup or *putsch.* It was crowded. One could not tell that the Germans had lost the war. To our surprise there were many young men present who looked sound and healthy. Who said that the German Army was scraping the bottom of the barrel? On the other hand these young men might have been recently released P.O.W.s; both the Americans and the British were letting them go in a hurry. These men and their girlfriends ap-

peared to be enjoying themselves. Unlike elsewhere in Germany, they paid us no attention, extended no special courtesies. We left after only about an hour. If there were any Americans present, they were not in uniform.

Kurt and I shared the jeep on alternate Sundays. My initial impression that Munich had been totally destroyed was wrong. A closer inspection showed that many streets and buildings had been spared by the bombardments. There were also signs of the beginning of rebuilding.

The famous Frauenkirche, with its onion-shaped domes, had been damaged, one of the domes severely so, but one could go inside to explore its architecture. Some of the buildings on the main thoroughfare, the Ludwigstrasse, were all right; the Sendlingerstrasse with its gate, the Sendlingertor, was intact. So was the Alte Pinokotek where the Dürer exhibit had taken place.

Spring had evidently rejuvenated people, who no longer had the depressed look that I had noticed on my first visit almost half a year ago. A library opened, and since it had some Polish books, I brought them to my daughters, who read them avidly. I also borrowed some English books to help me in my effort to learn the language.

Herr Loeffler, the German neighbor who had procured our apartment for us, was an almost daily visitor. When we had first met, he had assured me that he had not been a member of the Nazi party, which was probably true, otherwise he would not have achieved the fairly important position of housing administrator. In later conversations he insisted that he had had no idea of what had been going on in the Dachau concentration camp. This was harder to believe, considering the proximity of this prototype of all horror camps to Munich.

We too made a trip to Dachau, where the buildings housing the ovens had been preserved. I took pictures.

We met groups of Germans there, obviously brought by American MPs. Loeffler said that he had never been to the camp. He said that he could not bring himself to look where the German nation had disgraced itself. He used the word *entehrt* (disgraced), a rather mild expression for the crimes that the Germans had committed at the first-built concentration camp.

Interestingly enough, perhaps in expectation of our future conver-

sations, he had read up on the history of Munich and Bavaria. He told me that it had been a Jewish socialist, Kurt Eisner, who had established the Bavarian Republic in November 1918, after he had deposed the reigning king. What he did not mention was that Eisner was next assassinated by the right wing nationalists in February 1919.

He repeated that Hitler had not been a German, but had been born in Austria. Again he failed to mention that Hitler had found fertile soil for his teachings in Bavaria and that the Nazi party had been born in Munich. Like the Germans I had met in my travels, who had taken me for one of their own when talking about the war, Loeffler insisted that the rise of Hitler and the Nazi movement had been the tragic result of the treaty of Versailles, which had imposed heavy retributions on Germany. And of course, he blamed the depression, "*diese verfluchte Depression* [this damned depression]," that had brought unemployment and misery on the people. It was all an apology; he was trying to convince me that the Germans were not as bad as other people thought them to be. Perhaps he was also trying to convince himself.

Like the Poles I'd spoken to before I had left Poland, Loeffler was sure that sooner or later the Americans would have to fight the Russians. Americans are good people, he insisted, but politically naive. When he learned that we most probably were going to emigrate to America, he gave me an address of a relative in Milwaukee and asked me to write to him, which I did after arriving in New York.

I must admit that I had liked Loeffler. He was a tall, gaunt looking man with a high forehead, about fifty years old. He was married and father of three girls. Fortunately, he often said, he had had no boys to give to Hitler.

Since we had the jeep at our disposal, we often went to have lunch at UNRRA headquarters in Pasching. We took turns. Sometimes the women accompanied us, but since they did not care for the place, usually Kurt, Siunek, and I went. Someone always had to stay in the office to keep Bloom company and to keep him out of mischief, he never joined us.

The waiters at the UNRRA lunchroom were mostly Germans with a few Poles and other nationals, who had either come from the

camps or had been *Gastarbeiter* (literally, working guests), a phrase used by Germans for volunteers, but also for forced labor.

I met some interesting people at the canteen and had unusual encounters. One of the supervisors was a slender, strikingly beautiful mulatto woman. She was always surrounded by admirers—but not Americans, I noticed. She often came to our table. She liked Germany, spoke good German, and hoped to remain there permanently.

One day while we were having lunch, I noticed a tall attractive woman leaning on the arm of a young handsome American officer. She looked familiar, and I tried to recall where I had seen her. She noticed me too, turned pale, and then blushed. At that moment I recognized her; she was Olga, the "housekeeper" of my friend, Captain Goldberg. She put her finger across her lips with an imploring gesture meaning "keep quiet." Her lips were mouthing, "*Bitte, bitte schweigen.*" Kurt noticed the expression on my face and asked what was that all about. Before I could answer, Olga, who had evidently made some excuse to her escort, came over to our table, and asked in Polish whether she could join us. I said, "Of course."

She sat down, ordered a drink, and told us her story. One day Goldberg had been suddenly called away by some Soviet military types who wore green hats. She had stayed up for the entire night waiting for his return or at least for a word from him. She became frightened that he had been arrested, and afraid of being taken in by the NKVD herself, she had decided to disappear.

Her mother, she said, was Polish and her father a Volksdeutsch, so during the German occupation she had been German. After the war she hid with a Polish relative for several months. Early in the year she had slipped over to Germany with a group of refugees from Pomerania, where she had registered as a Polish refugee and obtained a job at a canteen serving American servicemen. She met her fiancé, an American lieutenant from Chicago. He had fallen in love with her and had promised to marry her. The lieutenant, a stocky fellow with round Slavic features, returned, saw her at our table, and came over. She introduced me as a friend from Poland. The lieutenant joined us, ordered drinks for all. After about an hour both left. I whispered to Olga that I would not give her away.

Olga's tale of Goldberg's sudden disappearance reminded me of

the abduction by the NKVD of Mr. Zwerdling, the father of Yetka Zwerdling, who had been seized at the railroad station in Zloczów, never again seen alive. Nor did we ever have confirmation of his death.

Officially the American army had forbidden fraternization, but, from what I observed, the order was not enforced with Germans. Our former landlady, Frau Knoebel, had found her American, as did many other German girls. Herr Loeffler once asked me to intervene with my friend, Captain Elias, to stop the commotion caused nightly by some Negro soldiers and neighborhood young women. Punctually with dusk, they would arrive in a truck loaded with beer, chocolates, and cigarettes, and party with loud songs and, according to Loeffler, lewd behavior. Loeffler expressed himself quite discreetly but I never mentioned his appeal to Elias. I doubted that he'd be interested.

However in UNRRA fraternization was not then the norm. Olga had been accepted because she had passed as a Polish refugee.

Work in HIAS and at UNRRA meant meeting many interesting people and encountering poignant situations.

Once a husband and wife, a Mr. and Mrs. Unger, met unexpectedly in our office. They had separated, attempting to escape. Passing as a Pole, she had volunteered for work in Germany, leaving her husband and their two children behind. They were to try to follow her. He had prominent Jewish features, and unfortunately the children had inherited their father's looks. All three were caught in an *akzion* in Jaroslaw, where the children were murdered at once and the father sent to Auschwitz. He was liberated there by the Soviet Army. He next went to Wroclaw, where he found anti-Semitism so rampant that he continued on to Germany.

The man had an uncle in Brooklyn, who had provided him with an affidavit. Rather than delay their immigration by waiting for an affidavit from the uncle for her, HIAS provided a corporate affidavit.

Mr. Unger has prospered in the United States. He and his wife have had more children; their son is a physician, their daughter married out of the faith and is doing well. I have met Mr. Unger several times in America, and he always says how grateful he is for the way HIAS helped him. He contributes generously to Jewish philanthropies. He has changed his name since he emigrated, and at

his request, I have not given his current name. I am not sure why he doesn't want it publicized, for the story is unfortunately not that unusual. This one has a relatively satisfactory ending, in some other cases both parties had remarried and were facing a difficult choice.

There was now a large influx of Jews who had survived in the Soviet Union. During the occupation of formerly Polish territories, between 1939 and 1941, the Soviets had carried out a policy of depriving the native population of political leadership, deporting lawyers, doctors, engineers, mayors of the towns, councilmen, manufacturers, large landowners, and among Jews, leading Zionists. These people were seized, usually at night, put in cattle cars and deported deep into the Soviet Union.

During the same period, Jews, escaping from German-occupied western Poland, sought refuge in the Russian territories. Soviet authorities, under the pretext of registering these people for a future return home, seized them and deported them also. Some of these individuals suspected a ruse and went into hiding, but the majority were taken in. And finally, a group of Jews, many of them communists, had managed to escape the advancing Germans in 1941, and they too, despite their political beliefs, were shipped east of the Urals. Families were usually separated and resettled in different parts of the vast Soviet empire. All this had happened in Zloczów, and we were learning, the same picture had been repeated in other towns under Soviet occupation. But most of these people, in spite of their harsh mistreatment, did survive.

Some of these former deportees had returned to Poland in 1945 with the advancing Soviet Army and were now showing up in our office. Others arrived in Munich directly from Russia. This was another class of Jews, different from the first wave of survivors. Unlike some of the earlier putative professionals—as someone had said, "Every second person was a doctor"—these individuals were what they claimed to be, doctors, engineers, lawyers, some educated in Russia during their exile. Many former communists were disillusioned with communism, they said, but others, citing the success of the kibbutzim in Palestine, still kept their faith. They argued, "Communism was a noble idea, but the experiment happened in the wrong country to the wrong people."

Some of the refugees did not want to emigrate from their native countries, and some decided to remain in Germany. There were rumors that life in the United States would not be easy. Palestine was closed. Other options were sought. Australia was taking refugees, and a few people went there, but it seemed very remote. South America, Cuba, and other islands in the Caribbean were considered to be more desirable. Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, and Curaçao were said to provide financial opportunities. However visas to some of these South American countries were difficult to come by, since they favored Catholics, who had to present certificates of baptism. Supposedly in the French Zone visas and birth certificates were for sale, prices ranging from $100 to $1,000, depending on the consulate and country. Rumors abounded. Among those who bought certificates were many who had lived under assumed names, or married gentiles, including some married to Germans.

Our Munich office dealt only with emigration to the United States. By March the office was running smoothly. A minor problem arose when our driver Karl quit and took with him his Mercedes. He had complained to me several times that he could not understand Rabbi Bloom and anyhow was annoyed with him for trying to educate him in democracy. However I do not believe that this was the reason why he quit. There was more money to be made driving passengers or hauling merchandise for the free market.

For about a week Kurt had to drive Bloom in the jeep, which curtailed our mobility until Bloom was assigned another driver, Hans Joachim Gärtner, who had just been released from a P.O.W. camp by the Americans. Joachim (he preferred to be called by his middle name) was the opposite of Karl. Karl had been grumpy, but Joachim was a happy-go-lucky fellow. He drove an Opel, which he had bought on the black market from a former Nazi, who had been stripped of his driver's license. Joachim spoke passable English, which he had learned from the "Amis" (German nickname for American soldiers); this endeared him to Bloom, who had been forced to communicate with Karl in Yiddish, which made him uncomfortable. Joachim hoped to emigrate to America, he told us, a wish shared by many of his countrymen.

With the jeep again all ours, Kurt and I took turns driving, taking

along our families, the Sudarskis, and less often the Glasners. At HIAS things were running efficiently as we took over more and more of the responsibilities from Bloom; eventually his sole task was dealing with the Americans—the consulate and the army.

Life was easy; food was plentiful.

More and more Jews continued to arrive from Poland and from the Soviet Union. They said that Poland was coming more and more tightly under Russian control, although the Church still remained a major influence among the Polish population, particularly the peasantry. The Russians had tightened the borders; it had become difficult to go back and forth between Poland and the Soviet Union. But the Soviets continued to adhere to the agreement concluded between Stalin and the late General Sikorski in 1941, permitting Poles and Jews to repatriate to Poland.

There were always rumors that some Jews deported by the Germans had survived; a new rumor claimed that the Red Cross had information about them. I decided to pay a visit to the International Red Cross office in Munich.

Before I went there, I was warned by friends in the museum not to expect a friendly reception. "*To sa zimne dranie tam* [These are cold-hearted SOB's]," Julek Katz, a survivor of Auschwitz, had said. Still I went.

I was received by a Swiss male in an UNRRA uniform with a Red Cross patch. He looked to be around fifty. He had a very dignified appearance, a ruddy face, and was smoothly shaven. He did not invite me to sit down even though we both wore the same uniform. His had the more elegant cut. He pointed me to a desk in the corner of the room, and said I should fill out an application, which would be answered in due time. He nodded his head frostily when I gave him the completed document, listing my father as a missing person. I read in his face that my request was not going to be taken too seriously. He so obviously didn't give a damn that I left with a bitter feeling. I never received a reply from the Red Cross.

When I told Julek about my experience, he shrugged, "Didn't I tell you?" We discussed the role of the IRC vis-à-vis victims of the Nazi crimes. In hiding I had read in a German newspaper of a visit of a Red Cross delegation to the concentration camp Theresienstadt. The

Swiss leader of that delegation had gone out of his way to praise the *humanity* of the management of the camp, and cited them for the comfortable life they provided for the inmates. Julek had seen the same story in a Polish underground newsletter.

In 1963, I needed a death certificate for my father. To make sure that I would receive a reply, I applied through a lawyer in Munich, and then I did receive information from the Red Cross that they had no record of the whereabouts of my parents.

In addition to the Jews, other people traveled through Munich. I met French people returning home from the east; Poles were traveling in diverse directions; to and from Poland, Russia, and England. Some Poles came to HIAS to find out about emigration possibilities. They were interested in going to America, Canada, or Australia. This was a time of a real Völkerwanderung—reminiscent of the wanderings in the wake of the Thirty Years War.

The museum staff had constant staff turnover. Each time I visited the museum, there were new faces behind the desks. Moskowitz left as did others I had grown to know. Some people went only to Frankfurt; others were smuggled into Palestine. Moskowitz went to the Russian Zone in Berlin where the thriving black market attracted many people. There was much shuttling between the American and Russian Zones, but the British and French Zones were avoided. The British were thought to be anti-Semitic and inclined toward favoritism toward the Germans.

The currency in all zones was the occupation mark; each power issued its own variety. This currency was convertible to dollars. Russian marks, which were cheaper than the American, were smuggled into the American Zone and converted into dollars until the Americans caught wind of this, and the occupation mark was discontinued as a currency. Not before Russia had acquired millions, perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars, I am sure.

The most sought after currency was gold, including the American $20 gold piece, the British sovereign, the French franc, and the Russian ruble. The volume of circulating Russian rubles was a tremendous surprise. We called the coins "*swinki* [piglets in Polish]," because the tsar's face on the coin resembled a pig's. Counterfeit currency, particularly British 5 and £10 notes, abounded; according to

the newspapers, the Germans had had factories in the concentration camps printing the notes during the war. We speculated that some of the printing plants were still being operated by the Russians. As a result people were hesitant to accept British notes.

Dealings in the currencies were the main business on the thriving "open" market, seconded only by cigarettes, the latter supplied by American servicemen. Candy bars were also a popular item. We became acquainted with Camels and Lucky Strikes, but also with Baby Ruths and Three Musketeers. I had read in a sports magazine in prewar Poland (to which I was an occasional contributor), of a game called baseball in which a player named Babe Ruth was making the fantastic sum of $100,000 a year. Obviously the chocolate bar was named for him. But why the Three Musketeers? Cigarettes and chocolate bars remained an "associate" one. American dollars continued to be the most sought-after treasure.

Loeffler, the man who had given us the apartment, had become, as I said, a daily visitor. Occasionally Dr. Siebold came in as well, and once or twice the older of the two teachers, Herr Gottwald, joined the group. He was a man in his sixties; after several conversations, I decided that he had been a devoted Nazi. He professed horror at the Nazi crimes, but ended his statements with "*aber* [but]," followed by an apology, an explanation of how Germany had descended into Hitlerism and war. He put the blame on the Treaty of Versailles. "We had been forced," he claimed, "into an untenable position." The other two agreed with him but in less strident terms.

One subject all avoided: Why had the Germans permitted Hitler to continue in power after the war was lost? Why had they continued the pointless slaughter of their own sons? No use trying to get them to talk about the Jews. *They knew nothing, had known nothing.*

In one conversation Loeffler disagreed with Siebold. Siebold snapped, "It is easy for you to talk. You have only daughters." Siebold had two sons; one had been killed on the eastern front early in the war against Russia; the other, a member of the Waffen SS, was in a French P.O.W. camp, and it was questionable if and when he would be released.

My guests persisted in their opinion that the war had not really ended, that in the near future, within two years maybe, America and

Russia would go to war. This was unavoidable. There was no room in the world for both empires. They would be forced to fight it out. England and France were discounted; they were not destined to play any significant role in this second phase of the war.

Paradoxically in the same breath, they expressed the fear that America would abandon Europe and permit Stalin to rule from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They worried about the rapidity with which the Americans were demobilizing.

I deduced from these conversations that Germans wanted the "Amis," their nickname for Americans, to stay and shield them from the Russians. I didn't think that they liked Americans so much; they mainly feared the Russians.

My talks with the Germans enlightened me about what Germans were thinking. The conversations at UNRRA were more varied. I met many people, some interesting, many bores. I tried my newly acquired English on the Americans and was mortified when I could not understand them. Poldek Hauser, who replaced Elias and Gruenberg and became a good friend, assured me the problem would disappear in America. I would get used to the sound of English; he and many other refugees had overcome the same problem. I hoped that he was right. Although I had considerable trouble understanding Americans—except those who had come from Germany—I was unable to understand Englishmen at all.

I understood German-Americans, because they pronounced or perhaps mispronounced words phonetically, almost as they were spelled. [They enunciated the mute "E" before consonants.] Words that were similar in German and English they pronounced as if they were speaking German. When I spoke to American Jews of second or third generation, I encountered another difficulty. I wanted to speak to them in English and hoped that they would reply in English, but they wanted to practice their Yiddish and replied in broken Yiddish.

In addition to talking to Americans, I also tried to observe their behavior, preparing myself for my future life in America. They ordered coffee or brought it over from the cafeteria the moment they sat at the table, ahead of the food. They handled cutlery strangely, while cutting the food, they hold the knife in their right hand and the fork in the left; after they had cut the food, they transferred the fork to the

right hand and put the knife aside. They drank a lot of something called Coca-Cola, a flavored carbonated drink that they encouraged me to try, but which I found not to my liking. They had one habit that disgusted me; they extinguished their cigarettes by grinding them on the floor with their heels. They seemed to care less about their appearance than the British, who were always immaculately dressed, coat, tie, and all.

Some Americans and English came over to our table when they overheard us speaking Polish; they were ethnic Poles or Jews whose parents or grandparents had come from Poland or Russia at the time of the Bolshevik revolution. They related stories of pogroms from which their parents had escaped and in consequence were favorably inclined toward communist Russia. They were surprised by our fear and distrust of the Russians. We learned to restrain ourselves, not show it and offend them.

Among refugees attached to UNRRA, as we were, were two men I remember well. One was Jacek Klima-Sobielski, who claimed that he had participated in the failed Polish uprising against the Germans in the summer of 1944. After the Poles had surrendered to the Germans, the victorious Germans had offered the members of the underground AK (Armja Krajowa), a choice between remaining in Poland in P.O.W. camps and being shipped to Germany as laborers. He, Sobielski, had chosen Germany. He told us of the tremendous hardships that the army had suffered, the casualties running to tens of thousands. He described the hunger and the daily bombardments. He was bitter that the Russians had deliberately stopped their advance, which was under the command of Polish-born Marshal Konstantin Rokossovski; that halt had enabled the Germans to wipe out the uprising. But he was equally bitter against the Americans and British, who had done nothing, he said, to help the uprising. Jacek Klima-Sobielski was a Jew, but a completely assimilated one anxious, he said, to return to his "*ojczyzna* [homeland]." He hoped that the Russians would leave Poland and then he and his friends would take care of the communist filth now running Poland.

We listened to him, but something about him didn't ring true. His story should have touched us, but somehow it sounded phony. He was handsome, blond, he had an upturned nose, the proper ap-

pearance of a Polish aristocrat, except that he was very short. He had sat down immediately upon coming to our table, before being asked, perhaps to camouflage his smallness. He admitted to being a Jew, but never revealed his Jewish name or told us where he came from. I tried to catch him once. I said that he reminded me of someone that I had known in Lwów, a member of *Fraternitas*, the fraternity to which only assimilated Jews belonged. He looked up as if in shock; evidently I had scared him somehow, because he never approached us again.

I was always looking for survivors from towns in Galicia. It seemed that Lwów and Stanislawów had the smallest number of survivors. Stanislawów was initially occupied by Hungarian troops, in which many Jews had served; the Hungarians were decent to the Jews. However, they were replaced soon by vicious front-line Waffen SS Germans, who evidently took vengeance for the initial lenient treatment of the Jewish population, and treated the natives with extraordinary ferocity. In Lwów, the Ukrainians had staged murderous pogroms in the first days of the German occupation of the city.

In Zloczów too, we had blamed the Ukrainians, who had a long history of tormenting Jews. Our parents were brought up on German culture, and in the beginning of the terror, it was easier to believe that Ukrainians or Latvians were murdering Jews than Germans, who had given the world Goethe, Schiller, Rilke. Nietzsche and Wagner should have alerted us.

A few days after our last meeting with Sobielski, I met in the museum a Lwówiak, Moshe Schuster, a man about my own age. An ardent Zionist, a follower of Vladimir Jabotinski, he was planning to join an underground group going to Palestine, he told us. He had survived the war in a forest just inside the former Polish border, and still carried a gun.

We started to talk, and as is usually the case, we tried to find mutual acquaintances. I happened to mention Sobielski and described him to Schuster. "Why," he said, "that *lajdak* [crook]—Sobielski, my foot! His name is Jozef Sobel." They had attended the *gimnazjum* in Lwów together, Schuster said. Sobel had never studied at the university. He had always been more Polish than the Poles and was probably a convert. He had been suspected of being a traitor and working with the Gestapo. Schuster said, "I would not be surprised if he was

now a spy working for the Polish Bezpieka." This was in line with a rumor that several questionable types like Sobel were in Munich to spy for the NKVD.

I was to meet Schuster accidentally in a café in Tel-Aviv many years later, when he was a captain in the Israeli Army.

Another man from Galicia whom I met at UNRRA was Janusz Kanarek from Rzeszow. During the First World War, my parents had lived for a year in that city in a house owned by a Kanarek family. It turned out that this Kanarek was related to that family. He had survived the war passing as an "Aryan" under his own Polish-sounding name. He had joined the partisans in the later days of the war. He was a short, stocky, powerfully built man with a drooping mustache, who looked like a typical Polish peasant. But he hated the Poles with a passion. He hinted that he had killed a few members of the AK during a fight in the forest, and I believed him. He too carried a gun.

Several ethnic Poles serving with the British Army listened to our Polish speaking group, approached us, one at a time or in groups of two or three. A Captain Niedzielski of the Royal Air Force, who wore many decorations, told us proudly that he had downed three German planes. He had been shot down himself over the Channel and was miraculously saved by a Dutch fishing vessel. He came from Poznan originally and had escaped the Germans by going first to Norway, and escaping from there "right under the noses of the Germans." He was a genuine hero.

In Cieszyn I had met several Poles who had served in the British Army; they were without exception anti-Semites. Captain Niedzielski was different, although he had come from the anti-Semitic environment of his native Poznan. He was happy when I told him that my family had been saved by a Polish woman; he grieved that so few Poles had helped Jews. His parents had died before the war. He planned to return to Poland to find his two sisters and to take them to Australia, where many of his friends had already emigrated. He was disillusioned with Poland. He wanted to meet my family but was transferred before we could arrange it.

There was also an English Jew, Lieutenant Carter, in the Judge Advocates Office. He wore a skullcap. I could not understand his English well in spite of the progress that I was making in the lan-

guage, but he spoke a passable Yiddish, so I could communicate with him as could Dr. Glasner. Kurt, who did not speak Yiddish, could not and was frustrated. Indeed we three had a very lively and interesting conversation. Carter was Orthodox and tried his best to preserve kashruth, not an easy task under the circumstances. He was an unabashed English patriot. He heatedly denied that the English were anti-Semitic, but blamed anti-Semitism on the aristocratic circles and on the influence of immigrants to England from Slavic countries. You could not find anti-Semitism among the English working classes, he said.

He mentioned with pride the Balfour Declaration. He was a member of the Labour Party and spoke highly of Attlee. When I mentioned Churchill, he said that Churchill had been the right man to lead the country during the war, but he had had to go because he failed to understand that the British empire was dying and another more relevant social model was needed. He became uncomfortable when Glasner and I questioned the current British policy in Palestine. He was sure, however, he said, that the matter would end eventually in favor of the Jewish settlement. He proclaimed himself a Zionist. He had a large family in England and relatives in Canada and Australia.

His grandfather had come from Petersburg during the last century, Carter told us, and had established a successful retail business in the "fashions" in Manchester. Of Carter's two brothers, one was a doctor and the other was with their father in the family business.

During the war Carter and his wife had adopted two Jewish orphans from Germany, a boy of ten and a girl of eight, who blended successfully with his own two sons and three daughters, who were slightly older. Carter too expressed a wish to meet my family, after I told him of our experiences, but again nothing came of it. He left his address with me, but I lost it along with many other letters and documents that somehow disappeared as such things do.

Rabbi Lang asked me to arrange a Seder for Passover, and once again I decided to hold it in my favorite restaurant, the Deutsches Theater Café. The Seder festivities were as well organized as the Purim affair. We staged a traditional seder with the youngest survivor, a seventeen-year-old boy, asking the four questions. I spoke briefly, relating the Seder to the last persecution and slaughter that we

had endured. Still, unlike Purim, this was in the main a joyful occasion as we celebrated yet another escape from bondage.

One day early in April, Loeffler came in to tell me that Gottwald had been arrested by the American police. He did not ask me directly, but in a roundabout way wondered whether I could help his friend. He believed that I had some influence with the American authorities since I wore a uniform. One thing that the Germans and the Poles have in common is respect for uniforms.

I told him that, even if I wanted to, I had no clout with anyone, and I could not intervene. I am not sure that he believed me. I had always suspected Gottwald of being a Nazi; now that he had been arrested, I thought that he might have been more than a believer. Loeffler claimed that he knew of nothing incriminating about Gottwald. As he had not believed me, neither did I believe him. A cleaning woman recommended by Loeffler, who lived two houses away, told me in confidence that after Gottwald was arrested, Siebold had gone into hiding in the countryside. Loeffler too became much more restrained in our conversations.

One day we had an unexpected visit. A pretty diminutive lady knocked at our door. I opened it, looked at her, knew her, but could not remember her name. "Lipa," she said, "you don't remember me!" Only my very good friends called me by my first name. I recognized Lola Burger, the daughter of my mother's good friend. The Burgers had lived in Lwów at Kleparowska Street No. 7. My mother and I had lived in Lwów with the Burgers for a few months when my father was with the army in Przemysl during the First World War. After the war, whenever my mother went to Lwów, whether to have some dresses made or for other reasons, she stayed with her friend. Later Lola visited us in Zloczów. It was no secret that her mother had been interested in me as a potential husband for Lola.

When I had entered the politechnic in Lwów, I had stayed for a while with the Burgers. She had visited us in Zloczów, and we had gone out together. She eventually met Linka as well, who also remembered her.

Lola's story was a little different from most others. A German civilian to whom she was assigned for forced labor in Lwów had fallen in love with her, and had taken her with him to Germany, where

they had married. They had lived in a suburb of Munich all through the war. Her brother, a medical student, found out from someone in the museum that I was with my wife and children in Munich. (She herself had severed all relations with Jews.) We spent some hours together reminiscing about old times. She visited us a few more times until she and her husband moved away. I have never heard of her again. The brother, after completing his studies in Munich, settled in America.

We received a notice to appear at the American consulate in Munich.

Chapter Nine

Final Days in Munich

Some people have complained that the staff of the American consulate in Munich had treated them cavalierly, evidently unfriendly toward refugees. We received royal treatment. By that time my English was adequate, and I could act as the interpreter for my family. The interviewer, a young man in his thirties, was pleased that I was making an effort to speak English even though he spoke German. All courtesies were observed. My mother-in-law was given the most comfortable chair in the room, and one of the secretaries put a box of chocolates on the table next to her. My two daughters were swamped with small gifts and sweets. When the vice-consul who handled our application found out that I was a lawyer, he gave me a copy of the American Constitution. I told him that I was familiar with it and in my second year of law school at the University at Lwów had delivered a paper comparing various constitutions, including the American one. The processing lasted a couple of hours; at the end we were congratulated and welcomed as future American citizens.

The vice-consul had chatted with me for several minutes. I told him that my paper covered aspects of constitutional and international law, and that the assistant professor who taught the seminar where I spoke, Zenon Wachlewski, had been a graduate of Oxford and a converted Jew. In my paper I had concluded that the American Constitution was the best. With the vice-consul I briefly discussed my reasons. Later he asked me questions as to how we had survived and also about the Soviet Union. I speculated about the future of Germany and all of Europe actually. I told him that I'd spoken with some Germans who were afraid that the Americans would pull out and leave them to the mercy of the Russians. He assured me that the Americans had no intention of repeating the mistakes of the Treaty of Versailles. I told him that the worst thing about life in the Soviet Union had been the constant fear of the secret police. My first impression of an American official could not have been more favorable, and it made

me look with hope and confidence toward our future life in that country.

I was asked whether I wished to change my name—"Americanize" it, as they phrased it. I replied in the negative. Lina and I had discussed this before and had agreed that "what was good enough for my father was good enough for us." Knowing that we would be in America within the next couple of months, I wrote a second letter to Uncle Itzig, this time in English, advising him of our plans to come to America in the not so distant future.

The first anniversary of the end of the war came and went. Used to military displays in Russia, we were surprised that there was no parade. Many of the soldiers who had fought the war had returned to America, and their replacements had no memories of the battles. The few remaining veterans did get together, sang war songs, and got drunk, happy that it was over. Some mentioned how happy they were to go home, that there was no time to be reshipped to the Pacific to face the Japanese.These soldiers hailed President Truman for dropping the atomic bomb on Japan.

As for the HIAS group, we mobilized ourselves a day later to go to the Deutsches Cafe to celebrate. But our thoughts and talk were of our families and friends that perished. We had invited Bloom but he had been unable to come, so Poldek Hauser had joined us instead.

The restaurant was packed with young Germans, who were celebrating openly and noisily. Looking at their faces, one would have thought that they had won the war.

Poldek was disgusted. Kurt and I had to restrain him from going over to the German tables and starting an uproar. He was slightly tipsy and would get up and try to go after the Germans, but we would force him to sit down. However he spat on the floor in the general direction of the Germans and said loudly enough for them to hear, "*Schweinhunden*," and turning to us, "Too bad that we did not drop an atomic bomb on this cursed country."

The Germans pretended not to see or hear. It was the only time that something close to a disturbance occurred between "them" and "us."

Poldek hated the Germans more than any man I knew. His parents had been killed by them. He had escaped West and spent a

few years in England. When the war broke out, he went to America where he had relatives. Afterward he enlisted in the British Army; then he joined the American OSS, and devoted himself to hunting Nazis.

The Sudarskis also received their visas; we agreed that we would leave together. Bloom asked us to stay for an additional six months to help him find replacements, and of course we could not refuse him. There was no compulsion or intimidation here, but I felt pressure to change my plans for departure. There was no comparison, but I felt a little as I had felt in Zloczów, where I ultimately had to resort to escape to get away from the NKVD. We stayed, but I wanted very much to settle down somewhere, to resume normal living, to send the children to school, to do something about the recurrent bleeding from my duodenal ulcer.

I put all that off as requested by Bloom, and I carried on with work at HIAS that was absorbing, difficult, mostly tedious, occasionally hilarious. One day a man came to register for a visa to the States. He had genuine rabbinical credentials; he introduced himself as Rabbi Moshe Kohn, a Hungarian Jew, from Bessarabia. He came from a distinguished family of rabbis, he said. His wife and seven children had survived; he refused to tell us how. Evidently very wealthy, he asked where he could obtain the best exchange from gold into dollars. He insisted on an immediate visa; he had a brother in Brooklyn he said, who would give him a congregation the moment he arrived in the States. He refused to talk to me or Igo and demanded to see the American rabbi. We gladly complied with his request.

Bloom received him with respect to begin with, but soon they were engaged in a heated discussion, with Rabbi Kohn yelling at the top of his lungs, and Bloom trying to pacify him. It turned out that he had refused to be interviewed by Igo or me because we were bareheaded. He berated Bloom for permitting bareheadedness in a Jewish organization. He also complained about the shameless behavior of our ladies; I still wonder what he meant by that. He refused to permit his wife, Sura, to be examined by Dr. Glasner and demanded a woman doctor. I put on a hat as he demanded and processed him in a hurry. Bloom found a Jewish nurse at the consulate, who examined the wife, who was very comely. We all ap-

preciated the couples' two little boys, who were very handsome with their blond locks and payess. It was a rather hilarious interlude and we all had a good laugh afterward. Our ladies said that the demure rebbitsin had given our men a very intense and appreciative visual examination.

Loeffler came to visit. His mood was much brighter; Gottwald had been released. I told Loeffler that we had obtained our visas to America and asked him to get hold of Dr. Doebling to retrieve the paintings. A couple of days later Doebling reappeared and asked whether I would not buy the paintings from him. I refused, a decision that I later regretted. Many people bought paintings that they resold for huge sums later in the States. Astute speculators also bought supposedly worthless stocks in German companies like Volkswagen, Telefunken, and others. Some of these people became wealthy after the Germans revived the factories and swamped foreign markets with their goods. Some people bought houses and also did well financially.

As Igo and I prepared to leave, Kurt who was to remain behind, albeit for a short time only, took over more and more of our responsibilities. We also trained new employees; now it was easy to recruit, once it became known that employees of HIAS received corporate affidavits.

The new arrangement gave Igo and me more time to lunch at the UNRRA cafeteria in Pasching. One day we arrived late and found several Americans, including our OSS friend, Poldek, in a heated discussion with the English Carter. The Americans were attacking Carter, demanding to know his position on India and questioning when the British were going to leave that country and give it independence. Carter's riposte was that America had not given up the Philippines. They argued heatedly about Palestine. Carter insisted that "in their hearts" the British were pro-Jewish. It was hard to accept his position in view of the facts as we knew them.

Neither Igo nor I understood their arguments, nor, to tell the truth, were we interested except for the subject of Palestine. Still since I was going to America and thought that such issues might be important there, I asked Poldek for more information. He offered to bring me a number of American newspapers.

Americans and Englishmen seemed to disagree on many issues.

In general, there seemed to be little love lost between the two comrades in arms. They had different assessments of the generalship of their respective leaders, Eisenhower and Montgomery. The Americans did not think much of the egotistical Montgomery whereas the British had low regard for Eisenhower's talents as a commander or strategist. The British seemed overall envious of the Americans.

Poldek, although he was British, was a great admirer of Eisenhower, believing him to be one of the greatest generals of all time. He hoped that Eisenhower would become the next President, succeeding Truman, of whom Poldek had a very low opinion (many Americans had a similar low assessment of the president at that time). One day Poldek surprised us; he said that he had applied for an American visa.

One day as he had promised, Poldek brought me a bundle of newspapers: *The Stars and Stripes*, published by the army; New York papers, the *New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *Daily News*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *World*; and some Jewish papers, *The Day*, the *Morning Journal.* He had added two communist papers, the English *Daily Worker* and the Yiddish *Freiheit.* He recommended the *Tribune*, saying that it was the best and advised us to follow in other papers the commentaries of Walter Winchell and Drew Pearson who, he said, would tell us in their columns what was really going on. I had known about the *Times*, the *Daily Worker*, and also about Winchell, who had been frequently quoted in *Pravda* and *Izvestia.* Reading the papers was a valuable exercise in learning English; much of what I was reading was "Greek to me" however.

The sheer mass of a single issue of the *New York Times* was overwhelming; its sport section alone equaled an entire issue of *Pravda* or *Izvestia.* I could not believe the pages devoted to Wall Street, to entertainment, and as for pages and pages of advertising, they revealed a whole new world.

The June 1 issue of the *New York Times* had a number of articles related to the Anglo-American Committee, which was to debate the future of Palestine. The committee had recommended the admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees to Palestine. This was grudgingly accepted by Attlee, with the reservation that the Jewish militias acting in Palestine would be dissolved. That condition was rejected outright

by the Yishuv (the Jewish leaders in Palestine). The Arabs rejected the entire document. The British and French evacuated Syria, still another bad omen for the future of Jewish settlement in Palestine. I read bad tidings; it seemed to me that legal immigration to Palestine was a distant possibility, if it ever was allowed at all.

The *Times* also reported boundary disputes between Poland and Czechoslovakia, and between Italy and Yugoslavia.

Much space was devoted to the trial of Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg; the Allies seemed in agreement there. But it was apparent that, regarding the future of Germany, there were basic differences between the Western powers and the Soviet Union. The plan of the American Secretary of State James Byrnes was rejected by Molotov. Byrnes was a new name to me. Poldek said that Mr. Byrnes had his eyes on the presidency and that the gossip was that he had low regard for President Truman. (The following year he was replaced by George C. Marshall.)

Major news was a coal strike led by John L. Lewis. Poldek told me that Lewis had led strikes even during the war, that he had no regard for the president, and held Congress in contempt. He was, according to Poldek, the most hated man in America.

A surprising piece of news was that there was a vast black market in the States in many commodities. In all the papers there were references to organizations, individuals, and issues that were unknown to me. It appeared that the country was ready for a change, that the Democratic Party had lost its appeal, and that President Truman was highly unpopular. Much space was given to two governors, Tom Dewey of New York and Harold Stassen of Minnesota, as potential presidential candidates. A former member of President Roosevelt's cabinet, Henry Wallace, was receiving much attention; according to these accounts, Roosevelt had made a big mistake in choosing Truman instead of Wallace to be his vice-president.

Several articles described anti-Semitism in America, particularly in Congress and on the radio. One Senator Theodore Bilbo from Mississippi and a Congressman John Rankin from the same state gave speeches accusing Jews of bringing disaster to America. A rabid Catholic priest, Father Charles Coughlin, lambasted the Jews in a weekly radio show. All this was very frightening to me. Were we

running away from a violently anti-Semitic Poland to find the same problem in America? The two previously mentioned journalists, Winchell and Pearson, who devoted articles to corruption in government, were solid philo-Semites. Poldek said Winchell was Jewish.

Articles in *The Day* and the *Morning Journal* described the tragedy that had befallen the Jews in Europe. They made much of the forthcoming trials of prominent Nazis by the victorious Allies, but the writing in these Yiddish papers was uninspiring.

The two communist papers, the English *Daily Worker* and the Jewish *Freiheit*, were full of praise for the heroic Soviet Army and the leader of communists all over the world, Josef Stalin. The soporific prose reminded me of *Pravda* and *Izvestia.*

All the papers devoted much space also to the future of Germany. The Morgenthau plan of which I had read in the German papers before the end of the war, was supposed to change Germany into an agrarian country.

Poldek also brought me a few old issues of the army newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, which related battles in the Pacific war zone of which I knew practically nothing. The articles were well written and at times lighthearted.

Stars and Stripes appeared to express genuine gratitude and respect for the foot soldier—by contrast to Soviet publications, which gave all credit for success to J. V. Stalin (his name never appeared without the initials J. V.) and his leadership. I enjoyed the cartoons in *Stars and Stripes*, particularly Bill Mauldin's shabby and unkempt characters, Willie and Joe.

Poldek had also brought some illustrated magazines, *Life, Look*, and *Time.* I admired the splendid photographs of the war, of the battle scenes, and of the civilian victims. Some issues were very old, going back to 1944 and 1945, a few were more recent from 1946. I began to acquaint myself with issues and individuals little known or unknown in the Soviet Union or Poland—war leaders like Gens. Omar Bradley and George Marshall, for example. I was much interested in Jews who seemed to have great influence in America, among them Bernard Baruch and Sidney Hillman. The latter was credited in some circles with having facilitated the nomination of Harry Truman to the vice-presidency.

I decided that, as soon as I arrived in the States, I would live by the edicts of the *New York Times* and would subscribe to *Life, Look,* and *Time.*

I discussed the reports and articles in the papers with Poldek; he warned me not to take everything that I read at face value. Papers, he said, had their political goals, not always in line with the good of the country. This, I admit, I could not understand. He said smiling, "You will, you will."

Everybody's great hero was Dwight Eisenhower; many saw in him the next president of the United States, even though the general had declared in an interview that he had no interest in the job. It was pointed out that, under similar circumstances, a general of the American Civil War, William T. Sherman, had been quoted as saying unequivocally, "If nominated, I will not accept, if elected, I will not serve." Eisenhower had not made as strong a disclaimer.

Igo and I discussed the articles that we were reading in the New York press, and agreed much of what we read remained abstract and remote. We did not yet know enough to be really interest in the politics of the country. The problem of anti-Semitism did worry us. Poldek asked us what we had learned about life in America. We confessed that we had not learned very much. He said, "New York is not America," and brought us the *Chicago Tribune* to our next meeting. It carried the same stories, from a strong Republican slant, which we were beginning to identify.

Much of the press, particularly the Jewish papers including the *Freiheit,* attacked England for its policy of denying Jews who had been liberated from the camps entry into Palestine.

By the middle of May, I received an answer to my last letter from Uncle Itzig. He said that he had sent me $10 through Rabbi Lang, which I had not in fact received. He wrote that he had been in touch with Dr. Elias, which meant that he had received the money that we had sent to pay for our passage to America, some $1,000. His understanding of the realities of our lives seemed bizarre; $10 is what he used to give me when I was a boy—I thought it funny that he still believed that $10 represented a fortune.

Uncle mentioned that he had shown my letter to Aunt Clara and Uncle Adolf. I remembered Clara well; she had paid us a visit in

Zloczów before the war and had stayed with us for a few weeks, but who was Adolf? But I thought, After all, my great-grandfather Shulim had had twenty-four children, several of whom had emigrated to America; possibly Adolf was a cousin as well. In addition to Itzig and Clara, I knew of Aaron who had emigrated to Canada. Itzig did not mention him in the letter. Aaron had worked in my father's factory before emigrating.

Finally Itzig complimented me on my command of English, as apparent in my letter to him, but he replied again in German. I was pleased at his comment, of course, but wished that I spoke the language as well as I was already able to write.

We were happy that we had a family to greet us in our first days in a new country.

One day Kurt, Siunek, and I went to a soccer game between two local teams. On an adjacent field, American GIs were playing a game that someone said was baseball. It resembled two games that I had played in *gimnazjum*: *palant*, played with a ball, and *kitshka*, played with a short stick, each struck with a bat, a shortened broomstick in our case. In *palant*, the player had to run to the end of the field and back after he struck the ball. The length of the distances covered by the ball or short sticks were measured and added for a final score. Baseball appeared slow and dull to me compared with soccer, but it was heartily enjoyed by the Americans, who whistled loudly at players. We remembered that, contrary to European custom, whistles signified applause in America.

My OSS friend told me that soccer, which we called football, was practically unknown in America, where "football" referred to a variation of English rugby played with an oval ball. American papers devoted much more space to sports than European ones, with baseball covered the most extensively.

Boxing appeared second to baseball. Jews in Poland before the war had celebrated when the American Negro, Joe Louis, had knocked out that specimen of the master race, Max Schmeling. (I remember reading in a German newspaper that Schmeling had been a paratrooper and had taken part in the successful German raid on Crete against the British.)

Baseball was often a major topic of conversation among the

Americans at UNRRA. Sometimes the discussions grew into arguments; often bets were placed. One day I overheard an argument among a number of American UNRRA workers about the respective merits of the Yankees and the Red Sox. Somebody exclaimed, "With Ted back, we can't lose." Joe was the hero of the opposition. Ted, who? Joe, who? The disputants talked about hitting three hundred (three hundred what?). Listening to Americans and reading the newspapers, it appeared that the vicissitudes of baseball meant more to Americans than all the problems of Europe. But I had once been a sports fan, too.

A few days after our interviews at the consulate, a noisy argument broke out in front of the building adjacent to ours, which was often frequented by American servicemen. Loud voices shouted curses and invectives in both English and German; the Germans, a man and a woman, were particularly shrill. I could hear that the argument was about money. There was something about the sounds of that altercation that reminded me of the shouts and screams of Germans and Ukrainians during *akzions*. I became upset.

On the following night I woke up screaming and covered with sweat. I had dreamed that I was back in Zloczów, trying to hide the children to prevent them from being taken from us. It was not clear whether I was protecting the children from the Germans or the Russians.

I could not get back to sleep. I tried to read, but I couldn't concentrate. I thought that the German voices had triggered the nightmare. I fell into musing about my life. Here I was, living in Germany, having survived a horrible war, having lived through yet another war before and endured an economic depression. What did the future hold for us? This was probably my worst few hours since I arrived in Munich. Generally I had been positive, optimistic. Soon we would be embarking on a journey to a new country, where we would be strangers. Memories of good and bad times raced through my head. I thought I was feverish; I felt as I had felt during the hemorrhage I had suffered in Lwów after the Russian invasion in 1939. After a long while, I fell back to sleep.

When I woke up, I was still covered with sweat, and my head ached. So I decided not to go to the office. Suniek advised me on the

telephone to take it easy for a few days, and prescribed aspirin, which gave me a stomachache.

Later in the day, the Sudarskis, the Pollaks, and the Glasners came to visit me. We spoke about our plans for the future. We reminisced about the past, the good days and the horrors of the war. We asked ourselves the persistent question, "Would we ever be able to resume, or rather begin, a new 'normal' life again?" In spite of my nightmare, I agreed with my friends, who felt that after we settled in a free country, we could resume normal lives.

Igo made an interesting remark. He pointed out that, during the last weeks, we had become absorbed in observing Americans: the way they ate, the way they smoked, the way they cheered, all trivia! Our interest in trivia was a sign that we were returning to normalcy, he said.

I mentioned my dream; it turned out that everyone was having similar dreams, but that too was considered normal. Even in peaceful times, we had all had "bad" dreams from time to time. We were not sure whether the recent past would soon be buried forever. Would we forget the horrors of the last five years? Would the world always remember? We agreed, we believed, that after an interval of some years, the world would forget and forgive the Germans.

We talked about the fate of Poland, Germany, and Europe, and were unanimous in our belief that Stalin would dominate, if not actually rule, all of Europe within a few years. Poland would be a separate province, like the Ukraine tightly bound to the Soviet Union.

When I returned to work in a few days, I learned that Bloom was again causing a commotion. A stickler for rules, he had become agitated and disturbed when he realized that applicants for immigration were not only registering under names assumed during the German occupation, but were also falsifying their ages. It was true that many survivors had chosen to keep their Aryanized names and that some, especially women, subtracted a few years from their ages. Bloom was afraid that if all this came out, applicants would be refused visas and that would reflect on HIAS. We couldn't see the problem. Who cares, we told Bloom, whether a Mr. Grossman was coming to America or a Mr. Wielicki? Who cares whether a woman was thirty or forty? Bloom tried to explain that people who falsified

their ages would have trouble with Social Security benefits when they retired. This argument drew blanks with us, because we did not understand what he meant. However, after we explained to him that everyone's birth certificates had been destroyed during the war, he threw up his hands. . . .

Throughout this discussion, Sonia Sudarski, Mary, and the other ladies, more perspicacious than we, had been laughing heartily. They had noticed long before that every second woman was taking several years off her age. We men too found it to be a very natural thing. Many women were prematurely gray and appeared older than they were, so perhaps for some it was a restoration. Men also, we realized, subtracted years from their ages—subtracting the lost years, maybe. Both men and women dyed their hair. Youth had been an advantage in concentration camp selections.

Lying about age reminded me of a story by Sholem Aleichem (or was it by Mendel Moicher Seforim), about a Jew who came to his rabbi for advice. I told it to my friends at work:

"Rabbi, my son is summoned to appear before the draft board. What age should he give? Twenty? Twenty-two?"

"And how old is he?" asked the wise man.

"Twenty-one."

"So why not tell the truth?"

"You know, rabbi, this never occurred to me!"

Many times, joking about ourselves kept us going.

At UNRRA new workers replaced the veterans; the newcomers were young, some barely eighteen. The men were interested in the Frauleins and began to bring them to the restaurant. The place became noisy. It was difficult to conduct serious conversations. Carter came to say good-bye; he had been discharged and was going to England. Soon Poldek alone remained from the original group, but he too expected to be discharged from the OSS soon. He planned to remain in Germany, perhaps as a civilian employee of some Jewish organization. He had pledged to devote his time to hunting Nazis, He had also applied for a permanent visa and intended to emigrate to the States after completing his self-appointed task.

We started to get ready for our journey. Everybody gave us advice on what to take and what to leave behind. I had to turn in my

uniform which meant that I had to buy a decent civilian suit. The family too had to be dressed so as not to appear in America as beggars. Clothes we had brought from Poland were falling apart. Someone said that it was forbidden to bring silver objects to America, so we sold some table silver that we had acquired and outfitted ourselves from the money derived from the sale. (The advice to sell the silver was erroneous, and we regretted having taken it. When we found out, it was too late.)

I sorted out the documents that I managed to preserve. Among them, I found some sheets in which I had mused about my love of writing and complained also that I was too lazy to write. I had written this while we were in hiding. Our chances of survival had seemed so minimal then that perhaps I thought it pointless to write. The pages were faded, and I retyped them in the office on an old typewriter that was missing Polish symbols.

> *How can I choose what to write with so much begging to be recorded? Such a wealth of subjects—any writer would be happy to change places with me. (And I with him, so help me God.) (1944)*

I discarded clippings from German newspapers, all my books—too heavy to carry. I threw out papers and documents that I found superfluous, yet ended up saving some of little value like the receipts for returning the furniture from our apartment. I had no expectation that in America I would find time to write, at least not in the beginning. But I saved my wartime memoir, which had survived in pretty good shape, and the treasured diplomas and photographs.

The first ship to carry DPs to the United States was a former army transport, the *Marine Flasher*. She sailed in May. We could have been on this first sailing but had promised Bloom to stay and kept our promise. Instead Bloom, Igo, and I went to the railroad station to say good-bye to our clients. They were being transported to the port at Bremerhaven in boxcars converted to passenger use. Those cars jarred us; the Russians had used boxcars to transport our people to Siberia or Kazakhistan; worse, the Germans had sent people to their deaths in them. But we reminded ourselves, the people in these cars were free, happy using them to get out of Germany. These cars

were marked with signs bidding good-bye to the past. Many were singing songs; others toasted their departure with wine or beer.

I suffered yet another hemorrhage returning from the trip to the railroad station. Igo came to see me. We talked and decided that it was time for me to leave HIAS. Igo too was eager to emigrate. He went to see Bloom on my behalf as well as his own, and advised him that because of my health, we needed to move on. Bloom did not resist; he said that he would try to book us on the very next boat, the *Marine Perch*, due to sail on or around May 31. However it turned out to be too late to catch that boat, so he booked us on the return voyage of the *Marine Flasher* due to sail June 6 from Bremerhaven.

My fare was paid by Uncle Itzig from the money that I had sent him through Dr. Elias. Since I was an employee of HIAS, I received a fare reduction from $400 to $135. Lina and my mother-in-law paid $200 each; we paid half of that for the children. The total plus tax amounted to $748, almost the whole of our savings.

I told Loeffler that we were leaving and obtained a receipt confirming that we had returned the apartment in good order and that nothing was missing. It had been a comfortable apartment similar to the one we had occupied in Cieszyn. But although I had had some misgivings on leaving Cieszyn, I felt no sorrow leaving Munich. I suppose this was in part because leaving Cieszyn and Poland we were leaving for the unknown. Now we were going to America—strange to be sure, but full of promise.

Unexpected visitors came: Loeffler and Dr. Diebold, with their wives whom we had not met before; the two teachers, and other tenants of the house I had known only by sight. Everyone was dressed in festive clothes. They had come to say good-bye and to offer their wishes for our future, they said. Mrs. Loeffler carried a bouquet of flowers. Loeffler, speaking for all the tenants expressed regrets for losing "*eine solche nette Familie*, [such a nice family]." I am sure that Loeffler was sincere; but as for the others. . . . Well, as I've said before, the war was over. Loeffler was always talking about liberation as if the Germans had been liberated. Many other Germans said similar things.

After they left, Lina and I wondered about the visit. We decided that we did not understand Germans. Had they felt the same friendli-

ness to their Jewish-German compatriots? Had they shown it, many lives would have been saved. Was their visit a show, an acceptance of defeat? Were they making amends? The future would tell.

We were told to assemble in some barracks, where we were sprayed with DDT before being assigned our quarters, as required by American immigration procedures. This was the third time that we endured that annoying ritual. Things improved immediately afterward. We were assigned a Quonset hut, one each to a family. An army major, young, handsome, tall, evidently took a special liking to Sonia. Wherever we went, she commanded attention and solicited wolf-whistles from the army men. Sonia had a charming smile, spoke only a few words of English, and responded to all approaches with a nod of her head. The major took her behavior for an invitation.

This reminded me of a story. In the summer of 1944, in my mother-in-law's house at the railroad station in Zloczów, my wife and her friend, Yetka Zwerdling, operated a restaurant catering to Soviet Army personnel. The Soviet government had allowed private initiative in those early days of liberation and the military had welcomed it. Another major, a Russian that time, evidently had a yen for Yetka, and said something to her in Russian She understanding nothing had innocently nodded her head, "Da, da. [Yes, yes]." Later that evening the major, quite drunk, returned to look for her. When she refused to go with him, he threatened her with his gun. The women started screaming, which brought a political commissar, always present with the army, to protect them from making contact with civilians. With his help and the help of some other officers, the major let Yetka go.

Well, this time there was no gun and no coercion. The episode passed for a flirtation, all in good fun.

We stayed at the barracks for a couple of days. Finally it was our turn to embark on a train to Bremerhaven.

We were put in the charge of a Canadian employee of HIAS, a Mr. Harmann, an extremely pleasant, intelligent man. He was swarthy and had a handlebar mustache. He was responsible for us until we arrived in Bremerhaven.

The entire office came to say good-by to us. Bloom wished us luck in America. I responded, thanking him for all he had done for us.

He was naive and a poor organizer, but his heart was in the right spot. We were never to meet again.

I have a photograph of that scene in the railroad station. On our car is a sign, "Good-bye Hitler." I have no idea who painted it. It didn't quite tell the story. We were not merely saying good-by to Hitler; we were taking leave of all our past, good and bad, forever.

The Pollaks and the Glasners were in the group saying good-bye; they hoped to follow us soon. Meanwhile Kurt told me that he had received some bad news from Cieszyn. His uncle Serog had been arrested by the Bezpieka. His mother had gone to Czechoslovakia to live with relatives. Another chapter of my experience with Poland was closed.

I realized that we had escaped just in time, recapitulating the timing of my escape from Zloczów a year earlier. Had I stayed in Cieszyn I would certainly have been arrested also by now. My politics had been widely known.



Farewell party in front of HIAS Moehlstrasse. Author at left.



Leaving Munich, top row—third from left: Edith, Henis, Lina and Selma; center row—Igo, Letzter, Sonia, author; bottom row—left: Rabbi Bloom.

Chapter Ten
Marine Flasher

We made the trip to Bremerhaven in a cattle car. It took a day and a night. We were protected by a couple of GIs, youngsters who had just come over from the States, and were very friendly, showering the children with candy bars and oranges. One, a handsome blond fellow whom I judged to be no more than eighteen years old, tried to engage us in conversation. He was very curious about us and just as obviously unaware of why an armed guard was needed. He was a Southerner, from Alabama, and we had great difficulty understanding him. Even our English speaking Miss Lester admitted that she could not make out his drawl.

Whenever we stopped, onlookers at the stations scrutinized us with a mixture of dislike and envy. When the train moved again, some mocked us with the Nazi salute. They knew who we were; logos painted on the wagons identified us. However most of the trip



Embarkation on Marine Flasher.

took place at night, so time passed fast; we awoke at our destination, very happy to be leaving Germany.

Our reception and processing at the embarkation center in Bremerhaven were well organized by a Canadian member of HIAS and the army. Each family was allotted a room. After we showered in communal showers, we were sprayed again with DDT the fourth time. An ample meal was served in a cafeteria and included bacon and eggs, ham and eggs, cereals, oranges, and other fruit, and real coffee and ice cream. For us all this was very luxurious. We were taken sightseeing once, in a jeep driven by the Canadian HIAS worker, who wore an army uniform. The city seemed in bad shape, worse than Munich. Some streets appeared totally destroyed.

In a few days we were told to prepare for embarkation, and everyone was handed a card printed in English and German giving the sailing date, July 6, 1946. We were to sail on the *Marine Flasher*, a former troop transport now converted for our use into a passenger ship. Most of the passengers were refugees being admitted to America in accordance with President Truman's executive order. Men and women were separated in large dorms. There were similar accommodations for the crew; private cabins were reserved for officers and passengers who were American citizens. To our chagrin, some of the best accommodations on the ship were occupied by Americans of German extraction who had chosen to remain in Germany during the war. Many of the men in that group were young, and we were sure that they had served in the Wehrmacht and possibly even in the Waffen SS. They kept to themselves and actually stayed out of sight. Some women did come over to make conversation. The crew was made up mostly of Negroes who sold us food, a dozen oranges went for a dime. We had no need to buy extra food but could not resist the bargains and could never resist oranges.

We passed the White Cliffs of Dover, which were beautiful, indescribable. I had read about them; I had lived to see them. The first two days of the crossing were calm, but as we emerged from the English Channel into the open sea, a light breeze rose and with it waves. It wasn't really rough but for most of us this was our first sea voyage, so practically everyone became seasick.

We spent most of the time on the deck relaxed, covered with

blankets. New acquaintances were made: a Viennese couple, the Adlers, the husband was a lawyer; a tall handsome Berliner, Mr. Baumgarten, said that he was a salesman, and that he had a wealthy relative in the States who had a job reserved for him. This made Mr. Baumgarten a person of importance and an object of envy. Mr. Adler, his wife, and Herr Baumgarten were ardent bridge players looking for a fourth, it turned out, and I gladly volunteered. Back home I had been considered a good player but playing with these three gave me a rude awakening. The Adlers were world-class players, who had participated in and won several tournaments. Herr Baumgarten was less skilled but still much better than I. I learned more about bridge during this journey than I had in all my years in Poland. We played almost nonstop for hours a day until we arrived in New York. I became so absorbed that I forgot to be seasick.

Conversation, which occasionally interrupted the bridge game, centered on speculation about what life in America would be. Would we be able to find employment in our professions? Would we have to settle for other jobs? Herr Baumgarten warned us that it would take us some time to get acclimated to the weather, which in New York was particularly hot and humid during the summer.

Most of the time we refrained from talking much about the war, but some stories came out. The Adlers had survived in Vienna hidden by "Aryan" friends as we had been. The friends were socialists. The socialist party in Austria after WWI had been led by a Jew, an Adler not related to them. The party was decimated in a bloody coup led by Engelhart Dollfuss, who in turn was assassinated by Austrian Nazis.

Herr Baumgarten had passed as a German in Köln. The Adlers and Baumgarten believed that Nazism had been an aberration that would never be repeated. I asked why they had run away from Austria and Germany in that case; their reply was that the stay in America was to be temporary; after the situation cleared, they planned to return. No one from Poland or other Eastern countries had such thoughts. We hoped to get to Palestine eventually. But that possibility seemed increasingly remote.

The Adlers and Herr Baumgarten had positive feelings for the Russians; they were very surprised that we did not share their enthusiasm. When we tried to explain what the Russians had done to us

and what we had had to do to escape, they simply could not understand. We were not inclined to make converts and ended these discussions. Our experience with Americans had been like that as well; many Americans respected Russia and Russians, and Stalin as well.

One day, an attractive woman in her forties, walked over to us while we were playing cards and asked for permission to kibitz. During a pause in our play, she introduced herself as Estonian. We started to talk politics. It was Herr Baumgarten who came out directly and asked her why her compatriots had been such ardent supporters of Nazism and had participated in *akzions* against Jews. She blushed and defended herself and her countrymen. She said that her husband had been killed by the NKVD and that most of her family members had been deported to Siberia. Russians lured by the superior life of the Estonians had swarmed over and had devastated the country. That part of her story I could understand, because the same experience had happened to us in Zloczów.

(Developments in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, disintegration of the empire that Stalin had built, has permitted Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia to regain the independence lost as a result of the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact. These countries will have a problem dealing with large and unpopular Russian minorities.)

Our two daughters traveled to Zloczów in 1989 and confirmed upon their return that Zloczów was totally Russianized; however it is part of the Ukraine and the Ukraine has just voted for independence from the former Soviet Union. Remaining Russians will not be popular in Zloczów either.

The woman did admit that some Estonians, hoodlums, had participated in the atrocities but, she said, they were a small, a very small group. She claimed that many Jews in Riga and Tallin had been saved by Latvians and Estonians. While I was working for HIAS in Germany, I had met several Jews of Estonian and Latvian origin, who had returned from exile in the eastern provinces of the vast Soviet empire; they claimed that Estonians and Latvians had helped no one, and had collaborated with the Nazis just like the Ukrainians.

We invited the woman to play, but she declined, preferring to watch. On one of her visits, she brought her daughter, who was about the same age as our daughters, and the children played together in

spite of the difficulty in communicating. The Estonian child spoke German, making us wonder whether the woman was an ethnic Estonian, or perhaps a German traveling under an alias.

Edith and Selma were pleased to find the little girl, because they had few playmates on the ship. There were no Jewish children that I recall only a few non-Jewish ones and two German boys. The children had no problem with seasickness. It was my mother-in-law who remained ill throughout the trip, whereas Lina kept in good shape.

On the next to last day of our trip, an alarm sounded. People panicked; some started to cry with fear, and some hid below. They thought that the crew had spotted mines. Mines were something new to us, and some people evidently thought that, as in bombardments, hiding in "a cellar"was the thing to do. However, shortly we were informed through the ship's loudspeaker that the ship had halted, because a man had fallen overboard. The ship cruised for some hours, but the man was not found, and his identity remained a mystery, although rumors about him abounded.

According to the Estonian woman, who had close connections with the Germans on the *Marine Flasher*, the man who had gone overboard had served in the German Army on the Eastern front, possibly Waffen SS. She said that he had committed suicide rather than risk being unmasked. Whether this was true, I never knew, and after a short while people stopped talking about it.

Recently our younger daughter, Selma, met a woman, Martha Rich, who had been on the *Marine Flasher* on this same crossing. She too had remembered the incident of the man overboard, and thought that the man had committed suicide, but why she also did not know.

The incident delayed our arrival in New York by several hours. We arrived at night and were thus deprived of the first sight of the Statue of Liberty.

When we came on deck early in the morning, the ship had already docked. Thus my first glimpse of America was of the West Side Highway, filled with cars and more cars. I was reminded of the movie *Megalopolis*, which I had seen a few years before the war, showing a tangle of highways crisscrossing a city. On the right I saw tall buildings and beyond the famous skyscrapers; I had

dreamed of seeing them someday, but under different circumstances.

However there was little time to watch the sights. Soon we were instructed to gather our belongings and left the ship for Ellis Island. I had read about Ellis Island while still in Zloczów. We were halted behind a barrier and steered to various desks for processing. On the other side of the barrier, a mass of people. I realized that they were waiting for us, the refugees. I saw Uncle Itzig, who motioned to me. He was crying.

For the first time in my life, I heard the words "Welcome to America" from a customs official. In subsequent years coming back from trips out of the country, I was always heartened by this warm greeting, which is a part of the ritual of arriving in the United States. The officer who processed us was a Jew, another wonderful surprise. There were no Jewish customs officers in Poland. Hearing that my English was still poor, the officer spoke to me in Yiddish, a broken and accented Yiddish to be sure, but still Yiddish. A nice, friendly man. After completing his routine, he added in a low voice something I shall never forget: "Du, *bedarfst du nischt moire zu hoben. Du bist in America* [Here you don't have to be afraid. You are in America]."

The crew was unloading provisions. They laughed heartily when food was brought out from the sleeping berths occupied by refugees. There were oranges, bread, and especially jars—jar after jar of peanut butter, the favorite food of the Germans. The need and compulsions of hoarding were still deeply ingrained.

Many people were awaiting our arrival. Uncle Itzig was accompanied by his daughter Tutzi and her husband, a tall, handsome fellow, a former MP who had served in the Pacific. Itzig was crying. He asked questions about every member of the family and was shocked when I gave him only terrible news. In spite of all the stories in the papers, the magnitude of the disaster still had not penetrated the human urge to believe that perhaps, just perhaps, the stories had been exaggerated and that some of the family had survived.

We were swarmed over by reporters from Yiddish and American newspapers and radio stations. The reporters pressed for details: How had we survived? By whom had we been rescued? What were our plans for life in America? We were a family with children—rare among refugees—so we became the object of much attention. I

answered some of the questions in English as best as I could, but most of the time we spoke to the reporters in Yiddish. I really had no idea about how we'd live in America, but I mentioned that I would like to resume working as a lawyer.

A woman reporter from the *Freiheit* asked the usual questions. I had known of course, that *Freiheit* was a communist newspaper. Soon she asked me why I had left the Soviet Union and would I describe life in that country. I answered in Yiddish: "*Rusland iz nisht a medine far menshen* [Russia is not a place for humans]." She was taken aback; after some hesitation she said, "*Do bist meshuge* [You are crazy]." She left me to interview others. I overheard her ask the same question over and over.

Her story published next day in *Freiheit* gave me a few lines. There was a lengthy interview with another person who had had high praise for the Soviet Army.

As more of us came in successive days, interest dwindled. After another few more ships arrived, no representatives of the press greeted them.

Max, Tutzi's husband, drove us in his car to Uncle Itzig's home on Linwood Street in the East New York section of Brooklyn, then mostly a Jewish neighborhood. However, Uncle's next door neighbor was a black man, who came to offer us greetings and to welcome us to America.

We were very tired; after eating the meal Uncle's wife had prepared, we were driven further to Aunt Clara's house in Coney Island, where we were given a room. In this room, all of us including Henis, were to remain for a month.

We were in America. I believed then that I was well prepared for the life that was awaiting us in this new country. I had read Mark Twain, James Fenimore Cooper, Jack London, Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair, Ernest Hemingway, and many accounts by writers and others who had visited America. I had had my talks with Americans in Munich. There should be few surprises.

The real America only slightly resembled what I had pictured, what I had expected and had prepared for. But it didn't matter. The country welcomed whoever I was. All I had to do was to open my arms and my mind. I am an unabashed American patriot.

Chapter Eleven
First Days

Clara's appearance was a shock. The last time we had seen her she had been an elegant lady resembling Dolly from the musical *Hello, Dolly*. Now she looked disheveled and run down, dressed in an old shabby housecoat. She lived with a household of cats—in a house filled with cans of cat food, smelling of cats. We were given a room in the basement.

After the sea voyage which (in spite of some seasickness) had been a relaxing vacation, the transition to the squalor of our surroundings was traumatic. The children and Bessie fell asleep on the cots, but Lina, Henis, and I could not sleep for a long time and talked and talked. This was not the America that we had expected and had hoped for. Finally we too fell asleep.

We awoke the next day, our second day in "God's own country," as Clara kept saying, and every visitor thereafter kept repeating.

Soon we were rushed upstairs to greet visitors; we were not prepared for a throng. We were the first arrivals from Zloczów since the war. Stories about us had appeared in Jewish and American papers. Uncle Itzig was claiming credit for having brought us over, and kept introducing us to every new visitor, "Here is the family that I brought over from Germany." We did not contradict his claim, although our admission to the States had been our own doing through the affidavit arranged by Bloom through HIAS.

Clara's house was too small to absorb all the visitors, and many had to wait their turn outside. People were eager to greet us, but even more to inquire about members of their own families whom they had left behind. People came who were from Zloczów originally but also from neighboring cities, towns and villages, like Zborów, Brody, Tarnopol, Lwów. Some brought photographs of their relatives. Again and again we had to go through the painful experience of giving tragic news. We were personally acquainted with a few of the people of whom news was requested and had heard about others. Sometimes

we had no information. Some of the questioners were older people, who had left the "old country" half a century ago and had only dim memories of it. They also confused chronologies. Over and over they commented, "What! You don't know my father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt? She lived near the great synagogue." Most of that older generation had lived in that district.

We had the impression that some people did not believe us when we told them that almost the entire Jewish population of Zloczów had perished. Our presence seemed a denial of this awful truth. It was as if they were thinking, "If what you are telling us is true, how come you are here—a family with children?" We explained over and over again that we were an extraordinarily lucky exception. It was not easy for some people to give up hope. They kept asking over and over, "Are you sure Aunt Sara is dead? She sold produce on the Green Market." Often, we weren't sure; we hadn't been present at all the deaths. We became exhausted, bereaved all over again as we were being forced to relive the Nazi years, remembering.

All the visitors meant well and showed us kindness and friendliness. Many brought small gifts, chocolates for the children. They came mostly by subway, a few in cars. A Mr. Schuster , the president of one of the many Zloczów societies—to our surprise there were at least six of them—came in a black Chrysler. He took us outside to show off his car. He was a rich man, others told us. The proliferation of Zloczów societies was puzzling. There was a single kehilah in Zloczów, the governing autonomous body of the Jewish community. When I asked where the kehilah met, Mr. Hochberg, the secretary of the society, told me that there was no such organization in America—no single Jewish body to register births or deaths, to appoint rabbis, to bury the dead, to perform all such duties and take on responsibilities. Each single society chose and paid for its own rabbi. Each had its own burial section. Registering births and deaths was handled by the civilian authorities of each city, and Jews were not listed separately from gentiles. This was all very strange. During the first week of our stay in America, Mr. Hochberg enrolled me in the society, sold me a burial site for the family (I still own it), and since he was also an insurance agent, sold me a life insurance policy (a must, he had explained) that took me years to pay off.

Aunt Clara had a boarder, a Mr. Wielgosch, to whom she rented a room and also served breakfast and dinner. He worked as a presser in the garment industry in Manhattan. He was the brother of our bookkeeper in Zloczów, who had been married to Lonek Brandes, our partner's black-sheep son. For once, I was able to deliver good news: Genia, a sister of his, a lovely woman and a teacher, had survived, had married a gentile, and was living somewhere in Silesia. (Thanks to my information, he was soon able to locate her.) Wielgosch also had a brother, Luka, in Palestine, with whom he corresponded.

Wielgosch was more knowledgeable than the bulk of our visitors; some of them tried to show us how to use electric lights, how to turn on switches, how to flush the toilet. He ridiculed them.

Wielgosch was unhappy with his lot in America. A *gimnazjum* graduate, he felt that the kind of work that he was doing was beneath his dignity. He was contemptuous of Clara and the kind of life that she was living. He said that Clara had never applied for citizenship, because she was afraid of the questions that she would have to answer, meaning factual questions about American history and laws. Later on someone mentioned to me that Wielgosch had wanted to marry Clara, but she had refused, so perhaps he put her down out of spite. Nevertheless, Clara's appearance was appalling.

I realized that some of the old-timers had no idea of the changes that had taken place in the world in the last half century. These people remembered Zloczów as it had been then, and could not imagine the changes. I must stress that these people were extremely friendly, and they tried to help us—newcomers in their country—but there was a great distance between us. One man reminisced about having had to put on galoshes to avoid the mud seeping into his shoes when walking the streets. When I told the man that the main streets in Zloczów had now been paved, he did not believe me—although he pretended that he did.

Some of our early visitors behaved very differently. A gentleman of about our age named Dubois (his name in Zloczów was Dubowy) arrived with flowers for Lina. He had been a silent admirer of hers, but in Zloczów, with its strict social code, he had felt inferior to a graduate of *gimnazjum* and university. Here in America he was sure of himself, sure enough to be our friend and our guide. He was a

businessman, a manufacturer of office furniture. He was married to an American born woman and lived in Manhattan, a social step up from Brooklyn, as he made us understand. He arrived in a brand new car, a Plymouth; Jewish Americans were boycotting Ford for his anti-Semitism, Dubois told us, and were also keeping away from General Motors cars, because of the company's alleged cooperation with Hitler's Germany. This was my first introduction to American politics in America.

Dubois invited us to see Radio City. Within a few days of his original visit, he arrived with more flowers and candy for the girls, and took Lina and me to that magnificent showplace. The movie house was enormous, bigger than anything we had seen in Lwów, Warsaw, Prague, or Vienna. I do not remember the movie, I believe it was a musical. Our admiration centered on the Rockettes, the flawless execution of their dances, and their high kicks. We admired the exotic bathrooms with their electric towels and drinking fountains. It was all new and exhilarating, so different from the world of Brooklyn. That we were impressed is an understatement.

Dubois took us next for a brief tour of the adjacent streets in Manhattan, and here we were appalled by the dirty side streets, sidewalks covered with refuse and piles of cigarette butts. We did wonder what these butts would fetch on the black market in Munich where urchins followed "Amies" to collect just such discarded butts for later resale.

When we returned from our excursion, Aunt Clara greeted us with a mixture of admiration and jealousy. "*Kik no, kik no, these greeners* [Look, look at these greenhorns]." I have lived in New York for twenty years and have never been to Radio City." We understood the word "greener" because the Polish word "*zielony* [green]" also meant an inexperienced person, a novice, an amateur.

One unpleasant experience: we all developed painful sores all over our bodies, "boils" they were called. The Americans said that that happened to all new arrivals and was self-limiting. We thought that living in crowded, somewhat unsanitary conditions, six people in a single room—Aunt Clara's basement, in the stifling heat to which we were not accustomed, must have contributed to the symptoms. This gave us an immediate spur to find our own living quarters at once.

Cousin Adolf, the one whom I had not known, materialized. He ran a bookstore on Astor Place in Manhattan, and we saw that he was the most respected member of the family and the best educated. Clara, Adolf, and Aaron, the youngest of my great-grandfather's numerous progeny, were the children of his third and last wife. She was younger than my grandmother Ethel, her stepdaughter, and had been heartily disliked by her, but she had been very friendly with my mother, whom she visited often after Great-Grandfather died, staying each time with us. Two years after her second and last visit to Zloczów, Clara wrote to my father asking to have her mother's house on Glinianska Street recorded in her name. Her mother had died without a will. My father did as she asked.

One day, Clara, Adolf, Itzig, and Itzig's two daughters—Tutzi, who had greeted us at immigration, and Ester—the older daughter, gathered to discuss our future with us. They agreed unanimously that we should find "a basement," and "rooms" would come later. A basement meant a livable cellar; we could aspire to that because it would cost little. To reach for "rooms"—i.e., a real apartment—was premature; we'd have to wait until we became "comfortable"—people of means. All this was told to us; nobody bothered to ask our opinion.

My relatives also criticized the way I pronounced English words. If I was to become a real American, I should learn correct pronunciation. Difficult words like "thirty," "early," were pronounced "toity," "oily," etc.

Mr. Zipper, a particularly friendly older gentleman, was most concerned and joined with the relatives in promoting our education. He smoked cigars, and like others, most of whom seemed to favor cigars, he kept them in the breast pocket of his shirt; sort of a status symbol, I realized.

Mr. Zipper advised me never to use my given name Lipa—what kind of name was that? My first name, Samuel, was perfect. I should shorten it to Sam. He expressed regrets that I had not relinquished "Tennenbaum." I should have Americanized it. Native Americans would have difficulty pronouncing Tennenbaum; I would get another chance to change my name in five years when I applied for citizenship, and should take advantage.

He was correct in this advice. I never felt the need to change—

Americanize—my name. However, while doing business in North Carolina in the early fifties, no one ever spelled my name correctly. The funniest spelling that I remember was *Teber-non-bum.*

Mr. Zipper also advised me to look for ways to "make a living," which I thought at first meant improve my health, but I soon understood that he meant find work, find a job. To get a job I had to join a union, he said. All this advice was given in utmost friendliness, and I was eager to absorb the lessons.

A few days after our arrival, another member of the family, Itzig's youngest half-brother, Aaron, came from Canada. My maternal great-grandfather had had twenty-four offspring from three wives. My mother was a child of his first wife, as was Itzig: Clara, Adolf, and Aaron were children from the third marriage. Aaron cried when I told him how my parents had died. He had been very devoted to my mother.

I remember Clara as stout but pretty. Mother's cousins Mania Frieman, Gusta Braver (a real beauty), and Clara looked liked sisters. Gusta lived in Ternopol, and used to visit my mother often. She was younger and became friendly with my father's partner's daughter, Sala Lerner, the Zloczówer town beauty. These girls used to closet themselves in my room telling stories and sharing jokes. I was always unceremoniously thrown out of my room on these occasions, which Gusta occupied during her visit. I strongly objected but to no avail. I was fourteen or fifteen at that time, and wanted to stay and listen, but they wouldn't let me. The rest of my grandfather's family was strewn all over the world, some in America, some as far as Argentina. Some had died in childhood, I was told. All those who remained in Poland were killed by the Germans including Laura, Mania, and Gusta.

Before emigrating to Canada, Aaron had been employed in our factory as a paper cutter. He was familiar with the kind of life we had lived in Zloczów before the war; he advised me to forget all the lessons of Mr. Zipper and the others and to go my own way. Aaron was quite deaf, but if anyone said in his presence, "*The toiber Aaron*" [the deaf Aaron], he always heard and would become incensed.

He created a stir once: A visitor bragged that he owned a car, that all Americans owed cars (a slight exaggeration at that time). Aaron said that the Tennenbaums had owned a car already in Zloczów, an

American car at that, a Buick. The visitor did not believe him. I fetched my album of old photographs and showed the skeptic my car.

Other visitors present were amazed and disbelieving when I showed them pictures from our vacations in Jaremcze and Krynica. One picture showed us around a swimming pool in Krynica. A woman exclaimed, "You have been fooling us. This is a picture from the Catskills. I know the place very well. You have been in America before." She continued to think I was teasing even though I swore that not only was this my first time in the country, but I had no idea what the Catskills were. It was all very confusing. Who to believe, and more important, whose advice to follow, to get a hold on America?

Jacob Recht, a carpenter, was another Zloczówer who came to visit us, and a colorful personality. He had first emigrated to America early in the century, but had returned to Zloczów during the depression of the 1930s. He had run for and won a seat on the City Council in Zloczów, and I remember him trying to talk my father into running for a seat with him. But my father had had no inclination for public office and had declined. Recht's tales about America were not favorable during those years. Mother's cousin, Laura, who spent several years in America and had returned disenchanted had agreed. (Laura later married a Dr. Reichard, a native of the Sudetenland, and they settled in Zloczów.) Recht returned to America, but the Reichards did not. Tragically they perished, with their young son Edzio, in the Holocaust. Their older son Walter had emigrated to Israel, where he had fought gallantly with the British Army. We were to see him in Israel years later, and meet his daughter, who served for a time with the Israeli consulate in New York.

We were disappointed in what we were seeing of America during the first few days. Jacob Recht and Aunt Clara said that people in America were crude. But other visitors made us feel better. Wielgosch kept saying that the people that we were seeing were not "real" Americans.

Ester, Itzig's older daughter, invited us for dinner, the first and only time that we were invited by her or any other member of the family, except for Tutzi who hosted us many times. Ester lived in a better section of Brooklyn. Her husband, a manufacturer of ladies'

hats, was "comfortable." Some of their children were married; some were still in college. Their older daughter and her husband worked in the father's factory.

Ester and her husband owned a single-family house, a ranch. It was well furnished with upholstered chairs and sofas. We liked the house; we thought that that was the kind of house that Dr. Elias had had in mind when he predicted that someday soon we too would have a house in America.

The visit to Ester's house gave us the incentive to move from the room in Aunt Clara's house. A private house was, of course, something to dream about for the future. We liked Coney Island, its proximity to the sea, the air much superior to the air in Manhattan. Perhaps we could afford an apartment. The very next day we went to look around.

But meanwhile we went to visit the boardwalk, a miraculous place where you could enjoy good food at amazingly low prices, the amusement park with rides, several movie houses showing double features for 60 cents. The children loved it. We went to a place called Nathan's, where we bought large, tasty frankfurters for 10 cents each. We went into a bar for beer, which also cost 10 cents a bottle. Every food item seemed to be priced at 10 cents or less.

When we returned home, we found a visitor, a second cousin of mine, Fay Bardash, waiting for us. A friend had told her about our arrival. I remembered Fay from her visits to her maternal uncle, Dr. Schotz, father of our friend, Sig.

Fay's father had been my father's first cousin. Her family had lived in Przemyslany, a town about fifty kilometers from Zloczów. Whenever Fay's father came to Zloczów, he stayed with us. He was strictly kosher and did not trust the kashruth of Mrs. Schotz, even though she did keep a kosher home. It was inconceivable not to have a kosher house in Zloczów.

Fay's brother, Salek Altman, also a lawyer, had gone to school with me; he had survived the war in Russia.

We had a joyful reunion with Fay. She was married to Joe Bardash and had two sons. She invited us to their house in Bensonhurst, where my two daughters met Fay's two sons, Manny and Irwin. Even though my daughters did not speak English, the children got along

very well. This was the friendliest reception that we had in America; the friendship between our two families has lasted until today; the "cousins" maintain a relationship, much more than that, something not easy to define.

Apropos of my struggles for proper English pronunciation, young Irwin told me years later that he had always hated his name, pronounced Oywin in Bensonhurst. It was not until he went to Stuyvesant High School in New York City, that he learned that he had quite a pleasant sounding name—Irwin.

On our fifth day in the country, we had another pleasant visitor: Sig Schotz, good friend, best man at our wedding, and his wife, Rosi, who had come from Philadelphia to see us. Sig had emigrated to America two years before the outbreak of the war.

We had a tearful reunion. Tragically I had only bad news for him. His father, a prominent lawyer, had perished during the final day of the ghetto, April 3, 1943. I had not witnessed this, but people had told me that Dr. Schotz, a member of the Judenrat, who lived in a house just outside the ghetto with other members of the Judenrat, had been taken to an execution ground three miles from the city. The Judenrat were machine-gunned, together with the 3000 Jews still remaining in Zloczów.

Hrytz was one source of the story of the massacre. He had witnessed this terrible event himself.

Rosi came from a wealthy Viennese family. She and Sig met on one of Rosi's visits to her grandmother, who lived in Zloczów. After the Anschluss, Rosi's parents escaped to Palestine, where her father had made some investments before the war, while Rosi went to Yugoslavia. A friend helped Rosi to come to the United States, where she and Sig were reunited.

Sig, who had come to America on a visitor's visa, had had to spend several months in Cuba, before he was granted a residential visa. He had an affluent family in America, who helped him a great deal. Many people who came to visit us at Aunt Clara's faulted us for not having come to America before the war. They seemed ignorant of the insurmountable barriers this country had erected against Jews trying to escape from the Germans. Sig had been fortunate; others, including some who had actually reached America, had been turned back.

We were to receive yet another pleasant if unexpected visit. Mr. Nathan Roth, an elderly gentleman, a recent widower, came to call on my mother-in-law. He was a distant relative, and she did not remember him. However, he remembered her. When he saw Bessie, his eyes lighted up. Bessie admitted that he had wanted to marry her, but she had chosen the handsome and dashing Mr. Horowitz, whose social standing was much higher. Mr. Solomon Horowitz had been a court officer, well-educated; he counted many of the judges in Zloczów as his friends.

Mr. Roth had evidently always carried a torch for Bessie. He came with a complaint. How come Bessie had not contacted him even before coming to America? He would have wanted to know. He had had to find out from strangers that she was in America. Mr. Roth brought boxes of candy for everyone and invited us to have dinner with him in Manhattan. He took us to Ratner's on Second Avenue, where the food reminded us of the old country. We ate chicken soup, flanken, and lekach (honey cake) for dessert.

Mr. Roth began to visit daily. When the Zloczower Society held its annual dinner, we were invited to sit at his table.

The relationship between Mr. Roth and Bessie developed into a heartwarming December to December love story; after a couple of months they were married. He took her on a trip to California, and she became the first one of our family to see the West Coast. She moved into his apartment at 213 East 5th Street, but, unfortunately, Mr. Roth died within a few months, leaving Bessie a widow for the second time.

After a long discussion, we decided to move to Manhattan. We did not want to leave her alone. I was not feeling well and the daily traveling to Manhattan had become difficult. Early in 1947, we moved into her apartment at 213 East 5th Street. Bessie had joined a synagogue on East 5th Street, which proved to have some unexpected, important consequences. But of that later. . . . Meanwhile, I had looked for and found a job.

The country was undergoing a mild recession, Mr. Wielgosch had told me. I remembered the depression in the 1930s, which had forced my Aunt Laura, Mr. Recht, and others to return to Poland. The word "recession" as used by Mr. Wielgosch sounded the same as

"depression." To compound the problem, the army had discharged many servicemen, who had priority over us for jobs. And again Wielgosch reminded me that to get a job, I would have to join a union. A nonunion person had no chance of getting a job in New York City. That was one of the times that Wielgosch expressed real pride, "New York is a union city."



Aboard Marine Flasher: (left) author, Sonia; (front) Selma, Eda; (rear) between Edith and Selma is Lina. Igo is holdingf Edith.

Chapter Twelve

A Job

Contrary to Mr. Wielgosch's and other people's warnings and my own fears, getting a job proved to be easy. Before I had left Munich, Rabbi Bloom had assured me that he had recommended me to the HIAS office in New York and they would have a place for me if I wanted it.

I went in search of HIAS, into New York by subway, first time alone. I found it to be a marvelous means of travel; safe, fast, cheap—it cost 5 cents, one nickel!

I soon found out that the IND did not actually go to Long Island, but only to Queens, a name I did not learn until after I started working for HIAS. For the Jews from Brooklyn, my original mentors, any place north of "their" borough was Long Island. Mr. Wielgosch, my principal advisor, explained that although the city transportation system was called the subway, in fact many lines ran aboveground on elevated pillars. Sometimes traveling cost more; when switching from one line to another, you paid another nickel. Mr. Wielgosch had also provided me with a map of the system and advised me where to get on and off.

He said that there were several subway systems. The BMT linked Manhattan to Brooklyn, boroughs where the majority of the Jews, the less affluent ones, lived. The IRT connected Manhattan with the Bronx, abodes of the Jews who had "done well." The IND went to Long Island, where the really wealthy were to be found.

Hearing where Jews of various degrees of affluence lived reminded me of Zloczów. There, the poor people lived in the oldest part of the city, on the other side of the stream Zloczówka, near the synagogue; the middle class was concentrated around the Rynek, the marketplace. The more affluent business people and the professionals lived near the park called Waly and on Podwojcie, a new broad street.

After I had lived in America for some time, I learned that economic segregation in geographic enclaves was not unique to the

Jews. In addition, there was the matter of the different races living apart, but that is not a part of this story.

To reach the Coney Island station, I was to take a tram that ran parallel to the major street, Surf Avenue, and cost 3 cents. The entire trip to HIAS cost me a total of 8 cents.

I found HIAS without any trouble, after I got off at Astor Place. The first man on the street whom I asked for directions answered in Yiddish and pointed me toward an old, red brick building with a few stairs leading up to its entrance. I told the receptionist in the waiting room that I was looking for employment. She directed me to the second floor to a Mr. Grossman, who turned out to be a man in his fifties. He greeted me cordially, and said that he had heard about me, and that there was a job available for me. HIAS needed someone who could read and speak Yiddish, Polish, German, and Russian, and I fit the bill. HIAS needed to improve its facilities for handling the influx of people hungry for information.

The office was being flooded by requests from people who came in person or telephoned, inquiring about relatives left behind in the old country. There were also thousands of letters from survivors searching for relatives in the United States; HIAS had two people reading these, but they were unable to cope. Mr. Grossman hoped that I would be able to start at once, so I promised to report forthwith. The salary was to be $55 a week, which seemed like a lot of money to me.

Mr. Grossman spoke a broken Yiddish. He introduced me to the people who were to be my coworkers, a Mrs. Sobel, an elderly woman, and a Mr. Hirsch, who was slightly younger. He wore a beard, payess, and yarmulka. We had a brief conversation, and they assured me that I was very welcome. They were interested in my story, but I excused myself and promised to tell them more about me and about what happened in Poland next time. I had suddenly grown very tired. I blamed the intermittent bleeding from my duodenal ulcer for this recurrent problem.

When I returned to Coney Island, Aunt Clara greeted me with the now customary "*Kik no, kik no, der haintige greene* [Look at this, today's 'green' one]." Mr. Wielgosch got a kick out of her surprise. He took my hand and said with a smile of encouragement, "You will do all right."

In a few days, the Schotzes came from Philadelphia to see us. They were appalled by our living conditions in Aunt Clara's house. However, they were amused when we repeated the assorted words of advice that we had been getting. "Brooklyn is not America," Sig said, echoing a sentiment that we had also heard from our American friends in Munich. Munich seemed centuries away. Rosi and Sig Schotz invited us to visit them in Philadelphia, where they would show us the real America.

We soon took them up on their invitation, traveling to Philadelphia by train within the next week. The trip took two hours. The train was quite different from European ones; all the seats were upholstered, and there were no separate compartments. Sig awaited us at the station and took us to their apartment on Locust Street. Next day he and Rosi and some of her wealthy cousins took us by car for a sightseeing tour of the city of Philadelphia and the surrounding suburbs.

In Philadelphia we visited Independence Hall and saw the cracked Liberty Bell; we looked at a copy of the Declaration of Independence. We next toured the business section, and then the "better" parts of the city, where the residential section was made up of rows and rows of very tall buildings. As we passed a particularly opulent one, the wealthy cousin made a remark that was to haunt me for some time, "Jews are not allowed to live in this building although it is owned by a Jew. You see," he continued, "we too live in a ghetto, the *'Goldene Medine'.*" *With all his wealth, he could not live where he wanted. In America?*

We next ventured into the suburbs, where we saw pretty one-family houses with lush lawns. We were surprised that the majority of the houses were built of wood with only a few of brick. In Poland only the poorest houses in the villages were made of wood. These houses belonged to affluent people, Sig said, who used wood by choice. All the streets and suburban roads were broad and paved with asphalt as in Germany.

Later when we were back alone with the Schotzes, I questioned Sig about the cousin's remark. Sig explained that this relative yearned to integrate into the gentile world, live in certain neighborhoods, join certain clubs, etc., but was prevented by anti-Semitic bias. Was there

much anti-Semitism in America? I asked. Sig said, "Yes, a lot, but I have never encountered it directly."

During this educational period, there was also an interesting minor episode. During our tour we had heard a deafening noise and seen a small plane flying overhead, disappearing from view almost instantly. Sig explained that this was a new type of plane, a jet; it was propelled by thrust, not by propeller. I had seen a similar plane in the last days of the war being flown by Germans, who had been the first to have jets.

We stayed in Philadelphia three days. Upon our return, we talked about the trip with Mr. Wielgosch and Fay and her husband Joe, who disagreed with the Schotzes and their relatives. Joe was especially upset; there was no anti-Semitism in America, he insisted.

If the people whom we met in Philadelphia had some doubts about their social status, the Zloczower in Coney Island had none. They lived in their own version of America. They were proud and happy Americans. They were also very anti-Polish. They were resentful that we spoke Polish among ourselves rather than Yiddish. My mother-in-law, Henis, and I spoke Yiddish, and Lina, who had spent most of her youth with her grandmother, understood the language and spoke a few words. Polish, not Yiddish, had been our language. Neither of our daughters even understood Yiddish. Some people of our generation had had some exposure to Yiddish, but our girls had had little of it; they attended Polish schools, and all the friends they met in Poland had spoken Polish.

I went to work at HIAS after we came back from our trip to Philadelphia. I was given slews of letters to read, most of which were written in Yiddish and very difficult to decipher. It was an exhausting, tedious job; there was a limit on how many letters I could bear to read during a single working day. I tried; we all tried, but we felt that, among the three of us, we would not make even a dent in the volume. In addition to the correspondence, our job was to answer queries on the telephone. I handled the Yiddish ones, my coworkers the English.

I came to realize that my coworkers were different from the people from Zloczów who had come to see us. Hirsch and Mrs. Sobel had both been born in America, as had most of the people in HIAS.

Everyone belonged to a union. "Join the union," was the first bit of advice given to me by my coworkers.

Hirsch was a religious man, who left at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays, explaining to me that leaving early was in his union contract. Mrs. Sobel, a retired schoolteacher, had started to work for HIAS as a volunteer; however, she became a paid worker when she realized that she could not survive on her small pension and the supplementary Social Security. She had joined the Social Security system before she started to work for HIAS; HIAS workers were exempt from participating. Social Security had been forged during the Roosevelt administration as an insurance program for the retired elderly. I was surprised to learn that no health insurance system existed; prewar Poland, Germany, and the Soviet Union all had forms of universal health insurance.

Mr. Hirsch and Mrs. Sobel both worshipped President Roosevelt and had little respect for President Truman, echoing sentiments that I had heard from the Americans in Munich.

Mrs. Sobel and Hirsch wanted to know what had happened to us. They were interested in my story, but I felt they couldn't quite grasp the general picture of what had happened. They also asked me why I had left the Soviet Union; no matter what I said, they did not understand. They believed that the future of mankind lay with communism. I was surprised that Mr. Hirsch, a religious man, was a communist, since communism is so antireligion. I learned in time to give the least controversial of my explanations for my departure from Russia: I did not want to live in an execution ground, where our loved ones had been killed by the Germans, in a vast cemetery where their remains were buried, somewhere.

I went to work for HIAS believing that it would be like it had been in Munich; I thought that I'd be meeting all kinds of people, interviewing them, arranging contacts, and helping solve problems. The work here was all paperwork; it was important but tedious nevertheless. Physically taxing. I had to read mostly handwritten letters; those in Yiddish were particularly difficult for me to decipher. A few writers wrote about their experiences during the war; all were looking for family in the United States. Some letters contained addresses; a few included photos. We would try to find relatives first by scrutiniz-

ing telephone books. We would call people on the phone, verify the connection, and forward the letter in question. We made many attempts but were able to make only a small dent in the thousands of inquiries. Unfortunately for the correspondents, brothers and sisters generally responded quickly, but many distant relatives did not. Some ignored the queries altogether.

I did not want to spend all my working life in America with HIAS. I asked my coworkers and others about the possibility of continuing my law studies. Everyone advised me that "lawyers are working as elevator operators in Macy's." I should study accounting, a much better profession, I was told.

The first step was to enroll in a high school to learn English, which both Lina and I did promptly. These evening classes were taught by an extremely helpful, elderly Jewish lady, who recommended after a few sessions that we proceed to enroll in a college. I made inquiries at New York University and City College. We needed to validate our diplomas from Poland before we could be considered for acceptance. Fortunately we had saved the diplomas. However, validating our diplomas meant a trip to Albany to the State Education Department. We had to postpone the trip until we had time and money. Eventually we were each given credit for two years of college.

Now that I had a job, it was time to secure an apartment. Aunt Clara had offered us what she had, and we were grateful; however, we had no intention of continuing to live six in a room with a shared bath on a different floor.

We did like Coney Island with its proximity to the ocean. After a few days' search, we found a six room apartment at 2507 Surf Avenue, which had two bathrooms and was a block away from Mermaid Avenue, the major shopping street, with movie theaters and shops. Aunt Clara's house was one block off Mermaid Avenue. Surf Avenue was mostly residential; it did house a few bars, however. At its tail end was Sea Gate, a resort for affluent, middle-class Jews ,some of whom were permanent residents while others maintained summer homes. The area was guarded and only accessible by invitation. Across from Surf Avenue was the boardwalk, containing carnival rides, bowling alleys, etc. The Full Moon Hotel was visible

from our windows; Mr. Wielgosch told us that a man who was supposed to be a witness in a trial against the Mafia had been thrown out of a window of that hotel. The story was perplexing; the term "Mafia" meant nothing to us.

Our new apartment came with iron beds, some tables, chairs, a cupboard, and enough pots and pans and dishes to satisfy our cooking needs. We saw an ad in a newspaper offering a living room set for sale, which we bought for $100. We thus acquired a sofa, two upholstered chairs in fair condition, a desk, and a revolving desk chair. I also bought a used typewriter and a combination radio / phonograph.

We moved in at once and very soon felt established and content. The first letter that we wrote was to Helena Skrzeszewska in Poland, the woman who had saved us, telling her about our new life and inviting her to join us.

It was still vacation time, but we enrolled our daughters in school as soon as we had the apartment. Meanwhile they met neighborhood children and began to speak English. It did not take them long to speak fluent English; both were able to get by within a few months. They soon excelled in school, just as they had done in Zloczów, Przemysl and Cieszyn.

I went to all parent-teacher meetings and made sure to speak to every teacher. Miss Augusta Shulman, one of Edith's teachers, told me that I was the first parent in her experience who came not to complain but to learn. Not that I had any reason to complain. My daughters were doing very well. I never pried into what was on my daughters' minds. They have both been very successful in their lives and chosen professions. One day they will tell their own stories.

One day, only a few weeks after I started with HIAS, I saw an ad in the Jewish *Morning Journal*: The American Federation for Polish Jews was looking for a translator. I decided to apply for the job. The office of the federation was located at 225 West 34th Street in Manhattan, not far from Macy's department store. The president of the organization was a Polish physician, Joseph Tenenbaum. We were not related, but during the interview we found that we had much in common. Dr. Tenenbaum and I had graduated from the same *gimnazjum* in Zloczów. He was a native of Sassów, a town five miles from

Zloczów; Lina and I had been married in Sassów. Tenenbaum was a general Zionist, as I was. After Poland had regained its independence in 1919, he was forced to flee to America. He had been a member of the Jewish delegation at Versailles, where he had taken a pro-Ukrainian stand. (This was in contrast to other major Jewish leaders from Galicia, among them Dr. Leon Reich, who opted for Poland, probably as the lesser of two evils.) It was Poland that was granted all of Austrian Galicia which made Tenenbaum persona non grata.

Dr. Tenenbaum offered me the job I sought at $85 a week, a higher salary than I was earning at HIAS. Aunt Clara was most impressed.

I became very fond of Dr. Tenenbaum, who was a fascinating personality. He was married to a charming, most attractive woman, Sheila, who has remained a good friend even after the death of her husband some years later.

Within months, I became the executive director of the federation. To avoid confusion between Dr. Tenenbaum, the president, and me, I assumed a pseudonym, L. Samuels. I was to stay with the Federation for almost two years, another major learning experience, as well as a means of livelihood.

At least two other organizations claimed to represent Polish Jews. Each was made up of representatives of the landsmanschaften—individuals from the same town in Poland and their descendants. (In fact, descendants rarely cared.) The landsmannschaften mainly raised money that went to support temples, cemetery plots, contribute to large charitable organizations like HIAS, the Joint, the American Jewish Congress, and other charities. Applying political pressure on behalf of Jews everywhere was the other goal.

Since every single Jewish town, large and small, had a landsmanschaft, they numbered in the hundreds, each with a president, some with a religious congregation, synagogue, and rabbi. I could not understand the proliferation of bodies, each claiming to work for the same objective; in fact, they wasted resources competing for the same funds. The job of raising funds was handled by professionals. The man who raised funds for the Federation was of Hungarian origin, but born in America. He spoke no Yiddish, knew nothing about Poland, and couldn't have cared less. He was a cynic

but very successful in raising money, which he did for a commission. He had lists of donors, which he carried on his person wherever he went and guarded vigorously. Nobody, not even Dr. Tenenbaum, ever saw all the fund-raiser's lists. There was a gentlemen's agreement that the clients of the fund-raiser would not approach his contacts independently. I became friendly with this man and learned a lot from him about that arrangement and other internal workings of organizations.

All Jewish and non-Jewish organizations used fund-raisers, he said. Lists were interchanged, bought, and sold.

In theory, the Federation represented landsmanschaften, but in practice few of their representatives served on our executive and administrative committees. Dr. Tenenbaum himself appointed people to these committees, evidently arbitrarily. Dr. Tenenbaum was a devoted Zionist, but to assure broad representation and support, he appointed people opposed to Zionism and even outspoken Communists. The latter group hotly opposed my appointment as executive director, but Dr. Tenenbaum prevailed. This was the second of the five jobs I was to hold in America, and like the others it proved extremely educational.

At my first meeting with the executive committee, I was supposed to take minutes and was terrified because I was unable to understand the language of people born in America. I had less trouble understanding naturalized citizens, including those who had been in the country for years. (I was to have similar trouble years later in Israel, where I was unable to understand the Hebrew of the Sabras.)

I was flabbergasted by the rudeness of the language and behavior of the people at the meeting. Like the soldiers in Munich, these Americans not only crunched burnt out cigarettes into the floor but they discarded paper cups from coffee also on the floor. Some of these individuals were lawyers and doctors, supposedly educated people. Yet their language was often replete with invective. They attacked each other's characters and motives. There for the first time I heard among other things, "You are full of shit." I expected that such exchanges would lead to blows, but no. After such heat, tempers would abate. The combatants would retire together to an adjacent cafeteria with no evident residual hard feelings.

In the beginning, before I was promoted, the others ignored my presence. Later on I was invited to express my opinion and invoked the wrath of the leftists when I described my years under the authority of the Soviet Union. "You do not know what you are talking about," was the friendliest reaction. Some called me a fascist.

Political discussion occupied many meetings. The upcoming presidential election and the future of Palestine headed the list of topics. Roosevelt's death was still mourned and the selection of Truman over left-leaning Wallace deplored. Sentiments were divided on Palestine. The Zionists hoped for a Jewish state or at least Jewish dominion under the British empire. The communists held out for a binational secular state with Jews and Arabs in a socialist alliance. Both sides hated Britain's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin.

Dr. Tenenbaum was a remarkable man. He was my mentor for this phase of my life in the United States. I was coming to realize that the Federation was an inchoate mass, made up of diverse dissenting elements, and that Dr. Tenenbaum was trying to forge a consensus among the factions. The factions were at least three: communists trying to help build a communist Poland; Zionists, and individuals interested mostly in fostering Jewish causes in the United States. He was a prominent urological surgeon, who had written texts in his subject. A devoted Zionist, he wrote perhaps the first definitive book about the tragedy that befell the Polish Jews. An outspoken man, he was not very popular with his counterparts active in Jewish affairs in this country. His essay, "*The Lemberger Judenpogrom*," describing the pogroms of Haller's army* perpetrated in Lwów, had forced him

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* Jozef Haller, as opponent of Marshal Pilsudski, led a faction of the Polish army that he organized in the fight against the Russians in 1919. His army was known for its atrocities against Jews. They were called "*fryzjers* [barbers]" because their favorite "game" was to cut off the beards of Jews caught in the streets. Because of his dislike of Pilsudski, he changed the headgear from the round "Maciejowka" worn by Pilsudski's army, to the four-cornered one which later became the staple cap. However, Pilsudski himself, remained true to the Maciejowka, and wore it to his death.

to leave Poland afterPilsudski Galicia became part of the reborn Poland.

In 1934 he wrote "Races, Nations, and Jews," ridiculing the German assertion of the superiority of the "Aryan" race. Mrs. Rosette Halpern, a friend and neighbor, recently gave me a copy of the book and with it a review written by her brother, Jacob Faust, for the newspaper *Chwila.*

As we became better acquainted, Tenenbaum told me his views of the Jewish leaders in America, of whom he was very critical. A vice-president of the World Jewish Congress, a body which he held in low esteem. He disliked its chairman, Walter Goldman, who he said, was inimical to the idea of a Jewish State in Palestine.

I was to meet some of these leaders of Jewish organizations, and I disliked most of them. Their egos exceeded their mental capacities. I realize that this may not have been an objective assessment, especially for a newcomer to America.

Dinners featuring some prominent people as principal speakers were a good source of raising funds. These speakers were paid, which surprised me. I had assumed that they were being charitable and volunteering their time. However, I had nothing to do with honorariums; my job was to send out invitations and to follow up with phone calls to secure an audience. "Bodies" or even "bottoms." Before being allowed to enjoy the star's turn, our captive audience had to endure numerous other speakers, each repeating more or less the same thing.

The most important person whom I met at that time was Andrei Gromyko, a very popular speaker at Jewish affairs. The U.N. vote that ratified the partition of Palestine and led to the proclamation of the State of Israel had not yet taken place. Years later I read that Gromyko considered his "Yes" vote to have been "the biggest mistake of [his] life."

Although I was known as a foe of communism, during the McCarthy period I became afraid that my having helped host Gromyko might affect my becoming an American citizen. I destroyed a group photograph, where I appeared with him. Mrs. Sheila Tenenbaum has kindly searched through her mementos, found the picture, and has allowed me to include it in this book.

I also met the late Senator Jacob Javits—then a congressman. We were awed by this Jewish congressman, who dared to take on Elliot Roosevelt, and go on to defeat him and put an end to his political life. I also had the opportunity to meet the late Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, and Congressman Claude Pepper.

I was part of the delegation that met the then Polish Foreign Minister, Raczynski. Dr. Tenenbaum proposed to Raczynski that properties that had belonged to the exterminated Jewish population in Poland be given to the fledgling Jewish community in Palestine. Raczynski refused. In a separate meeting, Polish Consul General Galewicz in New York haughtily declared that we (meaning the Poles, but evidently including himself who was a Jew) were not interested in building a Jewish community outside Poland. He predicted that a new regenerated Jewish community would be built and help create a strong socialist Poland. Ironically soon thereafter, Galewicz defected to Argentina, evidently unwilling to wait for his prediction to materialize.

The communists in our delegation strongly supported the position of the Polish spokesmen. The chairwoman of the ladies auxiliary of the federation (her name escapes me), wife of a wealthy owner of a chain of groceries, always sided with the communists. She truly disliked me. Once, after I had said something uncomplimentary about the Soviet Union, she had whispered into my ear, "You are a son of a bitch, a fascist. Too bad that Hitler did not kill you." I gaped at her, speechless.

Inspired by the Polish officials, this woman came up with the idea of acquiring some used sewing machines and shipping them to Poland to give the people tools to renew their lives. I surmise that the root of this idea lay in the fact that many new immigrants to America had started as sewing machine operators in the garment district. The idea met with enthusiasm and was swiftly put in operation. Machines were acquired and shipped. Having met no one in Poland interested in sewing (why sewing?), I was not surprised that nothing ever came out of this. I have a picture of myself and others on our staff examining a shipment of sewing machines. At that time, the communist faction was in ascendancy; I didn't argue.

Dr. Tenenbaum, himself often a target of attacks in the Jewish press and by some in the Jewish establishment, taught me never to

respond to attacks. If you respond, he would say, you only disseminate "their" viewpoint, which, he claimed, was "their" aim.

Soon I began to receive invitations to speak publicly. A gathering of Zloczówer in Manhattan Center was filled to capacity. I was myself in tears as I recounted the fate of the Jews in Zloczów. I will never forget the reaction of an elderly Zloczówer, a Mr. Lerner. The first to approach me and to congratulate me for a very moving speech, he also whispered in my ear, "Yes, you delivered a good speech. But now that we've collected a lot of money, tell me in confidence. . . . Is it true, that some Jews really were killed in Zloczów?" I was appalled. One year after the war, after stories and pictures of the concentration camps had been published, there were still people—and Jews at that—who did not believe in the catastrophe. Granted that Lerner was an exception in expressing himself in such a sorry way, I later met other Jews who, although aware that the German onslaught

ZLOCZOWER RELIEF VERBAND OF AMERICA

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Dear Friend:

You and your family are cordially invited to a very important

MASS MEETING

to be held **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th, 1946** at 1:30 P.M., at **MANHATTAN CENTER**, 34th St. near 8th Ave., New York City.

Purpose: **FIRST EYEWITNESS REPORT OF LIFE IN ZLOCZOW DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION WILL BE GIVEN BY OUR LANDSLEUTE WHO VERY RECENTLY ARRIVED FROM THERE.**

DR. LIPE TENENBAUM (Grandson of Shulim Friedman)
DR. ISAAC HALPERN (Son of Naftali Halpern)
JACOB EIDELBERG (Son of Joseph Eidelberg)

As we feel certain that you are anxious to know exactly what took place in Zloczow during the war, may we ask you to please come early and bring along your friends.

A NEW LIST OF SURVIVORS WILL BE READ

Sincerely yours,

NATHAN MESTEL, President — DAVID HOCHBERG, Secretary

NO COLLECTIONS

וועראהע פריינד:

איהר און אייער פאמיליע זיינ איינגעלאדען צו אייגער זעהר וויכ-טיגער

מאסן - פערזאמלונג

וועלכע וועט שטאטפינדען זונטאג, דעם 15טען סעפטעמבער, אום 1:30 נ.מ. אין

מאנהעטען סענטער, 34טע סט. און 8טע עוועניו, נ. י.

צוועק: ערשטע רעפארט פון די געשעהנישען אין זלאטשוב דורך דער דייטשער אקופאציע, וועט געגעבען ווערען ביי אונזערע לאנדסלייט, וועלכע זיינען נע-וועזען אין זלאטשוב דורך דער נאנצער צייט, און זיינען ערשט גקומטען פון זלאטשוב.

דר. ליפע טענענבוים (שלום פרידמאנ'ס אייניקעל)
דר. אייזאק האלפערן (נפתלי האלפערנ'ס זוהן)
יעקב אידעלבערג (יוסף איידעלבערג'ס זוהן)

אזוי ווי מיר זיינען זיכער אז איהר זייט נייגעריג צו וויסען וואס עס איזט געשעהען אין זלאטשוב דורך דער מלחמה, בעטען מיר אייך צו קומען פריה און ברענגט מים אייערע פרייונד.

אין נייע ליסטע מים נעמען וועט פאראלעזען ווערען.

מים פריינדליכען גרוס,

נחמן מעסטעל, פרעזידענט — דוד האכבערג, סעקרעטאר

קיינע קאלעקשאנס

The author addresses a mass rally in 1946 at Manhattan Center, New York City.

had had Jewish victims, still doubted the magnitude of the disaster. That comment of Lerner's was my worst experience in America.

On American election day in November of 1948, I spoke to some Canadian Jews in Toronto about the possibility of recovering properties left in Poland by relatives who had perished. American citizens were entitled to compensation from the Polish government for such properties, including some now under Soviet control. I had helped people make claims, among them Sig Schotz who eventually received $10,000 (in 1962 or 1963).

After the speech I was invited to the home of a Jewish member of the Canadian Parliament, a member of the Canadian Communist Party, and listened on the radio to the results of the American election. We dispersed after midnight, believing that Dewey had won, and I took an overnight train to New York. Early the next morning, the train stopped in Buffalo. I went out and bought a newspaper that proclaimed Dewey's victory in bold print.

I noticed the motorman in the locomotive shaking his head emphatically, as if contradicting what I was reading. I approached him; he said with obvious delight, "Don't believe what you are reading in this paper. This fellow Truman has taught a lesson to all the polls and predictors. He has defeated this bridegroom on the wedding cake."

I did not understand the allusion to the bridegroom, but I did grasp that Truman had won. I was astounded by this. Soon after I had arrived in the country I had seen a cartoon in a newspaper that showed a tiny dwarf sitting in a huge chair. The inscription was, "The man and the job." Believing what I was hearing and reading, I had become convinced that although Truman had inherited the presidency from the great man, he was too small a man to win it on his own. A few days before the election another cartoon had shown Dewey changing the name plate on the door of the Oval office.

Many Polish refugees, including Jews unhappy with the Yalta agreement, had blamed Roosevelt and supported Dewey. Dr. Thon, a member of the federation, namesake and relative of a former member of the Polish Sejm, had even formed an organization called "New Americans for Dewey."

However, there was an exception at the federation, where the news of Truman's reelection was received with joy by the others, all

קאַנאַדער פעדעראַציע פאַר פוילישע אידן

Canadian Federation for Polish Jews

461 SPADINA AVENUE
TORONTO
ONTARIO.
Midway 8195

חשובע פריינט : —

אויפן פאַרלאַנג פון אומצעליקע אידן, וואָס שטאַמען פון פוילן, האָבן מיר זיך באַמיט צו טאָן אַלץ אין אונזערע יכולת'ן אויף רעגיסטרירן אידישע תביעות ווען א׳מקרן אידיש פאַרמעגן אין פוילן.

מיר האָבן לעצטן יאָר אָנגעפירט אַ רעגיסטראַציע באַליגט אַ פּעטיציע צו דער פוילישער רעגירונג געהאַלטן פון פוילישן פאַרשטייער (קאונסול) אין טאָראָנטא.

מיר האָבן באַקומען אַן ענטפער פון אידישן צענטראַל קאָמיטעט אין פוילן, וועלכן מיר האָבן בשעתו פאַרעפנטלעכט.

עס זענען דאָ פאַרשידענע קאָמפליקאַציעס אין דורכפירן די פּראָצעדורע פון אויפמאַכן ירושות אויפן יורידישן געריכטלעכן וועג.

דער טערמין שליסט זיך דעם 31-טן דעצעמבער, 1948, און מיר וויל טרען, וואָס נאָר מעגליכעס ווי אַזוי געוועלטיגן אויפצומאַכן די פאַרמעגנס באַזירט אויפן דעקרעט, אַרויסגעגעבן דעם 8-טן מערץ, 1946 (דושעניק אסטאָו פון דער פוילישער רעפובליק נומער 13, ארטיקל 15, פּאַראַגראַף 2).

מיר האָבן פאַר דעם צוועק איינגעלאַדן דעם ענעראַל סעקרעטאַר פון דער אַמעריקאַנער פעדעראַציע פאַר פוילישע אידן

אדוו. **סעמיועל ל. טענענבוים**

אַ באַוואוסטער אידואַקאַט אין פוילן פון פאַר 1939, אַן זוויטשעריסע־אין פוילישן געזעץ. אוך מיר פאַררופן אַ

מאַסן־פאַראַמלונג

זונטיק, 31-טן אָקטאָבער

30. 8 צוויי

אין ראָדאָמער האַל

210 בעווערלי סטריט, (קאָרנער בעווערלי און סיסל)

רומט אין צייט־אוך באַקענט זיך מיט דעם גאַנצן ענין פון ירושה־אויפמאַכנונגען אין פוילן.

מים פריינטשאפט

קאַנאַדער פעדעראַציע פאַר פוילישע אידן

ח. גאָרפינקל, נאציאָנאלער פרעזידענט ס. שאַנאַף, פרעזידענט טאָראָנטאָער צווייג.
ל. צוקער, עקזעקוטיוו־סאַראַצער נ. שמן, סעקרעטאַר



אדוו. סעמיועל ל. טענענבוים

אַ געבירענער אין זלאָטשעוו, פוילן, האָט גראַדואירט פון לעמבערגער אוניווערזיטעט און איז געווען סעקרעטער פון זיוניסטישער באַוועגונג פון גאַליציע אוך איז געווען אַ מיטאַרבעטער אין אַ רייז צייטונגען אין פוילן: א נעי־ראָטעוועסער פון היסטאָריסן ניהגנום. האָט פֿר זיך שפּענעבן מיט היסטאָרישע ארבעטן פאַרן שארית הפליטה. פאַרנעמענדיג וויכטיקע פינדזיקע פאזיציעס אין די פאַרשידענע הצלה אָרגאַניזאַציעס.

Author is invited to address a special gathering on October 31, 1946 in Toronto, Ontario.

of whom were Democrats. I was beginning to realize that, in general, influential American Jews were Democrats. There were a few Republicans, like Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and Congressman Jacob Javits. People told me that Javitz was Republican by registration, but a Democrat at heart; he later became a Senator. He became best known for the War Powers Act, a highly controversial and possibly unconstitutional piece of legislation. It permitted Congress to stop war actions initiated by the president in his capacity as commander in chief; it may be of doubtful value in the age of electronic warfare and nuclear threat when the power to react instantly may be vital.

Among prominent Jewish Democrats were the former governor of New York and later chairman of UNRRA, Herbert Lehman. Henry Mor-

genthau, Jr., Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, I had read about in Germany, where he was excoriated for being the worst enemy of the German nation. Members of Congress Sol Bloom and Emanuel Celler and Justice of the Supreme Court Felix Frankfurter were some of the others.

All these individuals were to play vital roles in the establishment of the State of Israel. Years later I learned that some of them had not exerted all possible efforts to save European Jews from annihilation from a mixture of motives. In *Abandonment of the Jews—America and the Holocaust*, Professor David S. Wyman writes, "Congressman Sol Bloom, despite his influential position in Congress, attempted next to nothing for the Jews in Europe." Wyman adds that as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Bloom, always loyal to the president, had sided with Roosevelt's anti-Semitic State Department and had held up the Rescue Resolution that had been pushed through the Senate by the non-Jewish Senator Guy Gillette.

Three decades later, Congressman Emanuel Celler, whose efforts to prod Bloom to action had failed, concluded, "Sol Bloom did a great deal of harm. . . . He was a mere sycophant of the State Department." Unfortunately, we have seen a similar attitude among some Jewish members of Congress when they voted "the party line" against military action against Saddam Hussein. According to *Time* Magazine, one Jewish Senator, Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, had actually visited Hussein in the March preceding Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. The purpose of that pilgrimage has never been adequately explained.

It was at a Federation meeting that I listened anxiously with my colleagues to the vote in the United Nations over the partition. When it was over and we had won, we all went out for celebratory drinks.

Soon thereafter Dr. Tenenbaum had a heart attack and retired from the Federation. He was succeeded by a pharmacist, the brother-in-law of a friend of mine, whose brother, Max Stiefel, was a frequent visitor in our house in Zloczów. Small world!

I saw more and more clearly that the Federation was really floundering, had no influence in the Jewish community and in the general politics of the country; what clout there been had disappeared with the resignation of Dr. Tenenbaum. I was also becoming dis-

enchanted and disgusted with the constant bickering among individuals of different backgrounds and political beliefs who made up the Federation. I saw no end to the discord. More important, I felt increasingly that the very existence of the organization was a redundancy; there were too many Jewish organizations with identical aims, vying for the same membership and for the same money. I was never able to understand this multiplication and had asked myself a question: Was there really a need for a separate organization of Polish Jews or Lithuanian Jews or German Jews? I was also concerned about the continuing strong antagonism among the Jews from different countries—the German Jews, for example, still holding other Jews in contempt, just as they had before the war. Jews from Galicia like ourselves were at the bottom of the pecking order.

One member of the Polish Federation, known for his sharp wit and nonconformity, explained the proliferation in the following words: "Listen, Mr. Samuels, if there is a person who would contribute, let us say, one thousand dollars to one organization, perhaps he will contribute seven hundred fifty to two, if there are two." Perhaps that made sense; getting more out of people regardless of cause.

Years later, after I had addressed a wealthy Jewish congregation in New Jersey, its rabbi, Dr. Simon Noveck, said, "I see gathered here many millionaires, but very few minnionaires."

After I resigned from the Federation, I determined to stay away from political jobs.

Chapter Thirteen
Growing Roots

Finding a job and a place to live were critical in our trying to become normal again and rebuilding our lives. Finding out what America was all about and finding our place were inherent in the task.

From observing my friends and from our discussions, I saw that all of us New Americans had passed through similar periods of trial and error. Overall, our generation can be proud that most of us gained fast acceptance into the American mainstream. Previous cohorts remained on the periphery, and only their children and grandchildren reached full integration. But probably this is not a matter for pride; the earlier arrivals had been trailblazers, and their successes and that of their offspring probably made America more hospitable.

It must be said, however, that the social conditions of these early arrivals were different. The majority of these arrivals were poor, ignorant, dirty. With all the recriminations against German Jews, they must be given credit for taking these eastern refugees in hand, cleaning them up, unionizing them, providing them with medical care, and generally helping them to establish themselves in America.

Our previous attempts to be normal had been tainted from the beginning. In Cieszyn we were forced to live under assumed names, to pretend to be Christians and Poles. We were accepted by the Polish community, including some who guessed our true identities, but we were fish out of water, not really sharing in the prevalent beliefs and values. I don't require a new environment to be perfect. I can tolerate some dissonance while I try to change what I don't like. I can also compartmentalize. Some aspects of my life in Cieszyn, work and a few friends, I enjoyed. But my wife hated everything and was always afraid. She hated the Poles. She believed that the name Bulski was so phony that everybody saw through it. She was certain that as soon as our concealed identity was discovered, we'd be in great danger. I was not too concerned with these issues; for me the decision to leave



Visit at the Polish Mission to the U.N. (first left) Fisher, (second left) author, (third left) Mrs. Sheila Tennenbaum, (fifth left) Dr. Joseph Tennenbaum, (ninth) Ambassador Raczynski, (second from right) Consul Galewicz.

Poland became inevitable once I saw that Poland was on the way to becoming another Soviet adjunct. I could not ever again live with the hated system I had been forced to endure for two and a half years. So, for different reasons, my wife and I agreed to leave Poland.

In Munich living as ourselves, we had felt safe for the first time. I had a job, we had a comfortable apartment. We enjoyed restaurants, theater, concerts, we were free. On the surface, we had become normal people living conventional lives, but there was never any doubt in our minds that this was a temporary asylum.

America was to be permanent; we were here to stay. We were showered with well meaning advice, and listened, but I knew that we would eventually have to find our own understanding. We had to decipher the meaning of being an American as we planted our roots. This process is ongoing and still continues.

We decided to celebrate the beginning of our new life in America

by inviting everyone we knew to a party in our new apartment.

We invited the Eliases. We invited all our friends who had arrived from Munich, new acquaintances like Mr. Dubois (tragically, Dubois died soon thereafter, killed in a car accident) and old friends like the Schotzes from Philadelphia. We also invited Aunt Clara, Tutzi and her husband, and other members of that family which turned out to be a mistake. Aunt Clara did not come, claiming illness, and neither did any other family members except Tutzi and Max.

It was a happy, lively party. My mother-in-law was a fabulous cook and baker. Lina made a major effort to make our "coming out" a success. Sig Schotz brought his harmonica and entertained us with songs, old and new, some from the "Dritte Seider Nacht," a show our fraternity had sponsored when we were in our twenties. I had been master of ceremonies and had loved it. Sig sang some songs from the show but also others, including some he had composed.

Sig had a copy of the program of that show, listing names of participants, and we grieved for those who had perished and rejoiced for those who had survived. Some had gone to Palestine before the Holocaust, others like Sig to America, and still others like us had survived by luck. A few of that group had indeed emigrated from Poland for ideological or economic reasons; but for the rest of us luck had been the decisive factor. Some survivors claim providence, courage, alertness—which played a part, I am sure—but even so, luck was the vital ingredient.

Our relationship with the Friedman family cooled off after the party. After we moved to Manhattan, it ceased almost completely. Tutzi's husband died from a heart attack, and thereafter we saw her rarely. We did visit Aunt Clara regularly and also Itzig, until their deaths.

We settled into routines. I traveled to my job by subway. On the weekends, the Sudarskis and the Pollaks visited us in Coney Island. Going to midtown New York and especially Radio City became a tradition. We saw every show in Radio City until it closed. We also saw many of the shows at the Roxy.

We enjoyed also the Yiddish theatrical life, which flourished on Second Avenue at the time and disappeared during the next decade. The pieces were trivial, simplistic musicals, but the audiences didn't

care. They had come to hear Yiddish. The plots were all the same, variations on one or two themes. A young American fell in love with a poor immigrant girl newly arrived from the old country, or an American Jewish girl would find a sweetheart on a trip to visit her grandmother in a shtetl in the Ukraine. Or a visitor from Palestine (or later Israel), or a refugee or a survivor of the Holocaust would meet the successful and affluent American. The songs were forgettable, but old standards like "Yiddishe Mame" or "Rozhenkes mit Mandlen" were usually included. Often there was also a holiday celebration, Passover Seder or Rosh Hashanah or Purim. And always, always a wedding at the end of the show, and a happy ending. The only serious show that I saw during that period was *The Dybbuk.*

I may sound condescending, but it was all fun, real fun. The audiences enjoyed themselves tremendously. During intermissions we met friends. I was also conscious of social stratification, extending even to the seating, where the best, most expensive seats were oc-



Sewing machines for Poland. Left, author.

cupied by people who had made it to Long Island or to West End Avenue or Riverside Drive, the homes of the New York Jewish elite.

Second Avenue had several good Jewish restaurants, Rattner's and others, some kosher, but not all. The best restaurant was said to be Siegel's on Seventh Avenue. I was once invited there by a client whom I had helped to file a claim against the Polish government.

One day another man, a Mr. Topper, came to see me. He had a young niece in Poland who had survived and he asked for my advice on how to bring her to the United States. I secured a visa to France for his niece, and he became immensely grateful. He owned a candy and fruit stand next to the old Metropolitan Opera building on Broadway and 39th Street. He began to take me to lunch in one of the cafeterias, after lunch, he would have me walk with him to his stand, where he would fill a bag with candy, nuts, and fruit to give to me for the children. He seemed to be a wealthy man, which surprised me given the nature of his work and how hard he worked at it.

There were many Jews then in New York, making a comfortable living from such fruit and vegetable stands. Today it is the Koreans who operate these stores. The other day we went to New York to visit the area off Broadway between 23rd and 34th Streets, where we hadn't been in years. It is now all Korean or Indian; the Jewish stores that had dominated this neighborhood have disappeared.

In addition to the movies and Yiddish theater, we also saw Broadway musicals. Our English was too limited for plays and drama. We invited the Schotzes to *Annie Get Your Gun* with Ethel Merman, their first Broadway show. Those days were the zenith of the great musicals, and we saw *Oklahoma*, *South Pacific*, and others.

As in Poland, we were patrons of the public libraries. In the beginning my reading was limited to Polish books. The library in Coney Island had had some Polish books but in Manhattan, in addition to the large branch on Second Avenue, we discovered another branch on Avenue B, a treasure trove of Polish books, evidently in demand by the large Polish and Ukrainian population living there. To our pleasure and surprise, the books were borrowed free. In Poland all libraries were commercial enterprises, and one paid for all the books one borrowed.

I have frequently said that historians should allow fifty years to

pass before writing history. I am writing this page in August 1991 and while the past fifty years have been full of surprises, 1991 has topped them all.

Today's paper has brought the news of the fall of Mikhail Gorbachev. The Gorbomania of the preceding six years will evidently have to be replaced with some other idolatry. Needless to say, the specter of seeing the old communist guard return to power has put a scare into the West. I have always believed that Gorbachev was a dedicated communist trying to resuscitate communism with an infusion of money from the West. Other people believe that he has been walking a tightrope between the reformists and the die-hards and lost because he could satisfy neither. I believe that the extreme "right" (nowadays, the extreme left has somehow become the extreme right) became disillusioned with Gorbachev and has finally dumped him. Or is it premature to say that he has been dumped? It is not inconceivable that he may yet be restored, if not to power, at least as a figurehead.

Back to my story of becoming an American.

Soon it became obvious to us that in spite of our suffering during the war, we were resented by the old-timers—that is, those who had emigrated at some time before WWII. We frequently discussed this phenomenon among friends who had emigrated to America after the war. The experience was almost universal. Some of the immigrants who came before the war did not fully believe our stories, as I described in earlier encounters with these people; others felt that we were taking advantage of them because of what we had gone through; some believed that our complaints were exaggerated. When we described how we had starved at times, one old lady remarked, "We were suffering, too. We could not get sugar."

I asked Mr. Wielgosch, who was always friendly and understanding, why we were not liked. His explanation was that it was the fault of the German refugees, who had immigrated before and during the war. They had behaved in a condescending way, complaining that intellectually America was the most backward country in the world and insisting that they were waiting only for the present situation in Germany to change before they returned home. That was offensive to people for whom America was the most wonderful country in the

world. That part of Mr. Wielgosch's explanation sounded plausible, because I had had similar experiences with German Jews when I was with HIAS in Germany.

Wielgosch was a *gimnazjum* graduate; his views were more sophisticated than those of others in the milieu in which he lived. But the question still intrigued me, Why blame all for the behavior of some German Jews? My family had had the most wonderful experience with Dr. Elias. We are always inclined to generalize.

It often seems that those who manage to reach the safety of a lifeboat before their ship sinks bar entry to other would-be survivors for fear that they'll tip the balance. It is happening now to Russian Jews, who are disliked by those who came earlier. It is also happening to some Israelis, some of whom are seeking a better life in America. I believe that we who did not emigrate to Israel or face the dangers and hardships there have no right to criticize.

After Mr. Roth died, we learned that he had left Bessie his apartment on East 5th Street in New York. His children paid her a monthly allowance most handsomely; she had never requested or expected any such gesture. Bessie refused to move back to Coney Island, because she had found a better Jewish life, a synagogue, and a rabbi, Isaac Shapiro, whom she admired.

Rabbi Shapiro was very active in Zionist affairs and very influential politically. Many years later, our daughter Edith was to marry the rabbi's son Harris.

We decided to move in with Bessie. We had hesitated to make this change; we had liked the proximity of the ocean, and moving meant we had to take our daughters out of the school once more. Their teachers were sorry to see them leave; Miss Shulman, dressed in her best, which included a mink stole, came to pay us a good-bye visit.

But the apartment on East 5th Street, a railroad flat in a tenement, was more convenient for me. Edith transferred to a local junior high school, and Selma was admitted to the prestigious Hunter College High School, where Edith joined her after two years. Our traveling time now took minutes instead of an hour. I decided that my first priority was to go to school to earn some American credentials. I also decided to find a new job; the federation without Dr. Tenenbaum had lost its appeal for me.

After a few days' search, I became a cashier in a cafeteria. In Europe "cafeteria" meant coffeehouse, but in 1937 in Vienna, I had encountered an American-style Automat, across the street from a store where a stocking sale was being held. While Lina waited in line for stockings—it extended around the block—I fetched sandwiches for us from this strange restaurant; they were made of crabmeat, unfamiliar fare to both of us, and we ate them with some trepidation.

Now I was working in one, In America, I found, "cafeteria" meant a kind of self-service restaurant that served decent food for relatively little money. At the Automat (now, alas, defunct, along with its then prices), you put nickles in a slot, a little door opened, and you took out your food. A roast beef or corned beef sandwich cost eleven nickels in those days, a cheese sandwich between five and seven nickels. A cup of coffee was 5 cents, soon to be raised to 10 cents; refills were free.

The cafeteria where I worked was part of the Stewart chain, owned by the Lowenstein brothers, one of whom was a doctor. Dr. Lowenstein's son Allard, who was to become very active in civil rights and leftist causes, was eventually murdered by a mentally ill former associate.

Unlike European cafés, the cafeterias were not meant for lounging or card playing, but some people did congregate there to meet friends and to talk politics. My cafeteria was located across the street from Gimbel's department store. On my lunch hours, I met salesmen from both Gimbel's and from Macy's, a block away. I made new friends, the first non-Jews I encountered in the United States. That too was an important learning experience.

I worked on improving my English by reading books, magazines (back in Coney Island I subscribed to *Life* and *Look*) and newspapers (the *New York Times* was very important), and by listening to the radio. At work I began to pick up the American slang. I developed a taste for American food, like roast beef, corned beef, and salmon, tuna, and other varieties of ocean fish. At home we had eaten freshwater fish, carp or pike. My mother-in-law Bessie excelled at the art of cooking carp. The seafood that we knew and enjoyed was of course, herring. And sardines.

Meanwhile, my wife, Henis, and Igo Sudarski decided to go into

business and acquired a restaurant in Greenwich Village on West 10th Street and 6th Avenue (later Avenue of the Americas). The restaurant was named Art Foods, and catered to a mixture of working people and artists. Some of the latter became good friends; we still have oils and watercolors that we either bought from them or bartered for with food. I particularly remember a Russian painter named Rymski.

Being in business in America was trickier than we had thought, and we learned the hard way. We had bought the place, counting on obtaining a certain income from it, based on the amount of business the place had done in the month before we closed the deal. Later we learned that the previous owner had inflated the figure by having his family and friends frequent the restaurant in those weeks. After we took possession, the sales plummeted by half. But in the main, Lina and her partners enjoyed the place, the customers who remained, and the general ambiance of the Village—not then the hangout of drug addicts and the homeless that it has become since.

Sudarski, an amateur painter himself (and a professional draftsman), particularly enjoyed the company of the customers who were writers, newspapermen, and, of course, painters. He and Sonia, his wife, spent all kinds of hours in the store.

With the purchase of the restaurant, we inherited a counterman—Tom, a strange creature, a self-educated Irishman, a drunkard, a misanthrope who detested everybody but became very fond of my wife. Without him, we would not have been able to run the place. With all his peculiarities, he was very conscientious. This was a new and quite different life from Brooklyn or Second Avenue. I remember feeling carefree and giving frequent parties.

Soon after we took over the store, we were visited by a couple of well-dressed men who offered us "protection." When Lina tried to object, Igo took her aside and explained to her the meaning of "protection," a tribute that had to be paid to the Mafia, or else. We paid only a couple of dollars a week. The stolid men who collected the protection were reasonable and pleasant, and paid for food if they ordered any—and also left tips. As some Poles had said about some Nazis, they were "perfect gentlemen."

Between my earnings and Lina's income from the store, we

managed to live comfortably and even accumulate savings. Still, although we did like living in Manhattan, close to the store, close to our daughters' school, and convenient to my job, the neighborhood was below our standards. Drunks sprawled on Third Avenue; neighbors were not people like ourselves, mostly with little education. The streets were dirty and noisy. We were particularly concerned that it was not a safe or pleasant environment for young girls like our daughters.

However, as an adult, I never felt unsafe. During that time, Lina sometimes came home from work after midnight, after the store closed, and was never harassed. When I worked the night shift, I often returned from my cashier's job in the early morning hours. (As a new member of the union I had to work the late shift for several months.) Nobody ever bothered either of us. We, in turn, paid no attention to the drunkards sleeping in the hallways on Third Avenue.

In 1948 Lina underwent an operation and it took her several months to recover, which delayed our plans to move. However, toward the end of 1949, we started to look around for a house. Kurt Pollak was a great help. He was the first of our group to buy a car, and he gladly drove us around. After several trips and surveying locations and prices, we concentrated on Flushing. Our choice narrowed to a house on Francis Lewis Boulevard and another on Utopia Parkway. The house on the Boulevard was larger, a ranch, but it had coal heat; the one on the Parkway was two stories but was newer, built right before the war, and it had gas heat. But I believe that the name of the street, Utopia Parkway, was what decided us. There was something in the name that seemed very appropriate for survivors like us. We bought the house in August 1950.

The house had belonged to a Swiss/German family and had been very well kept. It was so easy to get a mortgage then. We soon signed the contract and moved in. Our lawyer was a Mr. Rosen, whom I had met at the Federation and who had become a good friend. He later ran for the state assembly; we lost track of him after we moved to New Jersey.

After the down payment, we had enough money left to buy some furniture, and we went to a store called Masters to make our purchases. Masters arranged to have their customers visit showrooms of



(Left to right) Lina, Selma, Edith in front of our first house and car.

different manufacturers and make selections from the displays. We were lucky to find some first-rate furniture that corresponded to our taste and was durable. We bought, among other things, a table and four chairs made by Miller, which are now considered classics and have been copied by other manufacturers. Some of the furniture is still with us and in good shape.

The house, furnished to our taste, was praised by one artist, our friend Igo Sudarski. He called it a dream house which pleased us greatly. Our new telephone number was Olympia 8-1408, another omen I thought for a bright future in America.

The clothing that we had purchased in Munich also had to be replaced. Lina's dresses and suits and my suits looked "European," and this revealed that we were newcomers to the country, an impression that we tried to avoid. We wanted to look like Americans. Lina retained her silver fox furs but changed the rest of her wardrobe. We went shopping on—or shall I say, we ventured onto—Fifth Avenue. In the first store (it was Lord & Taylor) we saw a suit that we both

liked. I liked it particularly. Lina said that we could not buy the first suit we saw in the first store we visited. Before we left, unbeknownst to Lina, I whispered to the saleswoman to put away the suit, assuring her that we would be back. Next we visited every store on Fifth Avenue, and also Macy's and Gimbel's on Herald Square, but nothing pleased my wife. After we were quite exhausted, I mentioned to Lina that perhaps the first suit was still available. She doubted it, she said, but I persuaded her. We returned and bought the suit we had liked to begin with. I have a photo of her wearing it with her foxes. The children were also equipped with American clothing for school and play.

As for me, I had admired a suit worn by a Mr. Fisher, a lawyer with the Federation. It was light blue with pinstripes. I found a similar suit at Robert Hall, an amazing institution, where clothing was displayed row upon row on plain racks without any embellishments. Robert Hall guaranteed bargains. I paid $32 for my suit, one of the most expensive pieces of clothing there. It was a lot of money. I also treated myself to a camel's hair sports jacket. I was deflated when someone remarked that the clothes I had chosen were worn mostly by gangsters. Perhaps I had been also influenced in my taste by the gangster films popular at the time.

Now I was also ready to buy a car. After a lot of research, I chose a Pontiac, a beautiful, shiny dark-blue one. At last we were Americans, at least on the surface.

I decided it was time to take a definitive step toward restoring my health. I had suffered yet another of my frequent hemorrhages from a duodenal ulcer. Dr. Elias decided that I should consult a surgeon about an operation, a gastrectomy.

I was fortunate, Elias told me, for the finest surgeon in this field practiced in the United States. I did not have the money for such expensive medical treatment, I told Elias. His response was "Leave it to me." He called a week or so later, to tell me that I had an appointment with the world-class surgeon, Dr. Rudolf Nissen, who had once operated on Albert Einstein and Zita, the former empress of Austria. Nissen said that an operation was urgent; he wanted me to secure a room at Doctor's Hospital, but they were full so I ended up at Wickersham Hospital. Nissen's fee was $2,000, but he said not to worry,

he would accept whatever my insurance covered which was $300.

The operation was uneventful. During recuperation, I shared a room with five other patients, all of whom were amazed that Dr. Nissen came to see me every single day of the eleven I spent in the hospital. Dr. Nissen, who did not like America, left soon afterward to head the surgery department at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

The man in the next bed was a Jew, a postal clerk, suffering from an inflammation of the veins. He listened to baseball all the time on the radio. He explained the intricacies of the game to me, and very quickly I too became an addict. I inherited from him his loyalty to the Brooklyn Dodgers. Now I am a Met fan.

In the hospital I learned the meaning of the words that had puzzled me in Munich, where I had watched American servicemen play the game. I learned the meaning of a single, a double, a triple, the importance of a home run, a shutout. However, I did not understand the role of the umpires and the reason for fights between players and between players and umpires until after we acquired our first television set, and I was able to watch the games as well as listen. I have also enlarged my vocabulary with some juicy baseball expletives.

After my operation we took advantage of having a car, and we traveled. We visited all the northeastern states and the Canadian cities of Montreal and Toronto. What a pleasure it was to travel in possession of our first papers. Not only were we free from worry about being readmitted to the United States, but in addition at the reentry point, we were pleased to hear the friendly words of the border guards, "Welcome back." In our later more extensive travels, I always looked forward to hearing those words.

We picked up hitchhikers all the time. The New York Thruway had not been built as yet, and we traveled in leisurely fashion, often on side roads, hoping to see more of the country. Lodging was cheap, a good cabin cost $5–6.00 per day; with a kitchenette the price went up to $8.00. One of the most pleasant experiences was our trip to Niagara Falls.

Unable to find a room in the vicinity of the falls, we went back about twenty miles and spotted a house with a sign, "Rooms to Let." We inquired inside, and a pleasant woman of about sixty was willing to turn over to us, for $12, the entire upper floor, which had two

bedrooms and included a breakfast for all of us. The accommodations were excellent, and the breakfast was both sumptuous and delicious.

Only once were we denied a room after our reservation had been accepted—that happened in Saratoga after we announced our names.

Once, at Lina's insistence, we backed out ourselves when the host referred to us as *Zydki* (instead of *Zydzi*), after hearing our conversation in Polish. He was a Pole who evidently did not know that this diminutive term was derogatory; he claimed that in the old country he had been very friendly with Jews.

As a young man in *gimnazjum*, I was an ardent reader. Among my favorite books were tales of adventure and travel. I dreamed that one day I might see Niagara Falls, the Empire State Building, the sequoias in California, particularly the tree through whose split trunk a car could drive. When we finally saw the tree, it had fallen from old age.

I had also hoped to see Jerusalem, the Nile, and the pyramids, the seven wonders of the world, Mount Olympus, and the Wailing Wall, Hawaii, the Taj Mahal, the Himalayas. Little did I suspect that one day my work would entail much traveling and that I was destined indeed to see most of these dream places.

Buying our house, furnishing it, and acquiring a car, exhausted our savings. After Edith graduated from high school, was admitted to Barnard College, but aware of our straitened finances, she was ready to forgo Barnard and settle for Queens College—a quite prestigious school at that time and, more important, free. I remember distinctly the discussion that Lina and I had in the car coming home late at night from her store. We turned over and over the subject of tuition at Barnard and asked ourselves the question: "What would our parents have done?" We were sure that they would have decided on Barnard, and so did we. We knew also that in another year Selma would graduate, and there was no possibility that she would not take the same route as Edith. So Edith went to Barnard. And so did Selma, one year later. Both had scholarships. Selma had two scholarships, which fortunately covered just about all her tuition. And of course they lived at home and commuted to college by bus and subway, a trip that took one hour and fifteen minutes each way.

Two events very important to us took place in 1952. On January

29, I became an American citizen. I remembered that Aunt Clara had never applied for citizenship, because she was afraid of the examination by the judge. Therefore we studied American history in the booklet that we had received at the time we had taken out our "first papers." Imagine my surprise when the judge asked me just one question: "Who was the first president of the United States?"

The second event occurred later the same year. In her first year of college Edith was elected president of her class, and because she was a refugee, she received much attention in the press and in the established Jewish community. She was interviewed by Gilbert Millstein of the *New York Times*, and an article about her and our family appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1952. Only five and one half years had passed since we had arrived in the country—seven years since I had been compelled to leave Zloczów clandestinely, my home town, now in the Soviet Union, to start our hegira to the Promised Land.

We received many letters and telephone calls from friends and from strangers. Two of the encounters with links to the past are especially worth mentioning.

We received a letter and telephone call from Roman Olesnicki, the son of the Ukrainian ambassador to the United Kingdom during the short-lived independent Ukrainian state of Petlyura (1918–20). Roman and his brother Genek were my bridge partners before the war. During the German occupation of Zloczów, Genek—who used to kiss Lina's hand whenever he came for bridge and supper—pretended not to recognize her when they met on one occasion during the occupation. Roman, on the other hand, after serving briefly in the Polish embassy in Washington, had gone into business as the representative of the Jewish-owned Oscar Robinson bacon factory in Zloczów. Roman's letter was very friendly.

The other surprise was a visit from Goral, the conniving director of our family's factory, whose brief reign had been imposed on us by the Soviets. Goral was now a Baptist preacher in Avoca, Pennsylvania (near Scranton). We never saw Goral again, but we did see Roman.

Several years later, we were having dinner at a Ukrainian restaurant on 8th Street and Second Avenue in New York City when I

spotted a haggard, looking man at another table. I told my wife, "That man is Roman Olesnicki!" She pooh-poohed the idea and said that I always seemed to recognize people. So I called the manager of the restaurant (at that time a retired, friendly Ukrainian teacher) and asked whether he knew the man. He said that it was indeed Roman Olesnicki, now a second rate lawyer. Before I had time to approach him, Roman recognized Lina, came over to our table, kissed Lina's hand, and complimented us again on our accomplished daughter. He also asked how we had survived the war. Without mentioning Genek's behavior, I asked Roman about his brother. He said that Genek was living as a Pole in Gdansk, working in some position in the government.

There was a saying about Ukrainians that they wore caps with two visors—one marked with a red star, the other with the *Hakenkreuz.* With political change, they turned the cap around.

This particular family was an old aristocratic one, dating back to the sixteenth century; one of their progenitors had been a *kniaz* (prince). The father of the two brothers had been a vice-marshal of



Edith (far left) participates in UJA conference with Mrs. Roosevelt (third from left).

the Polish Sejm, and Roman himself had served in the prewar Polish government. Genek had later held a position in the communist administration of Zloczów; after the German invasion, he had served the Germans. Once again he was obviously holding a position in the government, once again serving the communists.

(Today, reading the latest reports from the former Soviet Union and the other countries of the Eastern Bloc, I suspect that many caps are being turned around as former enthusiastic communists are becoming enthusiastic capitalists.)

Another important event that came out of Edith's election as class president. The Jewish community invited her to share the speakers' platform at a fund-raising affair with Eleanor Roosevelt and a Private Kravitz, a Jewish veteran of the Korean War. Both Lina and I were introduced to Mrs. Roosevelt, who struck me as merely going through the motions—her handshake was limp and her speech, although eagerly received, sounded as if she had delivered it numerous times before.

For me personally, the meeting had most important consequences. One of the ladies sponsoring the affair was Mrs. Michael, the wife of the legendary Jewish millionaire, Jacob Michael. I had never heard of him before, but a few days later his office called me and requested me to come over to his headquarters at 20 Wall Street to meet him. We had a rather long meeting, during which we spoke German exclusively. He offered me a job in his organization.

That changed our lives again.

I worked in Jacob Michael's organization seven years, while attending City College (Bernard Baruch School) at night. I received an MBA in June 1959.

While I was still working, I was courted by a Dutchman, whose name I have forgotten, an importer of foils used as gift wrapping, to join his company as a salesman. I did this, but after only three weeks, I decided that I had made a mistake. I spotted an ad saying that a toy company, Remco was looking for a purchasing agent. My MBA thesis had been on purchasing, so I decided to apply for the job, and was one of two people chosen out of eighty-two applicants. The other man had his MBA degree from New York University.

Thus began an interesting and exciting chapter in my life in

America. Within a short period of time, I was promoted to import manager, a position that involved lots of traveling to the Far East. After each business trip, I took a vacation with my wife, and we traveled extensively. We visited Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, islands in the Pacific and Caribbean. We also traveled to Canada, Mexico, Europe, and visited Israel several times. Eventually, I was promoted to vice-president of Imports. After I had worked twelve years with the company, it went bankrupt and was sold, and I resigned. Harris Shapiro, one of my sons-in-law, built a successful designing and manufacturing motor company and invited me to join as a consultant. I have been with Hansome Energy Systems since 1973. Meanwhile, our daughters Edith and Selma pursued their own careers. Edith became a psychiatrist, and Selma an electronics engineer. Both were married in 1955 and have fine families. Lina and I have five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, the joys of our lives.

One year after we moved to New Jersey, Bessie passed away.

During the last forty years, we experienced all sorts of adventures and witnessed many changes at home and abroad.



Lina and author in Japan at a reception. Author (center), Lina (extreme right). This photo from Japan is unusual, as my agent (extreme left) told me. The owner of the factory (third from right) brought his wife (next to him), and his two factory managers also brought their wives to dinner. The Kimono-dressed woman was a famous Japanese singer, who entertained us with Japanese songs.

When we arrived the first time in Japan, the three-wheeler was the popular mode of transportation. There were few highways and the "bullet train" was in the planning stage. But the streets were swept clean by storekeepers, and everyone worked hard. It was not unusual for me to work seven days a week, sometimes for sixteen hours. Therefore, I am not surprised that Japan developed into the economic power that is perhaps the most impressive story of the century.

We loved Hong Kong, but, during the Cultural Revolution, we felt threatened by mobs shouting anti-American slogans. Another time, in the Old City of Jerusalem, one month before the intifada, when we ventured out on our own, we were menaced by Arab youths. In New Delhi, on our way back from visiting Gandhi's resting place, the driver had to take a roundabout route to avoid anti-American demonstrators. But, except for these few unpleasant moments, we enjoyed our travels enormously. We met many interesting people. We became close friends with a Chinese couple, Darcy and Jeannette Fu, who were forced to abandon six children in mainland China. Before the Fus died, their children escaped to Hong Kong and later the United States. In Israel and Australia, we were reunited with people from Zloczów. My most interesting encounter was with the great Yiddish writer, Isaac Bashevis Singer, which took place in Florida in 1991.

Both Lina and I were invited to dinner by a mutual friend, the artist and illustrator of Singer's books, Mrs. Irene Lieblich. We were delighted when we found out that the other couple was to be Mr. and Mrs. Singer. The third couple was the renowned journalist and radio commentator, Shlomo Ben-Israel and his wife.

Mr. Singer was frail, but in full control of his wits, a modest man, easy to talk to. We soon became engaged in a lively conversation about Poland—the Poland we both knew, which did not exist any more—Polish Jews, Polish anti-Semitism, and American Jews. When I mentioned that I had written a book about my home town in Galicja, Zloczów, I mentioned that Zloczów claimed to be the birthplace of the composer of "The Hatikvah," Naftali Herz Imber, and that one of my friends, a lawyer also named Imber, claimed relationship with him. To that, Singer said that he had visited several towns in Galicja, and that Zloczów may have been one of them.

I told him that both Lina and I had read many of his books and that I always wondered how people who did not know the background of his stories were able to understand. To this he said that his writing was universal. Incidentally, that was the only time that he alluded to his writing.

Mrs. Lieblich prepared what she claimed—and he agreed—was his favorite dish, a vegetable fish dish, with no fish in it.

The three of us spoke mainly in Yiddish, but occasionally Mr. Singer switched into heavily-accented English, with a few Polish words thrown in. (With Alma, his wife, I spoke in German.) Singer regretted that Yiddish would soon become extinguished and that Israel does not seem interested in promoting it.

For us this was an unforgettable meeting. We were invited by the Singers for lunch, but the next day, Alma Singer fell and injured her leg. We never met the great man again.

After my first book was published, I received many letters from survivors and other readers. Some inquired about their families, others expressed their opinions and feelings. Strikingly, several survivors wrote that our experiences were identical to what they went through during these terrible times.

Chapter Fourteen
America and the World: A Summation

While all these shifts and adjustments were taking place in our personal lives, America and the world were undergoing momentous changes.

I am looking at a special issue of *Time* Magazine, called "The Face of History," which is a compilation of photographs of the magazine selections of Man of the Month, because I am particularly interested in the men and women considered to have been important during the years since the end of the war. In June of 1946, the month we arrived in the United States, the picture on the cover was of Ernest Bevin; a coincidence, for it had been his policies that had prevented my family and many others from entering Palestine, the Promised Land of Israel. Fortunately, we found a haven in America.

Harry Truman was a frequent cover subject. I had arrived in the United States during his presidency, when his greatness was not yet recognized. I believed then, as did other Poles, Jews, Germans, Russians, and even some Americans, that the future of Europe lay with Communism: "Ex oriente lux [The light would come from the East]." We all believed that, within a decade, Stalin would rule all of Europe, excepting perhaps the British Isles. An American friend went even further; he predicted a communist America in the not so distant future.

President Truman had acted decisively and had set the stage to halt and reverse this threat. He had gathered talented people in his cabinet, the two outstanding being two more *Time* cover choices, Dean Acheson and General George Marshall. A bold and imaginative economic-recovery program that had saved Western Europe from falling under Stalin's domination that bears the general's name was conceived. The Marshall Plan had been supported by Americans, had been funded with a generous influx of American dollars, and was a great success.

Truman's most important and most controversial decision had

been to drop an atomic bomb on Japan. In America, the decision is still the subject of heated analysis, with hindsight affecting judgments both favorable and unfavorable. I have only one regret—that Truman did not drop the atomic bomb on Adolf Hitler.

Truman was firmly convinced that preventing the spread of communism not only in Europe but in Asia as well, was in the best interests of the United States. The Republicans had accused him of "losing China," possibly goading him to intervene later in Korea. As long as the American Army was successful in defeating the North Korean invaders, the American public was behind Truman, but when the Chinese threw their army into the battle and pushed back our forces, and the Korean "intervention" turned into a bloody and prolonged miasmal affair, cries of "time for a change" were heard. Truman's firing of General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the Armed Forces in Korea, a very popular hero of WWII, further turned the country against Truman.

The Korean war had minimal effect on our daily lives. A young man whom Selma, our daughter, dated was slightly wounded in Korea. I received a refund from General Motors on my Pontiac because prices had been brought back under the rules of the Office of Price Stabilization. And that was the sum of the impact.

For Jews, Truman's most memorable decision had been to recognize the newly formed, independent State of Israel. Truman made this decision against the advice of his most trusted advisers, Dean Acheson and General Marshall. Marshall had even threatened to resign over the issue. This decision had been opposed also by the State Department.

As I mentioned before, my family had been beneficiaries of Truman's decision to admit to America 200,000 displaced persons above the regular immigration quota, a reversal of Eisenhower's policy of forcibly returning refugees to their country of origin. Some Russian escapees who had been returned against their will were to suffer misery and persecution from the Soviet secret police and many were deported to the gulags.

Even though Truman had been exempt from the constitutional amendment limiting the president to two terms, he decided not to run again, evidently heeding the calls for change.

General Dwight Eisenhower, another hero of WWII, was waiting in the wings. He had shrewdly pursued his ambition; wooed by both political parties, he had concealed his party choice until almost the last moment.

Truman had originally promoted Eisenhower, but after the latter's election and his behavior toward General Marshall whom Truman admired during the McCarthy period, Truman changed his opinion of his successor. Truman was not a man who concealed his feelings, and in his utterances and in his memoirs, his contempt for Eisenhower is clearly shown. Eisenhower responded in kind and never invited Truman to the White House during his presidency. In fact, Eisenhower was universally liked and his campaign theme song, "I Like Ike," was an expression of that sentiment. He was overwhelmingly elected. There were, however, some who believe that Eisenhower had won the election by his declaration: "I shall go to Korea." Eisenhower had gone, but the war had still ended in a stalemate. There are serious questions whether the unresolved Korean conflict had not been the seed of the Vietnam War.

Despite deep conservatism, Eisenhower had enjoyed acceptance by liberals and by the liberal press as well. He coined the phrase "industrial military complex," forgetting that it had been this complex that had brought him to the presidency. Eisenhower's style fitted the temper of the country, tired of the aggressive leadership of his predecessor and exhausted by the seemingly unending Korean War. His prestige at home was enormous, and he easily won reelection to a second term, in an election fought against an unwilling and ineffectual intellectual, Adlai Stevenson. (I voted for Stevenson in my first presidential election.) Had he not been prevented by the constitutional amendment barring a third term, Eisenhower would have been reelected again. Ironically, it had been the Republican Party that had forced the enactment of this amendment in a posthumous slap at Roosevelt.

Americans' affection for Eisenhower had not been shared universally by Europeans, as I had observed while I was still in Germany during the early months after the war. Later on, after I came to this country and read memoirs of British generals and historians, I realized that both his generalship and his political decisions had been criticized.

The prominent Australian writer, Chester Wilmot, in his *Defeat in Victory*, actually accused Eisenhower and Roosevelt of losing the peace by disastrous military and political decisions: by not pursuing the capture of Berlin as recommended by Churchill; by leaving Berlin, the biggest prize of the war, to the Russians; and by stopping Patton and preventing him from liberating Czechoslovakia.

Some British and American commentators have attributed Eisenhower's decisions to his being already in the running for the presidency and responding to popular cries, "Bring the boys home." Other boys might have had to pay in Korea and Vietnam with their lives for these hasty decisions. While these decisions were made by Eisenhower, political decisions were arrived at by Roosevelt and Churchill, with Roosevelt the senior partner. The Germans I spoke to in Munich, as well as British, blamed the duo for prolonging the war with their demand of "unconditional surrender." Jews and Poles hailed the demand.

The greatest diplomatic coup for Stalin had been the Yalta Agreement. Yalta had affected me personally; it led to the Lech L'Cho, the pilgrimage.

All these decisions were to lead to fifty years of the Cold War and hot wars fought by proxy.

Eisenhower's era had been the most somnolent in the second half of this century. The deep sleep was rudely disturbed by Sputnik. I remember how we rose at night to gaze at the man-made satellite circling the globe. It was an indication of the Soviets' striving for world domination. In response to this challenge, *NASA* was established in 1958.

Eisenhower's presidency was marked by the most stringent adherence to George Washington's warning for the country to stay away from foreign entanglements. He had left the conduct of foreign policy to Dulles, possibly the most inept chief of the State Department in the last half of the century. Dulles, a mortal foe of the Soviet Union, had constantly cruised the globe creating phantom pacts designed to put a *cordon sanitaire* around that country.

The only important decision that Eisenhower made had been to stop the British-French-Israeli war against Egypt over the Suez Canal. The intervention had the untoward effect of making Egypt's

leader, Nasser, the hero of the Arab world, and throwing him into the arms of the Soviet Union. It took Nasser's successor, Anwer Sadat to disengage from that liaison.

Eisenhower's prestige had not helped his vice-president, Richard Nixon, to secure the presidency. The perennial cry in a democracy, "Time for a change," and the demand to "get the country moving again" had defeated Nixon in a close election.

Every president leaves his successor with *matunes* [gifts]." Like many Yiddish expressions, the word has a double meaning. It also means, ironically, "something to remember me by." In addition to Sputnik, Eisenhower left to Kennedy the legacy of Cuba and Castro.

After a rousing inauguration speech by the new president, there were great expectations of a new era. Faced with the Sputnik challenge, Kennedy assembled an impressive group of scientists, which included some Germans who had developed Hitler's missiles. Soon America was in the lead in the effort to conquer space, and in 1969, it



Selma and austronaut Schweikert.

was an American who made the first landing on the moon. Our younger daughter, Selma, had a part in the *Apollo* project. She designed microwave tracking transponders.

But there were also crises. The first crisis of Kennedy's presidency was the Bay of Pigs disaster, but that was nothing compared to the dangerous Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, which occurred when Khrushchev, prodded by Castro and against his better judgment, installed Soviet missiles in Cuba. After some anxious days of prolonged negotiations, Khrushchev gave in and the missiles were removed. As the President's brother Robert put it: "The other side blinked."

Still another crisis occurred when the Soviets and East Germany decided to stem the outflow of people from their sector of the divided Germany by erecting a wall across Berlin. During Truman's presidency, the Soviets had tried to isolate West Berlin by blocking road and rail access to the city, and Truman had responded with an airlift of essential supplies. Kennedy could not halt the erection of the wall; all he could do was visit Berlin and deliver a widely reported morale-builder speech, "*Ich bin ein Berliner.*" However, the Russians and their surrogate the East Berlin regime had accomplished its goal and had stopped the emigration of East Germans.

So these two crises ended in a draw, with the Americans winning one round and the Soviets the other.

The high expectations that came with the new president were halted with his tragic assassination, and other cataclysmic events that followed; the murder of the president's brother, and that of the charismatic black leader, Martin Luther King.

All these, combined with the agony of the Vietnam War, which Kennedy's successor, President Johnson, was unable to end, transmuted the promising sixties into the arguably worst decade since the great depression.

Hated by the Kennedy clan, haunted by the Camelot myth created around his martyred predecessor, shackled to a war strategy that did not envision victory in this, the first televised war in history, misled by an inept field-commander, Johnson was doomed to failure.

Also, just as the Eisenhower-Dulles team had miscalculated the effects of their Mideast policy during the first Suez crisis, so did

Johnson's indecision led to the 1967 Six Day War between Israel and the Arab states. Nasser, encouraged and goaded by the Soviets whose intention had been to push the West out of Mideast affairs, had started the war against Israel. It had ended in a humiliating defeat for him and in the humiliation of all the Arab countries that had participated in it. In six days, June 5–10, Israel liberated Jerusalem and had taken control of the West Bank and Gaza. *Time* Magazine said, "And on the seventh day, they rested." The Palestinian problem remains one of the major unresolved problems of our time.

Johnson's considerable successes on the domestic scene, his leadership in the field of human rights legislation that he had steered through a reluctant Congress, was lost in an avalanche of hostile articles in the press and in books that have mercilessly criticized his leadership and his personal style. Disillusioned and disheartened, he decided not to run again.

Concurrently the country was undergoing a revolution in morals and customs. A young generation, deprived of its hero, disillusioned with the political system, was seeking outlets in a life-style of drugs and uninhibited moral and sexual behavior. In many cases, they were exhorted and misled by misguided teachers, and glorified their behavior in popular songs. Old icons were being smashed, but few new ideas supplanted them. Emptiness prevailed in the creative arts as well.

We still endure the legacy of this turbulent era. Wild accusations of strange conspiracies still appear in books, TV, and films, and find eager believers. Johnson has been accused, among other ludicrous theories, of having arranged the murder of his predecessor.

Reaction to all this was inevitable. After an election marred by violence, former Vice-President Richard Nixon, candidate of conservative interests, was elected with a mandate to lead the country out of the quagmire. The prime goal was to end the Vietnam involvement. Negotiated by a brilliant Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, the war's end was still a stalemate, in effect a defeat for this country. Dissension is still raging; how much of this defeat had been due to the hostile press and how much to the gory television images?

Nixon and Kissinger had been exponents of a realistic foreign policy and have been accused of preferring to work with autocratic

regimes. Both had been friendly to Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, but Nixon overruled Kissinger when he tried to pressure Israel by delaying military supplies in order to obtain concessions for the Arabs. Instead, supplies had been rushed, and the war had been ended by a U.N. ceasefire.*

Nixon's foreign policy successes and relative economic stability, not to mention the inept performance of his opponent, led to his overwhelming reelection. Nobody disputes that Nixon had been clever, but he might have grown overconfident. His selection of a vice-president, Spiro Agnew, had been a disaster. Except for Kissinger, his close associates were incompetents, and their allegiance to him was questionable.

But, nothing can explain the incredible stupidity of the Watergate affair. Watergate has left us with a generic term for almost any public scandal or accusation of real or alleged extralegal atrocities by various administrations. There is now the Irangate and the possibility of a Walshgate, relentless investigations and prosecutions that have accomplished very little. Still, Watergate permitted Nixon's enemies to seize the initiative and eventually force him out of office. He had never been forgiven the role that he had played during the McCarthy era, when he helped unmask a Russian agent in the U.S. State Department, Alger Hiss, a prominent member of the eastern liberal establishment.

(Recently a Russian military historian has been quoted as saying that, after having investigated the now-released archives of the KGB, he found no evidence that Hiss had been a Soviet spy. But this assessment has been challenged in turn.)

Nixon's downfall led to a general disenchantment with the Republican Party. Nixon's successor, the likable former vice-president, Gerald Ford, famous for his many public gaffes, lost his bid for a second term.

After a turbulent preelection period, an inept Democrat was thrown into the presidency almost by default. *Jimmy* Carter, as he liked to be called, did not survive a single term. A disastrous

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* See the Appendix for reprints of my Op Ed pieces on the relations between this country and Israel.

economic situation, the highest unemployment in recent history, interest rates in double digits, and foreign developments (some beyond his control) caused his downfall. Unwilling to accept his own shortcomings, he chose to blame the country for its "malaise." He went down to a disastrous defeat. *Time* Magazine has called Carter a "most spectacularly ineffectual leader."

Carter's apologists cite seizure of hostages by Iran and a failed rescue effort as the major reason for his defeat. And, in fact, the hostages were released as soon as Carter left office, a deliberate move by Iran to humiliate the outgoing president.

The most conservative president since World War II, Ronald Reagan, was next elected. Eisenhower had been the more conservative *individual* (in a "*quieta non movere*" fashion, his golf and bridge were not to be disturbed), but Ronald Reagan's conservatism was of the militant variety. He believed that he had been elected to reverse the course of American history, and to take a more aggressive stand in foreign and domestic policies.

The new president came into office with clear goals: (1) to reverse Roosevelt's liberal revolution; (2) to return the country to the values of the Coolidge era when "the business of America. . . [was] business"; (3) to defeat the "evil empire," the Soviet Union; and (4) to trim the ever-growing bureaucracy. He failed to curb the bureaucracy. He was successful in promoting conditions that led to the overturning of communism in the Soviet Union. He was only partially successful in restoring unrestricted capitalism. It was his antiliberal policies that brought him the undying enmity of the liberal establishment, concentrated in the academia and the media, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post, Time, Newsweek*, and the networks. In spite of this enmity, Ronald Reagan was widely popular among plain folks and was reelected by an unprecedented majority.

At the end of his term, his popularity carried over into the election of his vice-president, George Bush to the presidency. But Bush lacked his predecessor's charisma and appeal. In November 1992, Bush was defeated by Democrat Bill Clinton, despite questions about Clinton's character and qualifications for the office.

The 1980s will be remembered by an event that "shook the

world" even as it caught everyone by surprise: the demise and disintegration of the Soviet Union.

It all started rather innocuously.

In July of 1989, Francis Fukuyama, a previously unknown official in the State Department, shocked the liberal establishment with an article, "The End of History," in *National Interest.* In this he predicted the fall of communism. The reaction was expected and predictable. The *New York Times* printed a scathing editorial. The editor at large of *Time*, Strobe Talbot (September 11, 1989) called Fukuyama's thesis "pernicious nonsense" and said that Fukuyama was "afflicted by a peculiar combination of arrogance and shortsightedness." (In subsequent articles, Mr. Talbot admitted to a change of mind.) Mr. Fukuyama's position concurred with my own views and predictions that I expressed in a letter to *Time*:

> *Fifty years ago, on September 17, 1939, I watched the Soviet Army invade my hometown in eastern Poland, driving the final nail into the coffin of independence of that nation. Now, from the safety of my adopted country, I watch the Poles, who are ready to repay the favor by dislodging one of the cotter pins holding the Soviet empire together. For those in Poland and those who fled Soviet occupation, it is time to rejoice and hope. (09/18/89)*

The celerity with which the Soviet Union disintegrated has been astounding. The rot was deeper than even the most ardent foes of communism believed. Once the "evil empire" had fallen, a vision of a "new brave world" emerged. But as Machiavelli has warned, "*There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.*"

Nevertheless, at the onset of the 1990s, it seemed that the world was nearing a period of universal peace and prosperity. The Cold War had come to an end. True, there were unresolved problems and peripheral conflicts. The atomic genie could not be put back in the bottle. However the two isms, capitalism and communism, which had dominated the world during the preceding decades, appeared to have lost much of their meaning.

The cry, "It is time for a change," is being heard again. This time it is a universal cry. In England, John Major won his election by a slim margin. François Mitterand's downfall is predicted, and the socialists are out of office. In Italy governments change every few months. We have witnessed a change of government in Israel. In the New Russia, Boris Yeltsin struggles to retain power. In Japan, a forceful political leader was forced to resign.

The question of why this demand for change is taking place in so many countries simultaneously is not an easy one to answer. Perhaps it is because we live in an era of great expectations. Today's young people are not satisfied with what was considered a good life not long ago. The current depression is the mildest in the last fifty years; try to explain it to a worker who is not starving but has lost his well-paying job, or to parents who see no possibility of sending their children to a "decent" college.

How many voters who voted for a change appreciate the fact that the world has become a single economic entity? If Japan sneezes, we get a cold. If we sneeze, the whole world gets sick. Americans have little taste for world domination. We are tired of being the protector of the world. The majority of Americans seem to say, leave us alone, and let the world solve its own problems. If only it were that easy! But no country, no matter how strong militarily or economically, will solve these problems unilaterally or can afford to retreat into isolationism.

Few in the democratic world regret the demise of the Soviet Union. The unexpected and unforeseen result created a void in central Europe and in the Asian provinces of the former Soviet Union. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, so political voids are an invitation for stronger nations to fill them. History has shown over and over again that sooner or later some nation will claim hegemony. It happened in ancient times, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, Rome, each founded an empire. In the Middle Ages, and later in the nineteenth century, France and Germany held sway over Europe, and in the rest of the world it was "Rule Brittania." After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles created a void again, and planted the seeds World WarII.

The centripetal forces that bound together the diverse assortments of nationalities by beneficial rule, most evident in the Austro-Hun-

garian Empire, or by the ruthless dictatorships of Hitler and Stalin and their ilk, are now loosened. President Wilson's noble goal of self-determination of nations turned out to be a disaster, as we are witnessing today—and not only in Europe. Once domination is lifted, the ugly face of ethnicity reemerges in terror reminiscent of Hitler and Stalin.

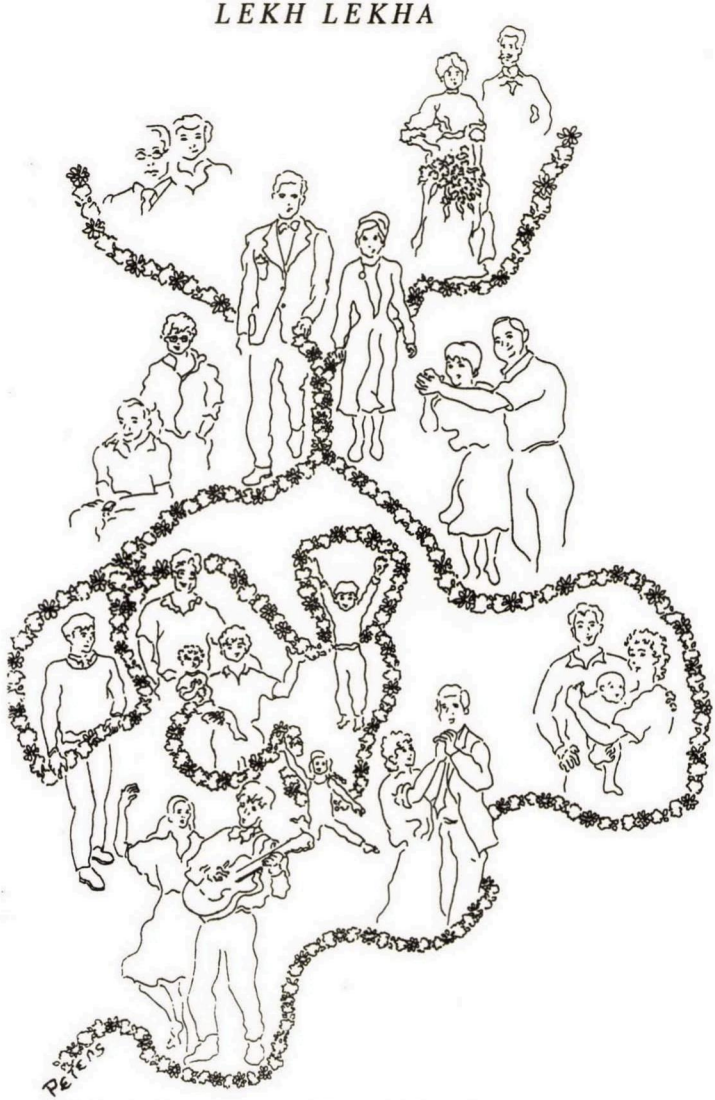
In the seventeenth century, Hugo Grotius, one of the founders of international law, wrote: "*Homo Homini Lupus*" ["Man Towards Man is a Wolf]". It is an ironic twist of history that the sinister manipulators behind the gleaming facade of the Congress of Vienna, the followers of Grotius, the believers and exponents of *balance of power*, the Metternichs and Tallyrands and their followers established in 1815 a century of relative peace in Europe and in the world.

On the other hand, one hundred years later, the believers that humanity is basically good, that every nation has the right to self-determination, that all that is needed in a world organization (United Nations) to keep peace, have brought about the most violent century in modern times.

I am looking again at the "Faces of History" in *Time*. How many of these people tried to shape and improve the world? Presidents, leaders, statesmen, and plain citizens. How many have succeeded? The twin fools—those who predict the future, and those who judge the past from hindsight—continue to pontificate. The miracle of America is not always appreciated by foreigners and home-grown detractors. I am always puzzled by the ostensible contempt for our country voiced by those who consider themselves the intellectual elite, and therefore immune to criticism.

Perhaps they should see, as I do, how smoothly changes happen in these United States. I have just witnessed another passing of the torch, on January 20, 1993. Once again, we see how well this country really does work; it makes one appreciate its greatness.

I have been a fool myself, making predictions and hindsight assessments. It is time to end this book with a promise on my part to wait for fifty years before making predictions.



This sketch of the family tree was made to celebrate the wedding anniversary of Lina and Sam, at the center of the picture. to the upper left are Leon and Laura Tennenbaum; upper right are Bessie and Solomon Horowitz.

To the lower left of Samuel are Edith and Harris Shapiro. To their left is Mark Shapiro, and next to him, Ron Helmer and Lynn Shapiro Helmer. Below them are their three children, Daniel Helmer, David Helmer (held by his mother), and Rebecca Helmer.

To the right of Lina Tennenbaum is Selma with her husband, Jack Rossen. Below, Michael Rossen, his wife Kate Trost and their daughter, Elaina Trost Rossen. to their left is David Knill, Deborah (Rossen) and their son, Ari. to the left of them at the bottom are Barry Rossen and his wife, Dani.

Right and left refer to the corners of the page as marked, not to anatomical right and left of individuals in the sketch.

Appendix

A selection of letters to various publications with commentaries on topical issues

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

November 1986

I was most interested in Paul Seabury's "Yalta and the Neoconservatives" [August]. . . .

I cannot accept the argument put forth by Theodore Draper that the Soviet occupation of Poland was a *fait accompli* before Yalta. Until 1944 I lived in Poland within the borders covered by the Yalta agreement. My property was initially confiscated by the Soviets in 1939; subsequently after the German invasion, I hid among Poles to escape the Nazis. This may be a worm's-eye view, but I recorded the following incident in the diary I kept throughout this period; it indicates that the Soviets were not at all sure they would prevail and dominate Poland.

The incident took place in a factory that had been nationalized by the Soviets in 1939. I wrote in early 1941:

> The head bookkeeper of the trust summoned me and ordered me to revise all the inventories taken during the nationalization which had been based on prewar prices, with the zloty on a par with the ruble. The total figure amounted to over two million rubles, but the bookkeeper made us reduce this sum to five hundred thousand. I am at a loss to understand what this means. Perhaps the Russians expect to have to compensate us for the confiscated properties in some distant future.

The Soviets, it appeared, were afraid that if the Western powers won the war, they would not countenance the deal the Soviets had made with the Nazis in the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact, which had been strongly denounced in the West. The Soviets were evidently preparing to compromise with Allied disapproval.

Soon after, in June 1941, the Germans invaded Russia and the views of Churchill and Roosevelt diverged. In 1941, we still believed that once America entered the war, Hitler would be defeated, and Poland would not only be restored to its prewar boundaries, but would be enlarged by the addition of eastern Pomerania and Silesia, territories to which it had an historic claim.

But the mood of the Poles changed when, after suffering reverses in the first two years of war, the Rad Army pushed back the Germans, and in the summer of 1944 once again occupied eastern Poland. The Red Army stopped almost exactly at the Curzon line, east of the Vistula, enabling the Germans to annihilate the underground Polish army then fighting in Warsaw. President Roosevelt, in spite of Churchill's entreaties, refused to give help to the Poles. Assistance to the Poles at that time might have helped establish a viable Polish armed force and might therefore have upset the Yalta agreement, which had been reached only a few months earlier.

Some time before that, on October 28, 1943, I noted in my diary:

> As we hear of Russian successes on the front our house becomes full of gloom. Our Polish hosts are showing great anguish, since the future of Poland is uppermost in their minds. I suspect that Poland is not the Allies' primary concern. We all fear that Poland's fate already has been sealed in Teheran. The Polish underground press is recording shrilly that the political situation looks very dark for the Poles. There is a great disillusionment with Churchill and Roosevelt, and Stalin is being attacked directly and viciously.

The premonition of the Poles proved to be tragically correct, although they did not give full credit to Churchill for his efforts on their behalf. At Yalta, the Curzon line was accepted by Roosevelt as the future border between Russia and Poland, although that was never its original intent.

The Curzon line was proposed by Lord Curzon, a former Viceroy of India who had been called back from retirement to serve as England's Foreign Secretary. His experience with European affairs was limited. The line, which included territories never before part of Russia, was to serve as an *armistice line* between the Russian and Polish armies, never as a *border.* This was understood by both sides. . . .

There is another strong indication that even after Yalta Stalin was not sure of the future of the disputed territories. In the fall of 1944, with the end of the war still not in sight, Stalin rushed to resettle Poles from eastern Poland in the then very narrow sliver of liberated Poland. For reasons still unclear, Jews, as well as many Ukrainians who had converted to Roman Catholicism and thus had "become Poles," were also encouraged to register for repatriation and were permitted to leave. Although trains were extremely scarce during the war, they were put in service for the registrants. We left the Ukraine on one such train and were struck by the absence of the usual thorough check by the secret police. It seemed to us at the time that there was an agenda to get the Poles out of that part of the territory as quickly as possible. . . .

Far from being a myth, Yalta has become a catastrophic reality, a colos-

sal blunder, perhaps the worst of this century. The Yalta agreement is the hinge from which the iron curtain hangs. It was the precursor of the Berlin Wall and the Brezhnev Doctrine. It has caused the enslavement not only of the Poles but also of the Czechs and Hungarians and all the other nationalities trapped behind impenetrable borders.

Is the fear of Soviet might a reason to defend Roosevelt? With this logic we had better prepare for future Yaltas in Central and South America, in Africa, in the Middle East, and everywhere Soviet interests and ours might collide.

Samuel L. Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

June 1988

During my last visit to Israel, I was again reassured by the sight of Jews carrying arms. I only wished that we, the Jews of Europe, had had arms when we were mercilessly and methodically slaughtered, while the uncaring world looked on.

Upon my return, I was shaken out of my complacency by the organized riots in Gaza and the West Bank, but even more so by the outpouring of invective from Jews, directed against Israel. (Attacks from non-Jews come to me, a survivor, as no surprise. . . .)

Your symposium is timely and very much needed. The responses restored, to some degree, my trust in the basic integrity of American Jews, if not in the wisdom of some of their so-called leaders. There were no surprises in the names of the moralists and op-ed writers who spoke out publicly against Israel. Have these Jeremiahs on the Hudson—the rabbis, social leaders, *apparatchicks* running the organizations, film-makers, and others without a discernible label—forgotten the lessons of Jewish history? . . .

They forget that Israel is not America. True, the majority, if not all, of these moralists are also against any effort by this country to defend its (and their) rights by force. Still, America is a mighty country which will survive their attacks. But when they call for Israel's surrender they forget that Israel, a tiny country surrounded by hordes of implacable enemies in wait for their version of the Final Solution, may not survive. . . .

I can feel compassion for the young Arab boys and girls who are sent to be maimed and sometimes killed by their insidious elders, but I must also remember that those who throw stones today will be ready to arrange for tomorrow's *Kristallnacht*. . . .

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

June 1988

. . . It would be comforting to be able to assume without reservations that the majority of American Jews are for Israel, as Norman Podhoretz maintains. While I make no pretense to scientific accuracy, in my forty years in this country I have arrived at an unhappy conclusion. Yes, American Jews, most of them, *are* for Israel, but too many of them are in the "I'm so sorry for them" category. They assuage their consciences with donations to the United Jewish Appeal. . . .

Even with this sympathy, we must remember that the aims and policies of Israeli Jews and American Jews are not identical, or even parallel; in many instances, they are actually divergent. . . . For example, American Jews were opposed to most of the domestic and foreign policies of President Reagan, who was seen in Israel as the best friend that country had ever had in the White House. It became clear to me in the course of a visit to Israel shortly before the American election that, given the chance, the majority of Israelis would vote overwhelmingly for the Republicans. American Jews, on the other hand, gave 65 percent of their votes to the Democratic contender and the Democratic platform, disregarding the fact that the party was in the grip of individuals and groups who are not necessarily friends of the Jewish state.

This divergence of opinion had to come to a head sooner or later. . . . but it is tragic that the gulf between Israeli and American Jews should be widening at a time when the world's opinion of Israel is at an all-time low, and the very existence of the Jewish state is at stake. . . .

Samuel L. Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

May 1992

Norman Podhoretz showed his usual perspicacity in assessing the present status of American-Israeli relations.

Israel and its American supporters have been stunned by the contrast between the friendliness of the Reagan administration and the hostility of the Bush–Baker team. This hostility was not so evident in the first two years of the present administration. During the Gulf War and in the period just preceding it, American-Israeli relations seemed almost amicable, for the Bush administration needed Israel's cooperation in holding together the fragile alliance. In addition, there was the belated recognition that without the Begin government's destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, the Gulf invasion might not have been possible. Since the war, however, and the disintegration of Soviet treaties with the Arabs, Israel has become an obstacle . . . to the Bush–Baker goal of maintaining cordial relations with the Arab world, and particularly with Saudi Arabia, which in some ways now dictates American foreign policy in the Middle East. . . .

Instead of an Arab–Israeli negotiation, the situation has now turned into a contest between Israel and the Bush administration, just as the Arabs had hoped. . . .

There can be no denying the immense difficulties in the way of a solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict, with its irreconcilable differences, deep-rooted hatreds, and 50 years of warfare. Bush and Baker do deserve some credit (possibly even a future Nobel Peace Prize), since the adversaries are at least talking about talking. Yet even while we acknowledge the importance of this diplomatic achievement, it is difficult to understand why the Bush administration has chosen this time to revert to the Eisenhower diplomacy of exerting unnecessary pressure on Israel, the only country in the region that genuinely desires peace. . . .

Samuel L. Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

. . . There are many plausible explanations for what happened in the Israeli elections, including . . . , among other things, the fact that Likud and Shamir had alienated the United States, Israel's prime ally. Israel could ill afford to continue having at the head of its government a man so utterly disliked by the American President and his Secretary of State. Nor could it risk losing support among American Jews, badly shaken by the American–Israeli rift. . . .

By contrast, Labor managed quite cleverly. For one thing, it changed its image so that socialism became a dirty word never to be heard during the campaign. The dovish Shimon Peres was replaced as party leader by the hawkish Rabin, and voters were reminded of the quality of the latter's leadership during the 1967 war and his strong performance during the early stages of the *intifada*. . . .

At this juncture, it remains to be seen whether Rabin will rise to the demands of change without endangering the vital interests of the country, and whether he will be able to distance himself from the extremists within the Labor party and among the allies in the coalition. . . .

Samuel L. Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

TO THE EDITOR OF TIME:

February 4, 1985

For more than 20 years, with some notable exceptions, I have found your reporting accurate and fair. I was therefore disappointed with your defense in the Sharon affair. To this lawyer it reads: guilty, with an explanation.

Sam Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

September 18, 1989

Fifty years ago, on September 17, 1939, I watched the Soviet army invade my hometown in eastern Poland, driving the final nail into the coffin of the independence of that nation. Now, from the safety of my adopted country, I watch as the Poles are ready to repay the favor by dislodging one of the cotter pins holding the Soviet empire together. For those in Poland and those who fled Soviet occupation, it is time to rejoice and hope.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

December 12, 1990

After Governor Jim Florio raised the tax on toilet paper, irate New Jerseyites taunted him by wrapping themselves in this precious commodity. Such taxes have been with us since antiquity. When Emperor Vespasian was asked to justify placing a tax on public urinals, he answered, "*Pecunia non olet*" (Money does not smell). Take heart, Mr. Florio. Vespasian is hailed as one of the greatest Emperors of all time and the herald of the Golden Age of the Roman Empire.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

TO THE EDITOR OF METRO WEST:

October 11, 1990

The President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, commented recently on the "crude exploitation" by Saddam Hussein of American media channels, which have been putting themselves unreservedly at his disposal.

Reporters are hopping all over themselves to find whom to interview.

Everybody has been on the tube. From Hussein himself to his deputy; to his prime minister; to his generals; to ambassadors; to his stooge, the kingling of Jordan; to his ministers; to all and sundry terrorists; to store owners; to domino players; to urchins in the street; in fact to everybody and anybody within reach of a microphone or a tape recorder. Utterances are microscopically deciphered and interpreted.

A question persists: Why was the camel left out?

After all, the camel has been there before the oil, and will be there, after oil disappears, and nobody, but nobody has interviewed the camel.

Camels have rights too.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

November 8, 1990

The anti-Israel bias of *The New York Times* is a well-known fact. Any comment on their paper's reporting and editorials on that score seems redundant.

However, both the reporting and editorial reaction to the tragic events on the Temple Mount demand special scrutiny. Joel Brinkley, the correspondent of the newspaper in Israel, in the valiant tradition of his predecessors, relies exclusively on opinions and draws conclusions from either sources hostile to Israel (*Al Hag*, the propaganda outlet of the PLO), from leftists guided by partisan politics (*Ha'aretz*, the voice of Israel's Labor party) or, finally, from individuals and self-appointed tiny groups of disgruntled intellectuals, with no following in Israel, to speak of (B'Tselem).

On the basis of such information, he presumes that the tragedy occurred because the Temple Mount Faithful, an insignificant religious group, was marching on the site of the Aksa Temple to lay a groundstone for a Jewish temple to be erected there, His report has been accepted, indiscriminately in the editorials, and, to no one's surprise, by the two indomitable Op-Ed contributors, Anthony Lewis and Tom Wicker.

The follow-up story by Brinkley could be considered hilarious, if it weren't sad. His report on Israel's commission appointed to investigate the tragedy is captioned: "Israeli Panel Faults Police Commanders, but Sees Provocation." In fact, the report explains and justifies that action of the police unit on the spot. The commission's verdict puts the blame on Arab provocateurs, muzzeins calling for holy Jihad, on the rioters who stormed the undermanned police station and stoned the innocent worshippers below. Before you come to the heart of Brinkley's story, you are ready to accept that the commission has found Israel guilty.

The *Times* did not stop there. In its October 28 issue, it reprints a singularly vicious cartoon, implying that Israel negotiates with Palestinians in the morgue.

The *Times* is as tenacious as it is wicked, a persistent foe, not lastly by its influence on the American–Jewish establishment. It also offers a safe niche for the doves who come fluttering from Israel, from Abba Eban to Uri Avneri. The two lonely swallows, William Safire and A.M. Rosenthal, unfortunately, do not make spring.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

July 4, 1991

In an op-ed article in *The New York Times* (Does the UN belong at the table? June 13), Abba Eban recommends acceptance by Israel of the "sym-

bolic" presence of a UN observer at the forthcoming conference with the Arabs.

There is no such animal as a symbolic presence. If that were all that was required, symbolism would be served by hanging the picture of Javier Perez deCuellar over the conference table. If James Baker really believed in the impartiality of the UN or the need for a merely symbolic UN presence, he would not have assured Shamir that he would stop UN interference should it occur during the proceedings.

The arguments are vague for the claim that Israel would derive political and economic benefits from admitting the UN to the table. There is no Arab state that has yet indicated readiness to sit down with the Jewish state. On the contrary, the Arabs have just added more than 100 companies to their blacklist for doing business with Israel. The absorption of the Soviet and Ethiopian immigrants is seen by the Arabs almost as a *casus belli.* Israel has made a major concession by accepting a role for the European community at the planned conference.

Neither are other assertions by Eban supported by facts, unfortunately. He contends that the 1939 resolution which admitted Israel to membership transcends the 1975 Zionism is racism resolution. Aside from the questionable legal point that an earlier resolution takes preference over a later one, the obscene resolution remains on the books and no serious steps have been taken to rescind it.

Eban brings up the ceasefire resolutions in 1967 and 1973 as proof of UN benevolence toward Israel. He fails to mention that these resolutions were passed only after the Arab armies were decisively defeated.

Again contrary to Eban's contention that the ceasefire resolution in 1973 curtailed the war to Israel's benefit, the ceasefire resolution was imposed on Israel one day earlier to save the Egyptian army from annihilation by Gen. Sharon's forces.

Eban disagrees that the vast majority of Israelis see the United Nations as Israel's adversary. I never met a single Israeli who had anything good to say about the United Nations. No secretary of the UN was ever friendly toward Israel.

The Jerusalem Post has published interesting statistics. They reveal that the time when many dangerous confrontations faced the world in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America at the height of the cold war, 30 percent of the Security Council meetings and a third of its resolutions were devoted to Israel. The Jewish state was singled out with "expressions of concern," with warnings and condemnations 87 times. Eban calls this a "balanced" approach. It was balanced all right—balanced against tiny Israel.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

September 26, 1991

After the German defeat in World War II in 1946, I was lucky to escape from a pogrom in the city of Kielce. The war ended too late to prevent the killing of Six Million Jews; the Polish "pogromchicks" were trying to complete Hitler's work and killed the few Jews who remained.

We have witnesses an incipient pogrom in an American city, New York, once the haven of Jews. The assassination of a German by a Jew in Paris in 1938 was used by the Nazis as an excuse for *Kristallnacht* pogroms in Germany. The tragic, accidental death of a black child is being used as an excuse for another "Final Solution," another *Kristallnacht.* An innocent Jew has been killed by a black racist mob; the cry "Death to the Jews," can be heard in Crown Heights.

The Nazi Goebbles, with his racist themes, has been dead for 46 years, but he is not buried yet. Leonard Jeffries, a putative political scientist, is perpetuating Goebbles' views, and, just as his infamous predecessor, blames all the evils that plague the black community on Jews.

Some black leaders are nodding their heads in agreement with Jeffries' words and explanations for the actions of the black mobs.

Where are our elected leaders, members of Congress, spokespersons for the Jewish community? Why the deafening silence? Too late for the usual excuse of *Quieta non movere* (do not stir trouble). The trouble is brewing now.

Jewish leaders and others must not repeat the tragic mistake of the Sol Blooms, who remained silent during the Holocaust in order not to disturb the reelection of Roosevelt to his fourth term. They must forget their former allegiances, the elections of 1992, and speak out loud and clear against the rabble-rousers before we have Kielces in this country.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

April 2, 1992

The first round of negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors ended, as expected, inconclusively. Israel had offered concrete proposals for self-rule on the West Bank, but the Palestinians merely postured, hoping for still greater American pressure on Israel.

They may have overreached. They were slapped on the wrist by a nameless senior U.S official who is quoted as saying, "The Palestinians are more focused on the media than on negotiations."

During the first phase of negotiation, the Bush administration acted as it were a surrogate for the Arab side. In pressuring Israel, Secretary of State James Baker took an unrelenting position on the $10 billion loan guarantees requested by Israel to help in the resettlement of Jews leaving the disin-

tegrating former Soviet empire, fearful of being targeted by ultra-nationalistic groups.

Making loan guarantees conditional on Israel's halting building in the disputed territories distorted the humanitarian motive behind the request and cynically linked it to an explosive political issue.

The discussion of the future status of Jerusalem was deliberately excluded from this phase of negotiation, a condition accepted by all parties, and endorsed by the Americans. However, the issue suddenly appeared in a strange confluence of coincidences.

Faisal Husseini, the head of the Palestinian delegation, requested an immediate debate on the status of the city. Simultaneously a "senior official" of the State Department was widely reported as saying that approval of the loan guarantees was linked to Israel's freezing building in the eastern part of Jerusalem.

Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY) revealed that during a conversation between Baker and the Democratic Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT), Baker threatened to penalize Israel by deducting money spent on building settlements from the regular aid given to Israel.

Strange coincidences indeed! Only after a strong representation by Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, were Baker's and the "senior official's" statements denied. Also denied was a report that Baked used an obscene phrase in reference to American Jews.

It may seem an exaggeration, but one cannot help but think of parallels with Germany in the 1930s, in appearances of both rabble rousers like David Duke and skilled demagogues like Patrick Buchanan. Now, as then, an economic depression is used as a springboard for anti-Semitic outbursts such as Buchanan's questioning whether Jews are "real" Americans. Duke may be dismissed, but Buchanan may not. Bush, under pressure from Buchanan, is unlikely to soften his pro-Arab stand.

There is no secret that Bush does not like Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

While regretting Shimon Peres' departure from the leadership of the Labor Party, the administration hopes to see Rabin, his successor—reportedly amenable to territorial concessions—as a strong opponent to Shamir and his Likud Party in the forthcoming Israeli elections.

On the Democratic side, two influential members of Congress came out in favor of the administration's position linking guarantees for the loan with halting construction in the territories. The leading contenders for the Democratic nomination, obviously cognizant of the truism that foreign policy issues are poison, had stayed out of the debate until forced to take a stand during the quest for Jewish votes in Florida.

It seems that the Democratic party takes the Jewish vote for granted, while Baker's alleged expletive surfaced in the contact of his discounting

the Jewish vote and indicating its insignificance in the forthcoming American elections.

It is high time for the Jewish community to dispute these "truths" forcefully.

The first step has already been taken by the united leadership of Jewish organizations, which unanimously resolved to oppose linking loan guarantees with the settlements.

Our leaders in congress, predominantly Democrats, must convince the leadership of the party that the Jewish vote cannot be taken for granted.

On the other side, the Republican party must be made aware that in a close election (which appears to be developing), the Jewish vote may be a decisive factor particularly in the large cities.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

July 10, 1992

The outcome of the last elections came as no surprise; however the margin of Yitzhak Rabin's victory is startling. Few will question that is a personal victory for him. The exodus has begun. Yitzhak Shamir and Moshe Arens have declared retirement.

There are many additional plausible explanations for this result, which represents a compound of Likud's mistakes, of Labor's correct moves, and of the passing of time. Labor has been forgiven.

The cries in the Knesset after the 1973 war, *Habayta* Golda (Go home, Golda), have been forgotten.

Heard in Israel now is instead, *Habayta* Shamir.

His adamant stand in the peace negotiations was a major reason.

Likud's other mistakes were many. Israel and Shamir alienated the United States, its prime ally. Israel could ill afford to have as the head of the government a man so utterly disliked by our president and secretary of state. Israel could not survive without the support of the American Jews who were being shaken by the American-Israeli rift.

Another of Likud's mistakes was pursuing the request of the $10 billion loan guarantees in spite of the evidence of President George Bush's animosity. Reliance on Congress was a doubtful proposition in an election year when Congress was particularly unpopular and furthermore was facing an electorate hostile to any foreign aid.

The failure to obtain the guarantees may have been the fatal blow to any chance of a Likud victory. Contributing to these errors was the retention of David Levy as foreign minister, a position for which he was not qualified.

Internally one problem was the failure to understand the values of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union whose long entrenched dependence on a government for solving employment and housing problems evidently superseded their rejection of socialism.

However the task of finding jobs for the overqualified immigrants will no doubt haunt the new government as well.

Clever moves changed the image of Labor in the eyes of the electorate on the other hand. Socialism became a "dirty word," never to be heard during the campaign.

The too pliable Shimon Peres was replaced as party leader by the hawkish Rabin and the appeal to the voters was centered on the latter's performance during the intifada and victorious 1967 war. It was as it were, Rabin versus Shamir, not labor versus Likud, with no subtle emphasis on the former's good image in Washington and in the hearts of American Jewish leaders.

At this juncture it remains to be seen whether Rabin will rise to the demand for change without hurting the vital interests of the country.

Will he be able to distance himself from the embraces of the Labor extremists both within and without the party? Perhaps he will show real statesmanship by rejecting the stifling demands of the religious parties and build a partnership with all segments of society including some from the defeated Likud.

As for the Arabs, it would be a major mistake to consider Rabin's victory as their triumph. Nothing in Rabin's past gives credence to such an assumption. It is obvious that the Arabs have temporized their moves in the expectation of Likud's defeat.

Now that this has happened, will they face reality, take advantage of Rabin's flexibility or will they prove Abba Eban's remark that the Arabs always find a way to waste an opportunity?

In August of 1988, at the beginning of the intifada, when Israel was vilified in this country and abroad, I wrote a letter to the *Jerusalem Post*, international edition, which was published on August 27, 1988:

"There is . . . one fact on which both friends and detractors seem to agree—that Israel is a sturdy democracy. When time is ripe. . . in a democratic way, through elections. . . the will of the majority. . . will be expressed and carried out."

Samuel L. Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

TO THE EDITOR OF THE JERUSALEM POST:

August 27, 1988

When I returned from my last visit to Israel, I was again reassured by the sight of Jews carrying arms. I only wished that we had arms when we were mercilessly and methodically slaughtered by the Nazis while the uncaring world looked on. However, I was shaken out of my complacency by the organized riots, but even more so by the outpouring of invective coming from Jews, and directed against Israel. There was no surprise in the names of the moralists and Op-Ed writers. Attacks from non-Jews come to me, a survivor, as no surprise.

I remember Munich. I am depressed and angry.

Still, some responses to the attacks restored in me, to some degree, my trust in the basic integrity of American Jews, if not in the wisdom of their so-called leaders. Have these Jeremiahs on the Hudson, the rabbis, social leaders, *apparatchicks* running the organizations, film-makers, and others of no discernible label, forgotten the lessons of Jewish history? Have they forgotten Munich?

For many of them *the* Holocaust seems to be a closed book that should, nay, must be put behind us. They have forgotten that we have been victims of holocausts for 2,000 years. We have been murdered by Roman emperors, Christian kings, Moslem caliphs, Crusaders, Torquemadas of various persuasions, Russia tzars and anyone who felt that it was time to "kill the Jews." Hitler's Final Solution was only the last effort to erase the name of the Jew, as a nation or religion, from the face of the earth.

The Jews forget that Israel is not America. True, the majority, if not all, of these moralists are equally opposed to any effort by their country to defend by force its and *their* rights. America is a mighty country and will survive their attacks. But when they call for Israel's surrender, they forget that Israel, a tiny country, is surrounded by hordes of implacable enemies, in wait for their version of the Final Solution, and it may not survive.

At this 50th anniversary of Munich, these people should be reminded of the miseries that appeasement has brought to the peoples of the world and the fact that it came close to annihilating our people. They believe that they, and only they possess all the wisdom, and in their self-righteousness, they assume the right to dictate to those who daily confront disaster and death.

Appeasement has become a dirty word, and even these moralists, who are in their hearts bound by it, do not want to be saddled with it. Slogans were invented and changed. "Peace in our time" was replaced by "Peace at any price." When this became unpalatable, a more appealing phrase had to be found. "Give peace a chance" has become the newest call. Who could resist that heart-melting cry, how convenient to hide behind it. Give up the

"territories," give it all up, who needs it. This is the battle-cry of the new appeasers.

There is at least one fact on which both friends and detractors seem to agree—that Israel is a sturdy democracy. When the time is ripe, a national concensus will be found, in a democratic way, through elections. The will of the majority of the Israelis will be carried out.

The preachers of morality, self-hating Jews, seekers of headlines can look back to a long line of predecessors, from Josephus Flavius in antiquity, through the Shabbetai Zvis in the dark ages, to the post-enlightenment Heinrich Heines and Karl Marxes, and closer in time and America to the Walter Lippmans and Hollywood's Woody Allens.

Like every human being, I feel compassion with the little boys and girls who are sent by their insidious elders to be maimed and killed, but I must remember that those who throw stones today will be ready to stage *Kristallnachts* tomorrow.

No we cannot forget or allow others to forget MUnich.

Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ

October 6, 1990

Two proponents of peace at any price have admitted errors in judgment about the Israeli position with regard to the West Bank.

Messrs Dershowitz and Rosensaft, in a remarkable *al het* before the coming Yom Kippur, admitted in articles in the *Post* that they had been wrong in advising Israel to withdraw. Their admission, which hopefully will be followed by others, here and Israel, puts an end to the policies of Peres, Eban *et al* and their reliance on promises by King Hussein and Arafat.

Unfortunately, it took Saddam's invasion of Kuwait to make these peace-makers face the realities of the Mideast.

Sooner or later, Saddam will play the Israeli card, as suggested recently here by Mr. Buchanan. Let us hope that the liberal moralists will maintain their present position when confronted with another peace offensive offering the sacrifice of Israel in order to save Saddam.

Samuel L. Tennenbaum
West Orange, NJ



Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum is a Holocaust survivor of extraordinary vigour and excellent memory. . . (he) writes well and reveals himself as a keen observer.

Jerusalem Post

Tennenbaum's incredible passion for details. . . the volume should really be classified as an historical document. . . . There are remarkable descriptions of the hierarchy of the Soviet and Nazi conquerors.

Jewish News, Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Tennenbaum weaves the story of his family together with historical events. . . . He adds excerpts from a diary kept. . . while in hiding. . . that miraculously survived. . . about the extraordinary years he lived through and survived.

Jewish Advocate, Boston, MA

. . . Tennenbaum weaves the story of his family together with historical events. . . . He adds excerpts from a diary kept. . . while in hiding, as well as notes, photographs and documents that miraculously survived. . . through WWI, the Depression, Russian occupation. . . and the danger of German occupation in which the older parents and the majority of their friends and relatives perished. . . about the extraordinary years he lived through and survived.

Sylvia Rothschild

ISBN 0-88400-163-6