Leon Glazer

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Cracow
Poland
Interviewer: Jolanta Jaworska
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Leon Glazer has lived for 30 years with his wife on a residential estate in Cracow, in a three-room apartment that is clean, neat and bereft of any superfluous clutter. He says that since his children have moved out there is even too much room in the apartment. During our conversations Mr. Glazer often has to stop and think about dates, names and events. But with names of military formations he never hesitates: their names roll off his tongue, even though he may last have seen them as a child during a 3rd May parade (Polish Constitution Day) in his home town of Bielsko. Mr. Glazer is very short, holds himself erect, and wears large spectacles. He spent 20 years in the army as a political officer and 15 in schools as a teacher. He has the feeling that neither of these careers were ones he would have chosen - in a way he was forced into them - but he says that teaching would have appealed to him more.

My family background

My name is Leon Glazer and I was born on 13th June 1923 in Bielsko. I was born Glaser, but I had to change my father's surname immediately after the war because German surnames were compulsorily, automatically Polonized. [The Polonization of German-sounding names was part of the de- Germanification after World War II.] 1. I always went by the name of Leon, even before the war, in school and everywhere, but I think my given name is Lazar.

I don't remember my great-grandparents. I don't remember my grandparents either. Perhaps I was born too late. My sister was from 1912, my brother 1914, and I was 1923, so when I was a child my grandparents may already have been dead. My parents mentioned their parents, but not much. Generally speaking I can say only that I think my grandparents on my mother's side lived in Kamionka near Oswiecim. From my father's side they lived in Plaza near Chrzanow [approx. 50 km from Cracow]. Both families lived in the country and were farmers.

As far as I know my grandparents weren't religious - on my mother's side more so than on my father's side, but I can't say anything more precise. There were other Jews living in Plaza too and, like my grandparents, they had farms. There wasn't a synagogue there, because it was very close to Chrzanow. It took perhaps an hour or so by cart.

If I remember rightly the maiden name of my grandmother on my father's side was Kupermann. I don't really know how well-off that family in Plaza was. Even then my father's sister lived there. I don't remember what her name was. I often went to Plaza with my parents. I remember taking milk and other food products to Chrzanow with someone from that family. Then we would sell them there at the market. I rarely went to Plaza on vacation. I've never been to my grandparents' grave. Presumably my grandparents on my father's side are buried in Plaza. As for my mother's parents, I don't know, but I think in Oswiecim. I don't know how it is there now - the Jewish cemetery in Oswiecim, whether it's there or not. [Editor's note: the Jewish cemetery in Oswiecim is still in existence; since 1980 it is regularly tidied and renovated.]

It was not far from Kamionka to Plaza and my parents are sure to have met somewhere around there. How, it's hard for me to say. I only know that my parents' marriage was arranged. Before the war that's how it was. Always.

My mother was called Brejndl, but on my birth certificate she is entered as Brejndl Bronislawa, nee Wetstein. I had that birth certificate reissued in 1947 in Bielsko with the help of two witnesses who knew me before the war and certified to who I am. All the time I only use the one name of my mother, Bronislawa. Actually, I don't know where that Polish name came from, but it had to be there for the reissuing of the birth certificate: I gave the Polish name and they found the old birth certificates in the registry office and wrote both names in.

I remember my mother's year of birth but not the exact date. She was born in 1888 in Kamionka near Oswiecim. She simply kept house. She was a little taller than Father and plump. Well, not too much, but plump, even so. She was dark haired, had mid-length hair, because long wasn't in fashion - that's what I think. She didn't wear a wig. From what I know German was spoken in Mother's house, like in Father's house too, in fact.

Father's name was Izaak, but as in Mother's case, he is recorded in my birth certificate as Izaak Ignacy. There must have been the same story with his first names. I know, but I don't know why, that my father had some other surname - Rosner. But I don't have any documents that could confirm that. I don't remember either what my father's family in Plaza was called: Rosner or Glaser. But I think it was Glaser, because they were nicknamed 'Szklarz.' [Both, the German Glaser and the Polish Szklarz mean Glazier.] In Chrzanow, when you brought milk from the country to the shops in the Square, I remember people saying: 'We're going to see Szkolrz'. Or maybe 'Szklarz'? And 'szklarz' in German is 'Glaser.'

Father was born in Plaza in 1887. He was short, with a moustache; he didn't wear sidelocks. I remember him as already bald. In 1939 he was 52. Father took everything calmly. I don't know, perhaps I'm similar in character to my father? Mother was more explosive, she ruled more than Father, too. There was no division of roles between them. Father, if he had any money, gave it, and Mother spent it and was in charge. She was very explosive, like - in relation to us children, no, but in relation to Father - yes. There were always arguments at home, but only because there was poverty. Yes, really, we didn't have this, we didn't have that.

Growing up

My parents had three children: me, my older brother Maksymilian, and my sister Paulina, who was the eldest of us. My sister was eleven years older than me, and my brother nine. I remember that my brother was very tall, slim, with a small moustache. My sister was of medium height. I was the smallest.

My sister and brother went to the German gymnasium in Bielsko, with German the language of instruction. I know that my brother repeated the last grade twice. He didn't pass Greek and Latin. In May 1939 he took his school- leaving exam and again he didn't pass. Because he was supposed to be doing his school-leaving exam, his draft was deferred. We didn't read too much at home, but I remember that my brother and sister did - they were always studying.

I remember that my sister gave private French lessons. She didn't have another job, but I think she was looking. My sister had some fiancé, who she was supposed to be marrying, but it went on and on so long, and that was the end. But I don't know what exactly happened between them, I only know that until the war she kept in close touch with him. My brother didn't have a fiancée.

My relations with my brother and sister were very good. There were no quarrels as such or anything, and because I was the youngest, they always helped me out with this and that. My parents too, as far as they could afford. But later, once I started working, I didn't need any financial help. I managed somehow for my own needs.

There was such a difference in years between us that I don't remember much of those sister and brother relations. I can't say much about my brother and sister either in terms of their company. But I remember that in my Jewish school a friend of my sister's taught Polish. Rauchman, she was called. I also know that my brother had a good friend. His father had a shoe shop in Biala. Barber, he was called, I think. Both the friend and the shop.

My parents moved to Bielsko after their wedding. My father was a tailor by trade. He had a tailor's workshop in Bielsko. Literally 100 meters from the square, there was this small street, Podcienie, it was called, if I'm not mistaken. You went into his shop off the street; there were some shops next to it. I think the shop was simply called 'Izaak Glaser.'

At first my father must have been successful, because I remember a tailor's workshop run by Father separately with a few apprentices. I don't remember how many of them there were. But there were sewing machines, not one - several. And then there were these irons that were put in a special oven. I remember the workshop, only I don't remember those good times of Father's. I remember the workshop when it must have been vacated, because unfortunately Father had to give it up, presumably because of the high rents. And so he was left alone with one sewing

machine.

From the end of the 1920s, I don't remember the year exactly, we lived on what had been Wyzwolenia Square, and was afterwards Zwirki i Wigury Square. And what it's called now? The same too, I think [at present Zwirki i Wigury Square]. Our first apartment, which I don't remember, but where I was born, was on Zamkowa Street.

I do remember the apartment on Wyzwolenia Square well. We lived in this house, first on the second floor, or the first - well, it's gone clean out of my head. We had two rooms and a kitchen for five people. Father's sewing machine stood in the kitchen. It was a normal apartment, without any luxuries, without a bathroom. At that time there weren't any such luxurious apartments. Well, and anyway, even if there were, for us at least, they weren't very accessible for financial reasons. We occupied that apartment for a few years I think.

In 1935 or 1936 we were evicted into the attic - for non-payment. We had literally one little room and a kitchen. The sewing machine was in the kitchen. We slept some of us in the kitchen and the rest in the little room. All the apartments we lived in were rented. All in all, Father did very poorly after that. Fewer customers, competition, and then there was a terrible crisis [the economic crisis in Poland 1929-1935: decline in industrial output, mass unemployment, fall in investment, inflation, a crisis in agriculture].

I was born before the crisis, but I remember the crisis. I remember how much money lay about on the floor in the apartment. Small change, it was. There was an exchange of money under Grabski [Wladyslaw Grabski (1874- 1938): politician, twice prime minister of Poland, economist. Widely known as the author of the 1924 currency reform]. At that time there was a terrible drop in the standard of living. At least for the poor people, and we didn't have any riches. Father kept us with the work of his hands.

And so that was why there was that poverty. But that's not all. We were evicted from that room, too, towards the end of 1938, to a new block, but into the basement, on Pilsudskiego Street. I don't remember the number, but I could point out the house even today. And we lived in that basement until the outbreak of the war.

By that time there was very great poverty. Well, in any case there were so many of us that Father couldn't feed us. Father didn't have any Polish customers, only Jews, and poor Jews at that. I remember that he repaired clothes by turning them inside out. Everything was simply unstitched, the material turned inside out, and sewn back together again. It was mostly that kind of clothes that he sewed. For two years at least. That was the kind of customers he had.

In my opinion Jews in Bielsko made up more or less 20 percent. There were fewer Germans, if I'm not wrong, that would have been about 15 percent. Just in Bielsko, because Bielsko was separate and Biala was separate. There was just this bridge linking the two towns, or rather dividing them, and not linking. Cracow province - Biala, and Bielsko - Silesia province. [Editor's note: at present Bielsko-Biala; in 1922 Bielsko became part of the newly created autonomous Silesian province, and Biala was part of the Cracow province. In 1951 the two towns were joined, creating Bielsko- Biala].

My school years

Until I went to first grade I didn't do anything; I was at home. There was no preschool or anything like that. I don't remember anything from that time. I only remember from my time at school. I remember that very often I would be at Father's there, when he still had his own workshop and when he had those apprentices of his there. I went to a 7-grade Jewish school with Polish the language of instruction. I don't remember what the school was called, but it was in the center of town, not far from the synagogue.

I remember three teachers. My sister's friend, that Rauchman. She taught Polish. And our class teacher, Gross, taught history. In my view he was a good man. Not very tall, a bit severe. But I didn't have any particular problems at school, either with behavior or with learning. I remember the religious studies teacher too, Zipfer, he was called. Then I didn't have any favorite subjects, it was only later that my world view formed in any way, in every respect. After the war, I made it into higher education.

It was at that Jewish school that I met my three best friends. Unfortunately these were my friends: all factory owners' sons. I was the poorest. The only one who came from a poor family. Literally a poor one. But all in all I felt happy there, in Bielsko, until 1939, until I had to leave the town. Henryk Bribram was the son of a factory owner and his father had his own factory that made fittings and a villa on Cieszynska Street. I often used to go round his house and we would do our homework together. Fritz Rappaport lived on Blichowa and was also the son of a factory owner. His father had a textile factory. But my best friend in my class was Henryk Horowitz. His family was moderately rich, his father had his own company, I think, but I can't remember what kind. We played together with Henryk, because he lived near me, on the next street.

On Sundays we would go to Aleksandrowice to the swimming pool together. That was this village just outside town, so you went on foot, there was a Jewish cemetery in that village too [the cemetery is still there]. The pool was an outdoor one, and I think that in fact it was some Jews that had built it. A ticket cost perhaps 50 groszy, the same as a ticket to the movies. These girls that we had our eye on used to go there. We wanted to flirt with them, but somehow it didn't work, because we were still upstarts, we were 13, maybe 14. Our school wasn't co-educational. Boys separately, girls separately. That's why we only knew each other a bit, by sight.

There were swimming competitions at that swimming pool in Aleksandrowice that Horowitz and I very often went to, because Bielsko had a very good swimming team - Hakoah Bielsko. [Hakoah Bielsko: Jewish Zionist sports club founded in 1912. Financed by membership subscriptions (1 zloty in 1939), the proceeds from the annual Hakoah Balls, and subsidies from the Jewish Community Organization in Bielsko. The club had several sections: athletics, football, tennis, and a swimming section including water polo. It functioned until September 1939; the club's activities were not resumed after the war. In 1953 it was officially struck off the register of Polish associations and clubs.]

I remember two Jewish girls winning the Polish championships: Dawidowicz over 100 meter breast stroke, and Kandl over 200 meter freestyle. [From 15- 17 July 1939 the Polish swimming championships were held in Bielsko. Hakoah Bielsko was the only Jewish team taking part in those championships. The club became Polish swimming champions on that occasion. Kandl won 2 gold medals, for 100 and 200 m breast stroke. Trude Dawidowicz: 3 silver medals for 100 and 400 m breast stroke, and for 100 m backstroke.] We used to go to water polo matches too - Hakoah

Bielsko even played in the top league.

Horowitz even lent me a bike, because I didn't have one of my own. In the winter we used to go skiing. The tram went to Gypsy Wood, just outside Bielsko, you went a little way on foot and there are the mountains, the Beskid. And with Horowitz almost every Sunday in the winter we used to go skiing. I had my own skis, these two simple boards, nothing brand-name. As far as I remember, my parents bought me those in Dattner's sports shop on 3 Maja Street. My friends all had skis, so I begged my parents to buy me some too. But I don't think it was for any special occasion. And so we used to go to Gypsy Wood for the day skiing and come back. Yes, what I had, what my parents bought me, were those skis. What I could have. And so that was how I spent my childhood.

After finishing Jewish school we couldn't afford for me to go to high school. I was too young to go to work, too - I was 15. So I had to do what they called a 'department grade,' an 8th one, which still counted as elementary school. I don't know what the idea behind that whole school system was, because there was just one class there. It was a different school, a Polish one, where I studied with Poles, at 2 Pestalozzi Street - I think [Editor's note: after the war Mr. Glazer had problems having that '8th department grade' recognized, because there was officially no such class in the Polish school system, and Mr. Glazer had no papers to prove he had completed it. In order to graduate from elementary school, he had to pass an extra school year]. I remember that I was taught Polish by a man. I also remember him giving me a '2' [out of 5] for reciting 'Pan Tadeusz' [Polish national epic poem written by Adam Mickiewicz in 1832-1834]. Well, I hadn't learned it.

I went to religious studies in that 8th grade too - my own religion, once a week, still with Zipfer. I don't remember where those religious studies classes took place, but somewhere outside the Polish school. It was a democracy, apparently, and the rights of ethnic minorities and their own religions had to be recognized. So they sent me to those religious studies classes from school. When the Poles had their own religious studies, I simply went to mine. But I don't remember anything from those lessons, really. It didn't really interest me, you know how it is with religion... Anyway, I didn't practice all that much, I wasn't a devout Jew or anything. And over time I went to those religious studies classes more and more rarely. I have to say that personally I don't remember, in that 8th class, any jibes because I was Jewish. Either from the teachers or from the pupils.

As a young boy I liked going to the movies and to the theater. I was the youngest in the family and the 50 groszy for the ticket could always be found. And I went to the movies every week, yes, really, I didn't miss a single Polish film. The pre-war films that they sometimes show on television I know from before the war - I went to see them several times. German films were also shown quite often in Bielsko, with that well-known German actress, Dietrich [Marlene Dietrich (1901-1992)]. I remember I went to a film about Jews once. 'The ...' - what are those rich ones called? 'The Rothschild Family'? Yes. I don't remember who made it, or what language it was in. I remember that the movies were silent at first, and then later not any more [films with sound could be seen in Poland from 1931]. I still remember silent movies. The violinist who played the tunes...

I remember an actor from Bielsko Theater. He was called La Grange or something like that. A French name. A good actor, he was, that much I remember. I remember too that I went to this German operetta at the theater, 'Weisse Rosse' - you could translate that as 'White horse' [actually 'White steed']. I mostly went to the theater on my own. The theater was in the very center of town, near the railroad station. I used to stand in what they called the gallery. The standing room. At the

bottom, or right at the top. I don't even know what that theater's called [before the war the Municipal Theater, Teatr Miejski, now the Polish Theater, Teatr Polski].

In our house, on Wyzwolenia Square, no other Jews lived there. At least I don't remember any. It was mostly Germans that lived there. I don't remember what kind of people they were or what they did. Everyone in our family knew German very well. At home, on the street, at school and everywhere we used German most often. In Bielsko that was the official language if you like, or rather not the official one, just used very often. We knew Yiddish less well, although we sometimes used it at home as well. We used Polish most rarely. On the whole we didn't really have much to do with Poles. It was only later, at school, in that 8th grade, that I met Poles. But I didn't have any particular friends among them.

I didn't have any friends on our stairwell. Actually I had one bad acquaintance, perhaps not from the same stairwell but the courtyard, who afterwards, shortly before the war, tormented me a lot. He even pushed me over. 'Wait Hitler will come, and he'll show you!' - he literally said that. He was called Piotrowski, and his first name was some German name. He was a German with a Polish surname.

The Germans had their own pre-war senator. His name - Wiesner. [Wiesner was also the deputy mayor of Bielsko and the head of the German National Socialist Union that functioned in the Cieszyn part of Silesia from 1921.] After that I don't know what became of him, but presumably he became a Nazi activist somewhere or other. The German minority was active in the Hitlerjugend 2 - in Bielsko there was a regular, legal Hitlerjugend [Editor's Note: Mr. Glazer is probably thinking of the Jungdeutsche Partei in Polen (JDP), from 1930-1939 the main national Nazi political party of the German minority in Poland]. And that acquaintance of mine, who tormented me so much - Piotrowski - he was in the Hitlerjugend.

Neither Father nor Mother were interested in politics. I wasn't either, that much, but I remember that I used to go out of interest to the march- pasts on 3 Maja Street, because there were troops in Bielsko. [Editor's note: In Poland before World War II military parades and march-pasts were very popular. They were intended to reinforce the spirit of patriotism among Poles, who had only regained their national independence in 1918.] There were two units stationed in our town: the third Podhale Riflemen Regiment and the 21st PAL, Light Artillery Regiment [Pulk Artylerii Lekkiej]. March-pasts were frequent, I remember the ones for 11th November best 3.

And when it was Pilsudski's 4 name day there were always masses in the churches and in the synagogue. [In Catholic countries, name days are widely celebrated. The one for Jozef (Joseph), Pilsudski's first name, falls on 19th March.] And then Jews would come to the synagogue in Polish uniforms. Yes, except that unfortunately there weren't any officers among them. The situation before the war was such that Jews were taken into the army only as recruits; at most they could reach the rank of corporal 5. And that was all.

Before the war, there was in Bielsko - can I mention this, because it is important - with the rank of major, an ethnic Jew. Niemiec, I think his name was. He was a Jew, but he had changed his faith - become a convert, because otherwise he wouldn't have worked his way up to officer rank. Unfortunately up to corporal inclusive. And so a corporal would lead a group of Jews to the synagogue. And always, on holidays like Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah or other important holidays, Jewish soldiers would come to the synagogue commanded by a corporal.

We lived in this quarter, I don't know what it was called, but it was almost the center of Bielsko, near Blichowa Street. There, on that street, there were a lot of factories. The Endeks 6 were on that street, and the PPS party 7 also had its headquarters there. Somewhere a bit further on, the National Alliance 8. And there were always these scuffles between them, because there were a lot of Jews in the PPS.

I remember this one guy from the PPS, a lawyer, name of Gluecksman. His son was active in the PPS too; it was a PPS family altogether. After the war, the son, after changing his name, went around in Bielsko as Lieutenant- Colonel Gruda. And as for the skirmishes, I remember that the police would come in on horseback, even. I don't remember any fatalities, but that period stuck in my mind, because there were often things like that near us - like Jewish pogroms. In what sense? Pickets outside shops, broken windows - very often 9.

I remember demonstrations too. Before the war in particular the PPS would demonstrate. 'Work!', 'Bread!' - I remember the workers walking with these banners on 1st May [Labor Day]. And there was a bit of unemployment in Bielsko 10, not too much, perhaps, because there were all these factories everywhere, and in all there weren't so many residents. Bielsko and Biala together numbered perhaps 50,000 residents. So unemployment perhaps wasn't all that great, but there were large differences in pay.

In Bielsko there wasn't a Jewish quarter as such. The Jews lived all over Bielsko, but in 1939 this Jewish quarter did come into being. It was built by Jewish factory owners, and called 'Tel Aviv.' Totally new houses. Not Jewish in the sense that for instance you see these poor Jewish districts. Nice houses built, villas really. Two and three story. Only rich Jews lived there. Every factory owner built themselves a house there. But then I can't say much about that district because I didn't go there much; I didn't have any friends there.

Where Bielsko now merges with Biala, that's the former Jewish district. There were fewer Hasidim in Bielsko; there were some, but fewer. There were mostly assimilated Jews. Most of them had property, meaning factories. I can even name several factories: 'Wolf' - mostly textile materials, 'Karibi' an abbreviation of Karl, Rizenfeld, Bielsko, and 'Bribram' - fittings. But with my father being a tailor, a tailor he remained until the end of his life. Unfortunately that was our life.

Various Jewish parties were active in Bielsko. As far as I remember, there were Akiba 11, Hanoar Hatzioni 12, Betar 13, Poalei Zion 14. I remember there being a Betar rally on the playing field a little way outside the town. They came from all over Poland. Afterwards they marched down one street, and another, and with those sticks, too. But I don't know what the sticks were for, they just waved them around. I went there then, just to go, as an observer.

The Betar members were almost entirely in uniform, I happen to remember that there were those uniforms - I don't remember the color, but perhaps brown? [They were indeed brown, a color that was meant to symbolize the color of the Palestinian earth.] Something like that. It was a kind of paramilitary organization. Perhaps they were training there, meaning - I don't know - the liberation of Palestine, something like that was definitely going on. Some of them, I think, went into the army [joined the Polish Armed Forces]. In our organization - because I belonged to Hanoar Hatzioni - they used to say that it was a Jewish fascist organization.

I belonged to Hanoar Hatzioni from the beginning of school. It's hard to say what attracted me to that organization. I suppose it was some youthful fad. Sport, among other things. I was a good table tennis player and I often played in our organization's club room. Hanoar Hatzioni meetings, talks and events were also held in that club room. We wore these green uniforms.

I also remember agitating for emigration to Palestine. I thought about perhaps going to Palestine inasmuch as that was how they taught us then in Hanoar Hatzioni, in the Zionist spirit, and prepared us for the possibility of going there. But I hadn't thought about it seriously then, because I wasn't aware enough. I was still young, at gymnasium. Anyway, it was unrealistic in those years, because you had to have lots of money for the trip. It wasn't for free.

There was also a Jewish football team in Bielsko. It was called Hakoah. I was too young for a player, but I was a fan. I went to all the matches. A 'Maccabiada' 15 was held there once [a Jewish athletics meeting]. I don't remember in which year, but I was 14, maybe 15 then. [In 1937 Hakoah Bielsko won the title of Maccabi Union Champion in Poland. Hakoah's rival in the championship match was the team from the Katowice Jewish Sports Club, which lost to the Bielsko side 1:6]

Among the teams that came were Maccabi Cracow, Maccabi Lodz and Hasmonea Lvov. The best pre-war team was Hasmonea Lvov. Hoenig [Editor's note: actually Honig], a great defender from Hasmonea Lvov, moved to Bielsko after that and played in a Polish team, in BBTS [the Bielsko-Biala Sporting Society]. I remember a few of the players in our Hakoah team, including the two Gruenstein brothers. One was called Aron; I can't remember the name of the other brother.

Our religious life

There were two synagogues, one in Bielsko, the other in Biala. There were these prayer houses too [shtibl], but they were in private houses, where Hasidim 16 went. But to the synagogue, at least from what I saw, more assimilated Jews went.

On the Sabbath Father didn't work at the machine. There were these attempts - I don't know - at not doing anything on the Sabbath, but it didn't work. Well, it was a family that was poor and didn't have any stocks, so to speak, to put a chulent in the oven, so as not to cook on the Sabbath, or to light candles. We didn't do that. Perhaps at first we did, in the early, better times, but after Father closed his shop down, not any more.

Well, so in our family, Jewish tradition as such wasn't kept up too much. Of course we celebrated all the holidays, as much as we could, as much as we could afford. I remember Pesach. We always sat down to the table as a whole family. Modestly, modestly we ate that meal. 'Mah nishtanah halaylah,' I still remember that prayer. No further, that's all I remember. Father always said it first, and then the children repeated it - 'Mah nishtanah halaylah.' I remember that several times just like that we celebrated that holiday, solemnly. Into the 1930s, in 1936, 1937, but not after that, there weren't the conditions, because that apartment was so very, very cramped.

The other holidays we didn't celebrate so solemnly at home. But at Yom Kippur, I remember, I fasted all day. The whole family fasted. That was a tradition that was observed. But in the basement we didn't celebrate the holidays any more. Father didn't pray at home. At Yom Kippur, on Rosh Hashanah, we were always at synagogue. The one in Bielsko was very beautiful and old; I don't remember how many years old [reform synagogue, built in 1879-1881, to plans by the

Bielsko architect Karol Korn, styled on the Budapest Dohany Street synagogue]. At one time I even sang in the choir there, but for a very short time. It was destroyed by the Germans after they invaded the town [13th September 1939]. The square is empty there to this day.

I remember my bar mitzvah. I learned a text in Hebrew, a fragment of which I was to read out during the celebrations in the synagogue. I had a teacher at home who taught me, because I didn't know Hebrew, and still don't, unlike my grandchildren. I learned it by heart. Literally. I didn't even know what I was reading from the Torah. The teacher told me something or other, translated it, but I don't remember what any more. Presumably it went well. I remember getting up, reading that fragment of the Torah, and that's all. And afterwards for a few days I put those straps [tefillin] on every day, but after that I stopped, because it bored me. I didn't go back to it again.

My relatives

As for my mother's siblings, perhaps I'll take them in turn. Mother had quite a lot of kin here in Cracow [Editor's note: Mr. Glazer has lived in Cracow for 30 years]. So I can list these: Mother's aunt, Eleonora Wetstein. I don't know from what family, but Mother's aunt. Presumably it was Mom's mother's sister, presumably she was a spinster too. She lived at 2 Matejki Square, or 4 Zacisze Street, let's call it, because before the war there was a passage through the courtyard, but after the war it was blocked up.

And that aunt's sister was called Ewa Fischer. Actually I don't really know who that Aunt Ewa was, presumably a widow, because she was alone. She had a restaurant at 2 Matejki Square. Seems it was either a lease or her property. Aunt Eleonora didn't interfere in the restaurant. It was more a licensed bar than a restaurant. There weren't any dinners, just vodka and various types of snacks.

I don't remember the name, but I often went there. I remember the buffet in that restaurant. I remember this young waitress, who even lived there in that apartment above the restaurant with both aunts. On the first floor, one or two rooms with windows onto the Zacisze Street side. And on Matejki Square I even played on the Jagiello monument. Literally on the monument. Yes, but those were the 1930s, my vacations. In more detail all I can say is that that restaurant of my aunt's existed until the outbreak of the war. It was a very popular place. Lots of railway men used to go there from the station close by.

The closest and best brother lived in Cracow at 51 or 53 Kalwaryjska Street, I don't remember exactly. Wetstein. Samuel Wetstein. I remember all his four-person family very well, because I went there a lot. Uncle was a locksmith. He had his own workshop on Starowislna Street. The locksmith's workshop is still there, somebody owns it privately. It was between the 'Palace of the Press' and Dietla Street, before what used to be the 'Uciecha' cinema [that cinema no longer exists].

Uncle's wife was called Salomea, I think. They had a daughter, Renata, and a son, Artur. Those cousins were older than me. More or less my sister and brother's age. The house they lived in on Kalwaryjska was very big and belonged to my uncle. Anyway, it was sold straight after the war, before the nationalization decree. I was one of the heirs; who the others were, that I don't know. That house was heavily burdened with debt and almost nothing was left from that house. I got a trifling sum, because in all - I don't know - in my hand I got 40,000 [zloty]. I remember as if it were yesterday. A pair of officer's boots, nothing more. That's literally all I bought myself. And in parenthesis now, those boots were stolen. Back in the army.

Now the next family. Well known in Cracow, really very well known. Mother's brother, Szymon Wetstein. His wife, I don't know what her name was. They lived at 15 or 15a Slowackiego Avenue in Cracow. If I'm not mistaken it's a house belonging to the Jagiellonian University 17 today [15a - Residential House for professors of the Jagiellonian University]. Once I tried to check if it was still the former property of the Wetsteins or if it had been sold on to somebody later, but I wasn't able to. They didn't tend to get in touch much either with Mother or with the brother who lived on Kalwaryjska Street. I went to their house literally once in my life.

It's hard for me to say what that Uncle Szymon did, but if he gave his sons an education he must have done something worthwhile in those times. He had two sons. One son, Jozef, was an architect, and I think that house on Slowackiego Avenue was designed by him. [Editor's note: The house at 15a Slowackiego Avenue was built in 1929 according to plans by Ludwik Wojtyczko; perhaps Jozef Wetstein was a member of Wojtyczko's architectural staff.] By the by, he also designed 'Feniks' in Cracow. [Editor's note: The 'Feniks' Society's building on the corner of the Main Market Square and Swietego Jana Street, the only building on the Square in the Modernist style, was designed by Prof. Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz (1883-1948), one of Poland's most eminent architects - as in the case of the building at 15a Slowackiego Avenue, Wetstein was probably a member of Prof. Szyszko- Bohusz's staff].

The other son, Wladyslaw Wetstein, and later Wladyslaw Krzeminski, was the director of the 'Stary Teatr' [Old Theater] in Cracow. I know that he was director until 1968, after that, presumably due to his background, he was dismissed from the post. [Wladyslaw Krzeminski was director of the Stary Teatr in 1954 and from 1957-1963.] Wladyslaw is dead now; he died in Cracow and was buried in the cemetery at Salwator [a Catholic cemetery in Cracow]. But what happened to Jozef, whether he's still alive, that I don't know.

Mother's third brother, Henryk, was a little handicapped, if you like. No knowing what was wrong with him. He just begged, roved the country, to the family, here a little, there a little. In Cracow he shuttled between the uncle from Kalwaryjska and the aunts on Matejki Square. I don't know what he lived off even. He often came to Bielsko to our house; we fed him as much as we could afford, he would stop a few days, and then off on his travels again. I don't even know where he lived. Everywhere and nowhere, I should think, because in my day there was no longer any family in Kamionka, and I've never even been there.

Mother's fourth brother lived in Belgium, in Antwerp. He often wrote to Mother. I don't know what he was called or why he'd emigrated, but presumably in search of bread, as they say. He lived there for a long time. I don't think he was married. What became of him afterwards, that I don't know.

To sum up, in terms of Mom's brothers and sisters, we had most to do with that brother, the locksmith, and with the aunts who lived on Matejki Square. But the rest of her relatives - at least as far as I know - Mom never visited, and neither did they ever come to see us in Bielsko even once. At least as far back as I can remember. I don't know why. Some of her family were just like that, richer - in the literal sense, and Mom was poverty stricken - you could put it that way. From Mother's side that would probably be all.

On Father's side the surname was Glaser or Rosner. But as I've already said, I don't know when and in what circumstances Father changed his name from Rosner to Glaser. And whether he did it at

all. Officially he used the name Glaser. One of Father's brothers - at least this is what I know - like us, lived in Bielsko, but they didn't have any contact with each other. I really don't know the reasons, but theirs was a secretive, unapproachable family. There are these arguments - I don't know - that drag on and are not really mentioned in the family.

That brother was a tailor too, and I think he was married. I can't recall what his name was. If I'd spent more time with him, like with my uncles on my mother's side, for instance, I'd remember his name. With him, unfortunately, I didn't have the opportunity. We never went to their house or they to ours, even though it was our closest family in Bielsko. The only other thing that I can say about them is that also after the outbreak of the war they went away somewhere.

I also remember another of Father's brothers. I didn't know him and I don't know what his name was, but I know that he lived in Bucharest. From time to time these letters would come to Father from him. Seldom, but they did. I don't know what he did there or what he had gone for. My parents didn't share stories like that about the family much. They just didn't talk about those things. I found out about that brother of Father's by chance - that he was in Bucharest - because I saw the letters when they came. As I've already mentioned, one of Father's sisters lived in Plaza. Most of Father's family was there, but I don't remember who lived there apart from her or how those people were related to Father.

Sixteen I was when I completed that 8th grade. I was born in the crisis, there was poverty, and so I went out to work, to earn something as far as possible. My friend, Bribram Henryk, also was in that class with me, so I asked him, 'Get me work at your father's place, would you?' I was moderately interested in the clothing trade then. I used to help Father with the unstitching, not just unstitching but sewing lapels back on too. I helped him as far as I could, I did what I could do. And from then on I remembered something. Once, I remember, I put my finger in the machine underneath, and the needle got stuck in it. After that I had this little operation. I could use my finger normally as soon as they took the needle out. And what I learned then came in handy later. That sewing perhaps even saved my life, in a small way.

Bribram's father took me on in his little fittings factory as a commercial intern. Surprisingly, for 20 zloty a month. In those days that was enough for me to buy material for a suit of clothes for 40 zloty. I even had my own insurance. When I needed my papers for my pension later, I got them in Bielsko. I worked physically a bit, and after that in the office. I could type a little, even in German, because I'd been on a typing course for a few months. After that I started to organize my own office, my own files, I put all that in order myself. And so much so that they praised me.

In the summer, in July 1939 I think, I went to Szczyrk on this two-week holiday camp. I don't even know what funds that was paid for out of. School didn't pay for it, because I had already left... In the meantime some commission came [to the factory], and they couldn't find anything, and they recalled me to work from my holiday. Because I was irreplaceable. Yes, 40 zloty I had towards the end for a month's work. And I remember as if it were yesterday, I bought myself some material for a suit of clothes. Me, out of my own money. Father was going to make them for me, but the war broke out and unfortunately I couldn't take advantage of that. The material was left at home, I lost it all. In any case, that was the sort of grim childhood I had. But there you are.

During the war

1st September, the year 1939, 5 in the morning: the outbreak of war 18. That morning we were already literally packed. I don't know how I knew that the war had broken out, but everybody already knew it. All the Jews from Bielsko fled on the first day of the war. All of them, because they suspected what was going to happen in Bielsko. There had already been talk that when the Germans entered the town there would be a terrible massacre. The propaganda by the German minority was very strident in relation to the Jews; they had announced that when Hitler invaded he would - not kill, but finish off all the Jews, and so on. Yes, that was pronounced officially. And the Jews were afraid.

So on that first day of the war, the whole lot went to the station with their bundles. It wasn't only the Jews that were fleeing. The Poles wanted to leave that area as fast as possible too, because they knew that once the Germans took over the railway things would be different. We set off for the station too. It must have been around lunchtime. One train after another was leaving. We got on the first one going towards Cracow. We stopped in the middle of nowhere several times on the way.

When the train arrived in Cracow at last, we didn't get off, because on the way we'd heard rumors that the Germans were already almost in Cracow [the Germans entered Cracow on 6th September]. We went on and got off just outside Tarnow, in Moscice, because the train wasn't going any further, because there were bombardments. And we went on from there on foot, eastward, until we got to Kolbuszowa, not far from Rzeszow.

Some people had already left Bielsko earlier, for instance my boss Bribram. He had a car, that was something before the war. Some people had left earlier still, and so they got east. They made it, but we didn't. From stories, I know that in Bielsko, on the first day of the war, Germans - civilians, living normally in Bielsko, shot at Polish soldiers from windows on the Square. Yes, lots of Germans lived on the Square. We had already gone by then, but I also know that the Polish army, leaving Bielsko, blew up the railway tunnel, which was also the passage from Bielsko to Biala, and so cut communication. That happened in the afternoon, before the Germans invaded. I don't know when the Germans entered Bielsko, whether on 1st or 2nd [it was on the night of 4th September]. For shooting at Polish soldiers, all the Germans had to leave Bielsko after the war 19. Even the Volksdeutsche 20 had to go, because the Poles remembered that. The Germans were forced to by the Polish authorities.

My brother was with us even though he had been called up into the army as a recruit. If he'd done his school-leaving certificate he would have been called up as an officer cadet. But he never went into the army. Mobilization was announced [on 30th August 1939 universal mobilization was announced and then revoked, on 31st August it was announced again] and everyone who had recruitment papers was under obligation to report to their unit. I don't remember what unit he was supposed to report to, but everyone was looking for their units and couldn't find them, because they weren't organized, or they were already on their way somewhere else.

1939 was a year when the army walked alongside the civilians and everybody was looking for everybody else. From that Moscice outside Tarnow, with the army, we walked east, on foot all the time. The army was walking, people were walking, horses, cows, the lot. September was terribly hot. The heat was unbelievable, so we mainly walked by night. We walked for four or five nights. My sister with her fur coat under her arm, I didn't have much in particular, just what we had in our

hands and could take, we took. We slept by the roadside. And we walked as far as Kolbuszowa, that's before you get to Rzeszow [the distance from Bielsko to Kolbuszowa is approx. 150 km].

In Kolbuszowa we met a Jewish family; they had a farm in the village. We stayed there for a period of some two weeks, just over, but the Germans invaded there too. There was no hope of them leaving that area because they had occupied everywhere by then. And so we went back, and that time we headed for Cracow - on foot, through various places; I remember that on the way were Radomysl, Debica, Brzesko and Bochnia. Wherever there was the chance we would go a bit by cart.

By then we didn't want to go back to Bielsko because in Bielsko it was already the German Reich, and there's a difference between the General Governorship 21, and the Reich, right? Here [in the GG] Poles and Jews had some rights for the time being. But not there. And so, mostly on foot, we reached Cracow, and the aunts on Matejki Square.

Once we were in Cracow, my brother [Maksymilian], decided to go abroad, to Russia. Right after 17th September 22, he tried to cross the border with Russia, somewhere near Nisko, I think, but he was unlucky. The Russians turned him back. Lots of Jews crossed the border at that time. They thought they would be a lot better off with the Russians than with the Germans. Everyone thought that. In the end my brother came back to us in Cracow.

In Cracow we had to have armbands 23 right away. Right off. My brother didn't wear his armband, because he could speak German well. A Jew with an armband couldn't go around Cracow too much. My brother didn't look like a Jew at all, he had that kind of appearance - unfortunately I don't have a photograph of him. But after that they started introducing 'kenkartas' 24 here in Cracow, those supposedly ID things. Because of that we left Cracow, because it was getting dangerous for us. All that General Governorship was there, and the seat of the governor [Hans Frank]. There were an awful lot of army and Nazi organizations. So we stayed with the family a while and after two or three weeks or so my parents decided that we would move to Tarnow.

In Tarnow we didn't have any family of our own. We stayed there some time on Goldhammer Street with some Jewish family. I don't know exactly how long it can have been. When we fled Bielsko we took what we could take, but the sewing machine stayed in the basement. And my sister went there for it. And she brought that machine back, how, I don't know, but that was in 1940. After that Father sewed again for a short time in Tarnow. I got a summons from the 'Arbeitsamt' [German for 'Labor Office'], what they called the labor office - as a 17-year-old lad. That was 1940. I was summoned to work. I didn't know what work - it turned out to be to the Pustkow labor camp 25 .

That's just beyond Debica [approx. 130 km east of Cracow]. It turned out that it was SS land, where there were these food storehouses. My camp was a bit separate, if you like, a little way off beyond the wire, but you could see the main part of the camp. The SS trained in Pustkow as well, and there was a big training ground. They were changing all the time, some arriving, others going. And there, in April 1940, I arrived to work and I was to work as a normal laborer. I wasn't particularly badly off as yet, back then. You could manage.

At first I was meeting deliveries to the storehouse off trains. I could speak German, perhaps that's why. The wagons came in, we would unload them, I carried sacks on my back, and crates with wines in. Straw and hay, too, not just food. And I worked in the storehouse some too. Beyond my strength. After all, at 17 I wasn't too well developed physically, and I had to lug 80-kg crates and

bags on my back. To this day I have spinal defects.

The working conditions were awful, but because we were working with food, each of us could steal something on the side, because no-one checked that too much. But even so, they caught me once. I was trying to steal a piece of salami. I got 25 lashes, in front of everybody, like. With a whip. It hurt terribly. I was allowed to work, but I was watched very closely. I stopped stealing.

Before that I had managed to steal something for my parents twice. They and my brother and sister had gone to the ghetto in Tarnow 26. At that time we were often sent to Cracow in this big truck. We would take flour from the mill on Wieczysta Street, and as Tarnow was on route, they let us go to the ghetto. I went into the ghetto once on a pass. I was there for a very short time. I don't know how it happened - they granted my request; not only mine but other people's too. And so they left us in the ghetto for a few hours. The SS-men in the convoy were evidently understanding like that. I don't remember what they were called, but they supervised the storehouses that we worked in at Pustkow.

They left me in the ghetto, I remember that as if it were yesterday. They knew I wouldn't escape from there. Well, how would I escape? How many hours I was there I don't know, but it didn't last very long at all. But it meant that I met my parents there, and we exchanged a few words. We despaired and that was it. I really didn't expect it all to be over that quickly and that I would never see them again. That was the last time I saw my parents and my sister. I didn't know about the liquidation of the ghetto when I was in the camp. I didn't know. Only afterwards, after the war, I found out.

In Pustkow there were Poles and Jews. The Polish camp was set up first, and then a separate Jewish one. I was with the same people all the time. I remember a few names. One, who I remember the most, was Marian Gruen from Cracow. He was a lad just like me and I don't think he had a trade yet. What kind of family he came from I don't know either. From the camp I remember Szas, too, but I don't remember his first name. He was older than me. It was a small group in that food storehouse. There were about 30-40 people working with me. But the camp itself in Pustkow was big. There was a chemical works somewhere on the Pustkow site there; Polish forced laborers worked there. I was classed as a forced laborer too.

I remember a Polish SS-man, that stuck in my mind. Dietrich, his last name was, and he came from Silesia, but from what town I don't know. [He must have been a Polish ethnic German as only Germans could join the SS.] He was a bit false, but he wasn't bad. The SS-men that came from Silesia treated the Jews better, and there were two of them. One worked in the bread store and the other in another one - I can't remember. They didn't treat the Jews too badly, but perhaps because almost all the Jews knew German.

I remember one more SS-man, by the name of Ruff. I don't remember what his first name was. [Editor's note: Ruff's first name was Heinrich - according to a certificate issued to Mr. Glazer by the Central Committee for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.] Our group wasn't very numerous, and he was the camp leader of our group. I saw him in the camp a lot. I'll come back to that matter shortly, because I was in Tarnow, after the war, in uniform, at a court hearing in that SS-man's case.

In Pustkow there was a whole camp for Soviet prisoners. Not all the time, but I seem to remember them being there in 1943. [The camp for Soviet prisoners was set up in October 1941 and liquidated in 1942; in its place a camp for Poles was set up.] Separately somewhere. We used to meet them as they were going to work. But I really did see this scene: they ate tar. Seriously, they ate tar! They were that starving. And apparently there were several thousand of them there [5,000 prisoners; a few dozen survived] and 30 were left. But why? Because those 30 joined the SS Galicia army 27. That SS Galicia trained in Pustkow. No-one survived with the exception of those 30-something who went over to the Nazi army as SS-men. [Placed under the SS, but not actually members of the SS themselves.] All the others died off.

Then in 1943 - Stalingrad 28. Discipline tightened in the camp, and they put us all together in one camp, in the main section. They simply wanted the Jews to be within reach just in case. Before that we had been free, as it were. We'd had our own barrack, but we weren't watched very closely. When a transport came in, we went to work. But after we were grouped in that camp, we did practically nothing, just marched in columns and we had to sing. Yes. Singing and marching around the camp pointlessly. Jews separately and Poles separately. We sang what we could, in Polish. I remember that 'O moj Rozmarynie' ['O my rosemary,' a song of the Legionnaires, Pilsudski's soldiers].

My brother was sent to the camp in Pustkow too. At first he was in the ghetto with my parents, but when I visited them there, he was already no longer there, because he had been taken to the camp in Pustkow. I found that out from my parents. He was working physically somewhere or other, in another group, I don't know exactly where, but on some earthworks.

In Pustkow I fell ill with typhus, in the grouped-together camp. And my brother came to visit me. I was lying in the sick bay. I really did have fortune in my misfortune, because I was cured of that illness. Typhus in the camp is awful. Well, and it was then that I met my brother for the first and last time. He mentioned to me then that he wanted to escape from the camp. I didn't advise him against it. How could I have advised him against it when I knew that it was either death or life? In the camp everyone knew what awaited them. People lived in hope, but in the end they expected that sooner or later the worst could happen. I said, 'Well go, then! Go!' But I didn't expect him to go to our parents. I thought he'd go to the forest or somewhere.

He went to meet our parents, and they picked him up in the ghetto there. The Germans probably found out where he was. I don't know how. They brought him back to Pustkow. He was put in what they called the penal camp, well, and presumably they finished him off there. I don't know anything more precise about the circumstances of his death.

I didn't think about escape. Anyway I didn't have the opportunity, because I simply worked together, in a group. Well, I didn't think about escape because quite simply I wasn't too badly off in those conditions. We lived in sheds, but the sheds were more human. Somehow I had as much food as I needed and a fair enough bed. It was only afterwards, in the camp near Gliwice, when the worst time came, that I really thought about everything and nothing. About everything. Whether I would survive it.

In July 1944, when the Russians had come as far as I think Baranow, fierce battles were fought there between the Germans and the Russians, because there it was Polish territory, so they packed us off in a transport and off we went. Transport, but no idea where to. Packing up? We aren't

packing up. We didn't have anything to pack. Wagons were put on, those cattle ones, naturally. From Pustkow itself, because there was a siding there. We were loaded in without any air. Locked up like cattle. We didn't know anything of what was going on. We didn't know where we were going, even.

Auschwitz

It took a whole day and a night, I think. They open the wagons: 'Raus' [Ger.: Get out]. We look: 'Arbeit macht frei' [Work makes (you) free, the infamous inscription above the Auschwitz gate]. What's going to happen to us? I thought then. I didn't know anything about Auschwitz. I knew about our camp in Pustkow, but about others, that they existed at all, I didn't. They left us a very long time on that ramp. And that SS-man, Ruff, said that he had had a 'Befehl' [Ger.: command] and he had to put us in the camp, not in any crematorium. No, because he had been given an order and he wasn't leaving the place until they took us to the camp. It wasn't that he asked for it - he demanded it. On that ramp Ruff behaved very decently. I didn't see him during the convoy, I only saw him on the ramp.

I didn't know that Auschwitz was a death camp. None of us knew that. We were told that we were going to the camp and we went to the camp. But later I found out that it was usually like this: a transport arrived and all of it to the bathhouse. There that poisonous gas at once, then the floor fell in, the corpses down, and that was it. In Birkenau 29 there were crematoria, those people were sent there to their deaths, and others were sent to the sheds. And so somehow we simply survived, because in the end we were sent to the camp. And so that's why I've got this number, A-18077. I was tattooed on the first day, 27th July 1944. Prisoners did it, but I don't know whether they were Poles or Jews.

After that I got my stripes, of course [camp uniform, made from material with blue vertical stripes, comprising a jacket and trousers]. But in Pustkow we hadn't had stripes. You went around in whatever you had. First we were sent to this big bathhouse. I knew that I was in quarantine, that this was how it had to be, that they would come and take us somewhere to work. I don't know what the point of that quarantine was. Two weeks we sat in these sheds and didn't do anything. On the bunks, without anything, just like that. There weren't even straw mattresses, and all those people.

There I saw the women's camp in Birkenau 30. Women, all shaven, I saw at once on the first day. I saw the gypsy camp too. Yes. I could see that they were gypsies; their camp was separate. I saw other people too, different nationalities, Greeks, Hungarians. I even remember this one episode. I didn't even know what it meant. 'Korfu lekhem' - one of the prisoners said that to us. 'Korfu' meant that they were from the island of Corfu, and 'lekhem' is simply 'bread' in Hebrew, apparently. I still remember those two words, as if it were yesterday. 'Korfu lekhem, Korfu lekhem.' Just meaning that they were from the island of Corfu and they wanted bread.

And after that quarantine, after all that, what they called 'merchants' came to the camp. Yes, SS-men. They ordered us all to get out of the shed. The whole group, the one from Pustkow, because we'd somehow stuck together. They asked about our trades. What trade, what trade? They just wanted to see who could do what, because it was to be real work. Obviously I wasn't a properly trained tailor, but I said I was a tailor. Perhaps I saved myself as a tailor, because they took me to work and didn't leave me in the camp. Some of them, that stayed, older people, they finished them off in the camp. Then they split us into groups and some went to the Siemianowice Foundry [proper

name: the Laura Foundry], others to... I can't remember, and I ended up in Gliwice. In July 1944.

I was still a prisoner of the Auschwitz camp, just of the Gliwice branch 31. There they were building a factory to make gun carriages and large water mines - munitions, in any case. We organized it all, in the sense that first we did the earthworks, and then we put the machines in, set them up, leveled them. Even lathes, milling machines and other machines. As non- experts we did what we could. And in charge of that was a firm called Zieleniewski [Zieleniewski-Maschinen und Waggonbau GmbH] from Cracow, which the Germans had partly transferred to Gliwice during the occupation. I don't know why. Perhaps so as not to be manufacturing munitions in Cracow? Perhaps they didn't want it to be visible in Cracow, that there was production going on in such a big city, and there in Gliwice it was somewhere out in the middle of nowhere, way out of town.

Some of the workers presumably had to move from Cracow to that factory. But they used to go home almost every Sunday. They weren't slaves like we were, but presumably got money for their work. We walked to work every day, perhaps 10 minutes, because our sheds weren't far from the factory that was being built. But there the conditions were awful. Indescribable. In the winter, washing right out in the open air, naked. The washbasins were outside. We had to wash, because we were covered in lice. I couldn't stand it any more. Everything outside. These camp sheds, so many people in one space, as many as possible. The nights terrible, the days terrible. And I was there until about January 1945. The worst I experienced was there. The worst. And then after that there was that march 26 as well. I didn't expect it to end like that. Quite simply, well.

In January we were evacuated and we left our base in Gliwice. We were taken one evening, it was already dark. I don't know what time it can have been. Perhaps 5pm. Then we walked all night and all day. On the way we met a whole huge column from Auschwitz-Birkenau. That was that death march. I don't know exactly where we joined up with them. We walked in columns. The Auschwitz camp as such was liquidated sometime around 18 January [evacuation of the prisoners went on from 17-21 January 1945]. I don't know how many people were on the march then. An innumerable number [at least 14,000 prisoners were marched along that route]. I remember that I got diarrhea on the way too. But anyone who broke ranks - a bullet in the head. Terrible, that was. I don't know how I survived it.

We had provisions from our former camp in Gliwice, jam and bread, so on the way we could eat that. But the things that went on on the way, it's obvious. Diarrhea, because the people from Auschwitz were incredibly hungry, and before they set off on the march they had been issued with food. And they'd been walking from Auschwitz, I don't know how many days [they walked along the route Auschwitz - Tychy - Mikolow - Gliwice, approx. 55 km]. I don't remember how long we were walking, but more than 24 hours, I think, and we reached somewhere near Kedzierzyn at night, the Blechhammer camp in the Silesian sheet metal works in Slawecice [approx. 25 km from Gliwice].

They were to pick up the next huge camp from there. We stopped in this one shed, on the fringes of that camp. One night I think we slept on bunks. In the watchtowers there were guards, I remember that still, as if it were yesterday - they were Romanians and I think Latvians, at least that's what all the prisoners round about were saying. A special international brigade of the SS was guarding us. I didn't see any Germans there.

The next day the guards suddenly started shooting at us into the shed from the watchtowers. I was lying on the middle bunk, and up top was Mandel, a friend from the camp in Gliwice. Kiwi Mandel,

that's what they nicknamed him. And that Mandel was wounded in the leg. I don't know why they were shooting. There was general pandemonium. We were afraid to go out of the shed, but sometime later that same day we noticed that they had stopped guarding us - they had left the watchtower and fled, evidently, because we couldn't see anybody there.

So then Gruen and I ran a little way to a nearby wood and sat there for several hours in the night. We attempted an escape, because what else was left to us? We could see that we were walking, walking, and there was no end. We could also see how many people had died on the way. We didn't go back. The injured Mandel stayed in the shed. There were three of us after that, because one more friend - another Mandel - joined us. There were two Mandels, entirely unrelated to each other. I don't remember what that one's first name was.

We reached this place near Strzelce Opolskie. It was the road between Strzelce Opolskie and Gliwice. It wasn't until that road that we saw the first Soviet tank. I saw it in a field. We just met them on the road as they were going into that area. One soldier got out of the tank, then another. We were still in our stripes then. They welcomed us properly, cordially. I don't remember what they said to us but I remember great emotion. And that was my liberation. Mine and my friends'.

Liberation

It was 20th January 1945, I think, I was liberated. I didn't have a calendar, but that date sticks in my mind. My liberation, because the general one I don't remember, when they liberated various cities. We told them at once where our wounded friends were. We said goodbye and went on, towards Cracow. And on the way there weren't any Germans. Somebody gave us some civilian clothes, so we got rid of the stripes. Later I found out from someone that the Russians took Mandel to a field hospital near Strzelce Opolskie and treated him.

We reached Cracow some time at the beginning of February. The city had already been liberated. We found a place to stay on Dluga Street. I don't know what it was the headquarters of, but places to sleep for people returning from the camps had been organized there. And I remember as if it were yesterday how these Jews who were staying on Dluga at that time took their revenge on this one Jew. On some kapo [concentration camp inmate appointed by the SS to be in charge of a work gang]. It happened outside the building. I don't know what camp they were from, but they recognized him, evidently. And they beat him up. Good and proper. Well, they didn't do anything to him, well, they weren't going to kill him. I witnessed the scene, that's all.

We used to meet up with friends from the camp in that place on Dluga. Jews who had come back from camps or come out of hiding used to sit around there. I went there a few times. And there I used to meet up with Kiwi Mandel. I was living with Gruen, in his apartment on Konarskiego Street. Later, whenever I came to Cracow from Bielsko I also used to see him.

Mandel had been a tailor before the war. His uncle had had a tailor's studio back then on Dajwor [a street in Cracow's Jewish district, Kazimierz] and Mandel had worked for him. But after that what happened to him I don't know. It turned out that I had no-one from my family left in Cracow. I looked for them. I went here and there - the family wasn't there. I knew that the whole lot had been taken to the Cracow ghetto, and that there were no Jews living where I remembered, either on Matejki Square or on Kalwaryjska Street.

In March [1945] I went to Bielsko. The town had already been liberated, but there was still fighting going on in the surrounding hills between the Germans and the Russians. I registered with the Jewish Committee in Bielsko and just thought that I'd get my life sorted out a bit better. [The first people registered with the Jewish Committee in Bielsko on 13th March 1945, and by the end of April 261 people had reported. By the end of December 1945 there were 1,589 people entered in the register]. At the Committee they gave me the address of an apartment where there was a spare room.

I looked for my family but I couldn't find anyone there either. I knew that no-one had survived in the ghetto. The ghetto in Tarnow was liquidated in 1942. I don't remember which month. [The last transport from the ghetto in Tarnow to the extermination camp in Belzec was in November 1942, subsequent transports went to Plaszow, the last in September 1943]. Presumably, I'm not sure, they were taken to Belzec 33. And I meant to go to Belzec, but I'm too old, I can't. Not long ago I talked to my wife about it.

Then, in March 1945, I went to our old apartment on Wyzwolenia Square. I went to show my face, that I was there, that I was alive. Some German opened the door and I asked him if he knew my family. He did know them, indeed; when he saw how I was dressed he took pity and gave me a coat, a trench coat. I wore it when they called me up into the army a month later, but it got left behind somewhere later on, on the way. I know that that German was resettled out of Bielsko, or he left himself, I don't remember, but I think they resettled him.

At that time I still had hope of finding family, and I wrote to the PCK [Polish Red Cross]. It helped to look for families. I got a reply that there wasn't anybody of that name anywhere. And in Bielsko the Jewish Committee was already in existence and all those who came back to Bielsko after the war - it was like a Jewish community organization - registered there. At first it was this book, a normal book. Everybody wrote their name and surname in, date of birth, and then apparently they made these files. And that book - not just that one, because there were a lot of those books all over Poland - was sent to Warsaw and is in the Historical Institute.

I managed to find only one person from the family, my cousin Roza, the daughter of my father's sister from Plaza. Actually, it was she who found me and wrote me a letter from Sosnowiec, that after being liberated from the camp she had settled there. I don't remember which camp she was in, but she had met her future husband, Jurkowski, there. About her own parents she told me only that they were dead, but I don't think she herself knew anything more precise, because she'd been in the camp. She must have been somewhere in a camp in Poland, because already straight after the war she was in Poland. Certainly not in Auschwitz, because I'd have remembered that. Somewhere near Sosnowiec it must have been. Her husband was a cobbler. He had some kind of cobbler's shop. In the apartment even, I think. I used to go there a lot once I was in the army.

After me, Horowitz and Liban came to Bielsko too. First Horowitz turned up; he'd found my address at the Committee. After that we were joined by Liban, who'd come back from the camp in Stutthof 34, that's near Gdansk. There had been a soap factory there, that soap from human fat. What a thing 35! We lived together in one room in some German's apartment. Yes, a German took us in, welcomed us, 'If you please,' but it wasn't anyone I knew. Russian officers had already taken over part of that apartment, and because the other room was free they had taken us in. And there was a Czech girl there too, who had been liberated, but I don't know from which camp. She was called

Zita Maj.

And so we spent time together, we friends and her. Soon afterwards she left to go to her family in Czechia. She came from there, from the border region. She wasn't a sweetheart, just an acquaintance. And my friends and I traded together at that time, the three of us. The Russians who we lived with had pork fat in abundance. They would give it to us for nothing, and we would go to Cracow, sell the fat - I can't remember at which market, buy soap with the money, and sell it in Bielsko. And basically that's what we lived off. You had to live off something. But that wasn't for long. And so I stayed a while there in Bielsko with my friends, with Horowitz and Liban. Later on it turned out that we were all registered at almost the same time in that book of surviving Jews that's in the Institute in Warsaw.

My time in the army

I was the first to be called up into the army, not long after coming out of the camp, on 21st April 1945, while the war was still on. And I was sent at once to Cracow, to where the Polytechnic is now [Cracow University of Technology] on Warszawska Street, and where the Second Reserve Infantry Corps was stationed then. How they could take a man who had been in a camp for so many years? 'You're going to war,' this and that - an officer gave us this speech outside the Town Hall. But so what? There was no option. My friends stayed in Bielsko.

On Warszawska Street in Cracow I was in active service. I did normal training, shorter because the war was still on. I also went through an accelerated NCO [non-commissioned officers] course and became a corporal. They needed officers to train recruits - for the front, for the front, for the front. I didn't go to the front, because they needed me to train privates.

I personally wasn't with any other Jews in the platoon or the company; all I know is that our second-in-command for political affairs was a Jew. Rozen, he was called. Other officers were apparently Jews too, who had graduated from that officer training school in Cracow, or before that in Lublin. In Cracow I found out about the Kielce pogrom 36. [Editor's note: on 4th July 1946 Mr. Glazer was already serving in Luban Slaski, in the Borderlands Protection Forces]. I don't remember who I found out from. I was on the Cracow Market Square for the end of the war, 9th May 1945. It wasn't a parade, it was a kind of march. The whole lot of us onto the Square. Without a machine gun, because I didn't have one yet then. And Victory Day was announced on the Square.

In October 1945 we were sent to the Recovered Territories 37, to the WOP, the Lusatian Brigade of the Borderlands Protection Forces. This big group of people left for Luban Slaski. Well actually first we were sent to Sulikow, 20-something kilometers from Luban, because there were still German POWs in the Luban barracks. We were billeted in various different private homes, German ones. There were still Germans living there, but they had to move out of some of their rooms. And I - didn't get friendly with - just talked quite a lot, with this one German. He had been a sergeant in the German army but had been released early because he had some sort of invalidity. He even asked me, when they were resettling them, to do something to stop them resettling him. What could I do?

In the army they persuaded me to go professional. This personnel guy, an army man. I didn't want to, but he said to me, 'You were in a camp, surely you wouldn't want a return of those times? Here we're guarding the border, hunting down Germans, and you can see how many of them there are

here. Surely you don't want the Nazis to come back here, so work with us.'

I was supposed to complete my compulsory service after two years. Because there was this 'war not-a-war', battles with UPA gangs [the Ukrainian Insurrectionist Army, a Ukrainian armed independence division formed in October 1942] and the Wehrwolf [a German underground military organization set up by the Nazi authorities at the end of 1944 to conduct sabotage and diversionary campaigns], in Polish they called them the Werewolves, they kept active service on for an extra year. I had to serve out those three years and only then were they going to release me into the reserves. I didn't want to do that military career, because really after all I'd never planned to be a professional soldier. But because I'd done well, they literally wouldn't leave me in peace. And I agreed - I became a professional soldier.

My post-war life

When I went back to Bielsko again in 1947, my friends Horowitz and Liban weren't there any more. I found out that they were on training somewhere. I went back in uniform then, back as an NCO, to find out about my family and get my birth certificate made out. And it turned out - when I talked to Horowitz later - that they'd been militarily trained by Haganah 38, somewhere near Dzierzoniowo [a town in Lower Silesia], I don't know exactly what the town was called. That was back when Palestine was still in existence 39. They were trained by the Polish army. As far as I know it even gave unofficial military support to Haganah, and apparently officers from Berling's army 40 and Anders' army 41 through Haganah trained future Israeli army officers.

It's strange, but there were still good relations between Poland and Palestine back then. Israel didn't exist then, it was Palestine, but obviously Poland, Russia and other countries of the Socialist bloc of course supported those countries that were fighting for liberation. But because it later turned out that this was a different sort of liberation, not the way the socialists had wanted it, their attitude changed too 42.

Those friends of mine from school, Horowitz and Liban, after that training course, left for Palestine legally in a military transport as future army staff. I remember that Horowitz had a passport issued by the Polish authorities. He still has that passport; now he lives in Israel, in Qiryat Motzkin, near Haifa. I think they went via Czechoslovakia. That was in 1948, but back before the creation of Israel, because Horowitz told me that they were still fighting on the front. They took Horowitz into the navy because he could swim well. I remember from when we used to go to the swimming pool, he was a good swimmer.

Well, and during my visit to Bielsko I met that friend of my sister's, Rauchman. Thanks to her I have my only photograph of my sister. They were together on that photograph, but she split it in half then and gave me only the part with my sister on. When she gave me that photo, I knew that my sister was dead. I didn't find any of my family in Bielsko that time, either, but I had to have my birth certificate made out, because I needed it in the army. They accepted me into the army, didn't ask about anything. Where were you born, what's your name? Literally that much. And then they started making ID out, so I had to have a birth certificate.

Bribram I met after the war, but only one single time, then, in Bielsko, in 1947. I have the impression that he together with his father left Bielsko at once, on the first day of the war, and they probably got over to the Soviet Union in their car, and from there got taken out to Siberia. A factory

owner, the obvious. The enemy of the classes was exiled to Siberia. So I know, from what that Henryk said, that they worked hard in the forest and his father couldn't take it - he died there, and he came back as a repatriate to Bielsko. Henryk came back from Siberia almost blind. He did a massage course I think and worked a bit in Bielsko as a masseur. After that I went to the Jewish Committee in Bielsko a few times to keep abreast more or less of what was happening, and there they told me that he'd gone away to his family, to Germany.

In 1949 I got a letter from a friend from the camp in Pustkow, Chaskel Fischman, that the case of SS-man Ruff had come up; he'd been arrested in Tarnow and was going to be tried there. Why in Tarnow? Because they were tried in the area where they had operated. In the letter that friend asked me to go as a witness. Well, I said, absolutely. I'll go. I arrive in Tarnow, for the case - I was an officer by then - in uniform, naturally. The judge told me to swear my oath on a breviary. I say 'No, I'll just take my oath like that.' I wasn't a Catholic, and there wasn't a Jewish prayer book, so hard luck. I took my oath.

Beforehand my friend had informed me that I should testify as badly as possible against him, because after all he'd been a mean SS-man and that was it. That Ruff wasn't the worst, he was fairly alright, and so I didn't know what to say in court about him. The judge asked me if he had been cruel. I say, 'Yes.' I just said the worst thing I could have said. Well, what else? He got 15 years' imprisonment thanks to our testimonies. I don't know whether he did that much time, but presumably he was let out earlier.

There was another one being tried with him, who used to go round with a dog [W. Wittmann - according to a certificate issued to Mr. Glazer by the Central Committee for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland]. But I can't remember how many years he got.

At Ruff's hearing there was a confrontation first of all: 'Does the accused recognize this man?' He stared at me, because I was already at second lieutenant rank by then. 'Yes I do.' That saved me. Why? Because later, when I wanted them to include the period of the occupation for my pension, I didn't have any documents, literally none confirming my time in the camps. I wrote to the Central Committee for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes, to Warsaw, and I got the answer that there was a possibility of receiving the statement of the accused regarding my recognition. And so I got a certificate that so-and-so had testified, etc. And so they counted all my time in Pustkow towards my pension, and then later for the compensation too. [Mr. Glazer received compensation from the Polish-German Unity Fund founded in 1992. The German side gave DM 500m to be divided among the living Polish victims of the Third Reich].

I had a problem with them including that camp period towards my pension in another respect too. They told me that forced labor was not a concentration camp. They had a list of all the concentration camps and they had it written down that Pustkow was not counted as a concentration camp. I appealed against that decision and later an explanation came that it had been included. That meant a higher pension, because otherwise I would have had a shorter period of work and less compensation.

I don't know why I of all people got in as a political officer. Because I was a Jew, perhaps? Because in fact the political officers were Jewish. In the initial period I was staff writer; I kept the bureaucracy in our political department - not yet as an officer but as an NCO. Later I was promoted to clerk in the personnel section. My next promotion was to party records officer. I kept personal

data records. Then I became an instructor in the political department: I taught 'political classes,' I lectured in Polish history, but put a little differently to now, socialist political economics, capitalist too, and I taught civic education.

Finally, in the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, I became secretary of the party 43 committee, elected by the members of the brigade and so I was at the very top of the brigade. After the commander and the second-in-command for political and educational affairs, I was third highest in rank.

I was in the party from the beginning. They persuaded me to join in 1948, while it was still the PPR 44. An army man joining the PPR at that time - before the creation of the PZPR - was in theory legal, but illegal, because the army had a principle of apoliticism back then. But these two guys came to see me, one of them was a Jew, and they gave me some spiel about the party, and I didn't know what it was all about back then. I was 23. They told me that the party would lead to prosperity, and told me to sign. So what was I supposed to do? Not sign?

One of them, Henryk Oppenheim, then in the rank of captain, worked in the Political Department in our brigade, and gave me a recommendation to the PPR. He was like my introducer, as they say. And from then on I had to be in the party all the time, because getting out of the party was very difficult. Anyway, if I'd withdrawn from the party I'd have had to say goodbye to my career. And since I was in the army I at least wanted to serve my way to a decent pension.

I know why they made Jews secret security officers, military prosecutors and put them in the prison service. It wasn't accidental. The war had shown that there were a lot of rogues among the Poles. Well, didn't enough Poles occupy apartments that had been Jewish? A lot. How many people were there who treated Jews with cruelty during the war? Who had not a few Jewish souls on their consciences? Knowing that the Jews had been through such hell, they put Jews in those important posts because they could trust them and be sure that in revenge they would be cruel to Poles who had collaborated with the Germans or helped them. That was the policy. And that was the truth. Some were cruel. That's why, later, 1968 when it came around 45, they started firing them, because they were Jews. There was too much Jewry in the Polish army.

After all, it's common knowledge that after the war all those various gangs were murdering Jews. There were the so-called NSZ-ers - the National Armed Forces 46. On their chests they had these shields hanging with the Virgin Mary and the inscription National Armed Forces. There was that famous commander of theirs, Zubryd. [Major Antoni Zubryd, pseudonym 'Orlowski,' 'Zuch.' He led a detachment a few dozen strong that operated in the Sanok district. The division was called the Independent Operational Battalion NSZ 'Zuch.'] At first he worked in secret security, then he formed that gang and prowled the Nowy Sacz, Nowy Targ and Sanok regions. And what happened? Zubryd was posthumously rehabilitated - I read that in the paper a few years ago. There was even a protest by the Australian Jews against it, but it did no good. That was rehabilitation in an unjust sense, but historians will assess that one day.

In Luban we had this unit to fight the UPA gangs and the so-called underground army [NSZ]. And they would send that unit out to wherever the NSZ was operating. I know that they attacked them, of course - not the soldiers, but the officers. And if they found out that he was a Jew or a PPR party man, they would murder him. They often sent someone to that unit of ours on inspections or - I don't know - these military 'visits,' and Jewish officers didn't want to go. They were afraid. They would even attack them on trains. I didn't want to go either, but luckily they didn't ask me.

And why did that friend of mine from Pustkow - Gruen - get out of the camp and go straight in as a secret security officer? He got to such a high rank in a very short time, because he was a major - I think - in 1953. Yet he'd had no military training. Before the war he was a teenage lad - like me, without an education, although he'd pretended to be a tailor in the camp. I knew Gruen and I know that he can't have been a bad man.

After the war he worked in secret security. He was head of some department in the Provincial Security Office in Cracow, he didn't tell me which one, but I know that he had something to do with supplies I think it was. I saw him in Cracow in 1953 or 1954. I met his fiancée then; he told me that he wanted to get out as quickly as possible, get married and emigrate to Israel. And he got out somehow. He went away - how he did it and where he ended up I don't know.

I wanted to leave Poland too, even before that. Between 1948 and 1953 I wrote about five or six so-called release reports because I wanted to emigrate - at first to what was still Palestine. I knew that secretly the army agreed to that, and that there was some kind of recruitment campaign underway to Haganah. I also knew that some Haganah officers had served in the Polish Army, or in Berling's or Anders' army during the war. Why I wanted to leave? Because I wanted to start myself a family. Straight after the war I went into the army - how do you start a family then?

The Jews weren't in the best of situations after the war, although I didn't feel it so much because I was in a backwater. There were very few Jews in the unit. I once went to a meeting of a group of Jews in Luban, and this lecturer came and gave a lecture entitled 'The Jewish question and Birobidzhan' 47. At that meeting I met this guy, a Jew from the District Security Office in Luban. He didn't give me his name. And he asked me, 'What are we to do? Stay or go?' He thought that there was no sense in staying in Poland.

Actually, two of us wrote those reports together, I and this Lieutenant Sawicki [name changed]. He had been through all sorts. He'd even been in the German army. He'd spent his whole life in fear. We decided to attack the command together, because those reports didn't go through official channels, we sent them directly to Warsaw. The chief of staff of our brigade at the time was a Jew, Margules Jakub, who didn't want to know anything about it, but he did know. We just used to contact him in secret, not in his office. Anyway, if he had known about it officially and they'd found out, he'd have said goodbye to his post.

We wrote in the sense that we wanted to be seconded to the Israeli army, still Haganah back then. Not to be released, just for secondment, because that was back at the beginning of 1948, when relations were still good. At one point Sawicki and I were even planning to go illegally. We wanted to get in touch with Haganah ourselves, except that would have been desertion and in the end we decided not to. The official refusal to my reports was: 'No, because we say so,' until in the end they summoned me to Warsaw, because the command of the Borderlands Protection Forces was in Warsaw - and still is. And they blew up at me like this... 'What's wrong? Are you badly off here in the Polish Army? Go there, to Israel? To fight?' They called me to order a bit. That's why I wasn't promoted afterwards. For eight years.

I remember the creation of Israel. Not from the army, only from the papers, because Israel wasn't talked about in the army. They didn't want anybody to talk about that at all. I had no chance of leaving at all. Sawicki stopped writing those reports before me and left the army. I stopped writing mine around 1952 or 1953. After that more Jews came to Luban and I wasn't so lonely any more. I

could have left the army too, but afterwards I wouldn't have been able to do anything. Well, where would I go? I didn't have a trade. I didn't have an education. I found love and in 1955 I got married.

I met Julia in the summer of 1954. At that time it was quite fashionable, both in the army and among young people, to forge cultural and entertainment links between workplaces and the army. I was one of the ones in the army who went round workplaces and organized it all. Julia worked in Gryfow, not far from Luban, in a clothing factory. She ran this art club for the ZMP 48. They had a theater group in the works, an amateur one, and my wife used to come with them to us. We had this little stage in the base. I know for certain that they put on Moliere. One moment, what was it? The Nobleman - something like that. [The Would-Be Gentleman]. And then afterwards, after the performance, there would be a party for everyone too.

Married life

My wife's maiden name was Musial, she's Polish, born on 9th January 1931 in Szczakowa. I know that as a child she used to go to the nearby villages to graze cows. Her mother was a housewife, and her father a worker, he worked in the local tannery. When the war broke out they got their things together and left Szczakowa, because they'd found out that that was going to be the Reich. And it was. The border between the Reich and the General Governorship was between Trzebinia and Jaworzno, in Dulowa [Dulowa is actually west of Trzebinia, nearer Cracow]. They were on the move several days, after which they went back home, because I don't think they had anywhere to go. My wife said that they had a very bad time of it under the occupation. They lived very, very modestly.

After the war my wife first did a course in tailoring somewhere near Katowice or in Katowice. Then she moved to Wroclaw, because she had an uncle there who worked in secret security. Quite an important post he had. Then she learned the trade at a vocational school in Wroclaw, where she also worked in a clothing factory. And because she was quite talented that way and she was generally liked, her factory sent her to Lodz to what they called a Technical High School for Prominent Workers. Workplaces sent future employees for management posts there, ones without an education. And they had to get that education while they were working, because there was a lack of management staff.

I was getting an education too. Because I didn't have any papers, they didn't count my 8th grade. No, because they said that there was no such thing as an 8th grade as such before the war. So in September 1954 I went to this school for people at work, an elementary school in Luban. I went for one year. All officers together. While I was going to the 8th grade [Editor's note: 7th grade; the 8th grade in elementary schooling was introduced in the education reform of 1961] Julia and I were still engaged. She helped me with my lessons, because I had no idea about mathematics, and by then she already had a secondary education. I had no problem with Polish. For instance, since childhood I've never made spelling mistakes, although I never learned my spelling much particularly. I don't know why, but it's perhaps a bad trait of mine, but I like correcting people. Not when they're talking, but writing.

I graduated from elementary school a few months before our wedding. And in the end that forced me to carry on studying, because already then they were saying, unfortunately everyone has to have a school-leaving certificate. And yet beforehand they'd been saying 'Not certificates, but willingness will make an officer out of you' [a rhyming recruitment slogan]. I didn't go to

gymnasium, because I wanted to get a commercial education. I passed some exam and they took me.

In 1959 I graduated from a part-time Technical High School for Economics. For the first two years I went to school in Brzeg, and then the school moved to Luban, where I took my school-leaving certificate. But then once I'd started learning, I said to myself that I would carry on. Studying had sort of attracted me in the sense that I not only had to get my school- leaving certificate, but a higher education too. But straight after my school-leaving certificate they sent me on a year's military training course to Warsaw, because I hadn't been to officer training school and for that reason I'd been in the rank of captain for too long. It was a specialist training course for political officers at the Dzierzynski Political Academy. I became a major while I was still in training.

I remember that I was taught education, philosophy, psychology, Polish history and the history of the workers' movement, military geography and army tactics. I completed the course in 13th place out of 120 people. After that course I didn't want to go back to Luban, because unfortunately it was a hole. I thought to myself that after all, there were WOP units in Nowy Sacz, Koszalin, Szczecin, Gdansk and everywhere. I didn't want to go back, but they forced me to. You are there, you have to stay there, and that's the end of it.

My friends from Luban who were already studying also encouraged me to study, so right after that course, in 1960, I started a part-time degree course at the Department of Law and Administration at Wroclaw University. It was a two-part course. First a three-year vocational course in administration, and then a two-year Master's course called administrative studies. I got my degree in 1966; I was in the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel by then.

My wife ended up in Gryfow a little by chance, because after graduating from school it was there that she was sent to work. Before, there used to be employment orders, and not that you worked wherever you wanted to, only you had to work where they wanted. First she was in the post of ZMP chairperson, and then she rose to the position of head of production of a factory employing 1,700 people. She was in the party too [PZPR].

Naturally we didn't have a church wedding. I couldn't have a church wedding as a political officer because they'd have dismissed me from the army at once and I wouldn't even have got any pension. And so on 5th December 1955 in Gryfow we had a civil one and that's how we've stayed until now. A modest ceremony. There were a few officers from Luban and a few of my wife's friends. And that was all. It was in my wife's apartment.

I remember going to the Jewish wedding of a friend, Ferster Henryk, an officer too, in Wroclaw. While still a bachelor, in 1954 or 1955. I didn't go to the ceremony in the synagogue that time, I don't remember why. The wedding reception was in the Hotel Monopol. The band played Jewish tunes, of course. He married a Jewish woman, but he wasn't allowed to have a Jewish wedding. They just asked why, how and what. And he had to go back into civilian life.

I remember that at first there were recommendations in the army to let Jews out of work on Jewish holidays. There were a few such cases. It was officially accepted. But that was the beginning. Not later. Anyway, for me it was pointless, because we weren't really working - in the physical sense or anything. But if I wanted it I had the time off. There in Luban I didn't have any possibilities at all of celebrating any Jewish holidays. Where? No synagogue or anything. There in the western territories

it was a ruin. The nearest synagogue was in Wroclaw, oh, and maybe in Walbrzych as well.

At that time, when we were living there, Luban had 20-something thousand inhabitants. What kind of life there was there? None. One cinema, but no- one went to the cinema. No television as such then, it wasn't until later years that we had a television set. And other than that we used to go for walks. We had neighbors, friends. Our children were born there. First a daughter, Bozena Anita, in 1956, and later, in 1961, a son, Mariusz. The children went to elementary school there. That was the first school in Luban, the so-called secular one. Its directors were party people, and mostly officers' children went there. Those were the requirements in the army of officers, that everything be without religion. But in all in terms of our life in Luban, we did quite well. My wife earned fairly well, at first even more than me.

The children had what they needed. I'd say it was like this, that I'd lived in terrible poverty, and I wanted my children not to know that kind of poverty. So I did everything so that the children would have it good. And that's why I say that I had that army career - I did it, so I did it, to have some kind of good life.

In Luban I had friends, colleagues from the army, both Poles and Jews. There wasn't any difference there between a Pole, or let's say a Christian, and a Jew. At least not where we were, in the WOP. It was only in 1968 that the whole thing started. Then all the Jews there felt it. Even those who hadn't admitted to being Jewish, and there were two of them. Absolutely! Apparently nobody was supposed to know about it, but military information knew - that was this kind of military secret security. But in all, in the whole brigade, there were more of us Jews.

I can count them on my fingers and give names. The ones who were there at the beginning were two brothers, they'd come straight from the front: Wilk and Wolf. One had changed his surname to a Polish one. They were from Cracow. One in the rank of lieutenant, the other a major. When I came to the WOP, they were already serving there. They were transferred elsewhere before March [1968]. There were also: Szechner, my good friend - he came from Sambor -, Bard, and Berchard - this guy who served on the border. I was always friendly with them.

Our brigade commander was even Jewish, Banski his name was. He was transferred to Warsaw later, but he used to come to see us all the time. The brigade commander before him had been Jewish, too. Wasilkowski Roman, his name was changed, I think he'd been called Wasyl Berg before. After that he transferred to Szczecin and had terrible unpleasantness there. They made an Israeli spy out of him, fired him from the army and threw him out of the party.

That was simply the kind of atmosphere that was reigning. There was a purge in the army, the police - everywhere. A big purge, because the intelligence bodies were in charge of it. They were doing the same as the Nazis, checking people to the nth generation. Yes, they were firing third-generation [Jews]. Absolutely. If there was a mixed marriage like ours, forget it. They were always saying things, digging at my wife there at work. But she wasn't dismissed from her post.

They created such moods, such anti-Jewish propaganda in our brigade, that they said: 'Let's not let Jews into our barracks here any more.' And I was very well liked in the army. Very. But the reports that I'd sent before then gave me trouble. They reminded me: 'What do you mean, you wanted to go to Israel...' By then they were throwing everybody out, not just from the army, but from the party too. Well, nearly everybody. And because I was at the time party secretary and they didn't

have any particularly compromising material on me, a Pole even had to come from Warsaw - incidentally, our close friend. Antoni Krasicki. He was the chief party secretary for the whole of the WOP. Before that he'd been in our unit, in Luban, and when he'd moved to Warsaw, we got his apartment, a larger one.

So that Krasicki came and simply dismissed me, because those were his orders. Because he had the command to dismiss all the Jews. But he did it all in such a way that I could resign from my post, and that's what I did. I resigned from my post, because I was ill, because this, because that, because I wanted to set myself up differently. I had to say that. And he did it all amicably, he defended me in a way, he didn't let them throw me out of the party. I'd been honest all the time, and that was another reason why they didn't throw me out of the party, they didn't have anything on me.

If I'd been thrown out of the party that would also have been the loss of half my pension. And that was a lot. They had these guidelines: throw Zionists out of the party first of all for their views. They couldn't always prove that someone had such views, but then they simply fabricated evidence against him. They wanted to deny people their right to a pension. If someone had served 25 years, he got a full pension. After being thrown out of the party you got only half your pension, and for being thrown out of the party and dismissed from the army on disciplinary grounds your pension was taken away altogether. I was dismissed in July 1968, and I went into the reserves. I stayed in the party.

But I remember how, still in the unit, I was isolated from the officer corps - literally. They'd greet me, but they didn't want to stand even for a moment and exchange a few words, because they were afraid. And because I was still a party member, they sent me to the district PZPR conference in Luban. It was my lot to speak publicly that time. That was at the time of the battles between Israel and the Arab countries. I had no choice but to stand up and condemn the Israeli aggression. It was all so artificial, but I had to do it.

Another story, at the same time I was also the vice president of the district ZBOWiD 49 in Luban. Everyone there respected me. It was the time of the district convention and elections to the board. I knew that they could not have elected me in an open ballot, and they didn't. But nobody even nominated me for the vote, and yet I was on the board.

As to the fates of other Jews from our brigade, like me, one more was dismissed from the army but not thrown out of the party. Evidently they didn't have too much material on him either. Szyszko Eugeniusz his name was, now he lives in Koszalin, I think. He hadn't admitted to being Jewish but I knew that he was. He was transferred to the reserve a few months after me.

There was also Koropkow, a Jew too, who'd come to Luban from Warsaw as brigade second-in-command for line affairs. Because that post was vacant in our brigade, they'd sent him to us after some training. And at that time, in 1968, he was there in Luban. And I used to meet him, surreptitiously, if you like. How surreptitiously? They saw us meeting, but no-one could have heard what we were talking about. And we talked about Israel. Yes, we talked about the victory, about this and that. Yes, we were pleased.

Anyway, they threw him out first. They put him through the mill all day, because apparently he'd said something like this: 'Israel's army has won the Arabs,' or something like that. And that was just

humiliating. What, praise Israel like that at that time? You couldn't do that in the army, not only in the army, but above all in the army. Praise Israel - you couldn't. You had to condemn Israel, that Israel was aggressive, that it had attacked the Arab states. That was the theory. And intelligence found out what he'd said. And Koropkow was thrown out of both the party and the army disciplinarily in the end.

Jews were dismissed from the army on disciplinary grounds for being enemies. They became enemies because they spoke approvingly of Israel. I remember, I think there was some talk that they'd returned it to him - I mean not his membership of the party, just his full pension. He'd had an important post, colonel. By then the pension was high. As far as I know, later they changed everyone's disciplinary dismissal to normal dismissal. I mean Jaruzelski 50 did, apparently, but I don't believe it.

And I remember one more, Jolson, his name was. A regular Jew. He was an intelligence officer. Mind you, their intelligence often involved one suspecting another and one informing on another. Yes, so much so that I didn't really want to have much to do with him. My contacts with him were just official. We didn't really see eye to eye. But in general we knew that we were Jews. He and I. I don't know where he ended up after his dismissal, but a few years later we met by chance in Zamosc, where I was working in a clothing factory. He came to our factory from the Silk Industry Union on an inspection, from Lodz, I think.

In workplaces there were these posts for military affairs, and I think he was in one of those posts. They were in charge of civil defense, training, stuff like that. And he told me a bit about how they'd gathered material on me. I found out that I'd wanted to go to Israel. It was only afterwards that he could talk to me about that, because when he'd been in the army he hadn't told me. But he met the same fate as me, because they dismissed him at the same time. But as I said, I wasn't one like him, because they'd roped me into political work, and that was a vast difference. My job was a little different. To keep the army informed. Only that, no more.

I only found out all that, that other life, after being dismissed into civilian life. I thought that it wasn't like they'd said it was. But it was too late. So I said then that I didn't want to do any social or political activity or anything. When later I started teaching in school, I taught what wasn't connected with politics. I said no. Tough. At first I'd even belonged to the combatant organization, ZBOWiD, to the Union of War Invalids, to other organizations. I threw it all in.

I remember the last New Year's Eve, after my dismissal, in 1968. And then, still living in our army apartment, we were alone at our table. My wife can't get over that to this day. We'd always been friendly there with our neighbors: the Muchowskis and the Rzezaks. Poles, officers. And we'd spent every New Year's Eve at the army, naturally, in this large sports hall, we'd sat together at the same table. We were just totally alone, no-one from our table had come to the New Year's Eve party, although they'd put their names down.

The Muchowskis were so embarrassed, because they weren't allowed to sit with Jews. And they didn't come to the New Year's Eve party, because they were simply scared. But I know they did it on purpose. For me. So that we couldn't hold it against them that they were at the party and had sat somewhere else. Because they were supposed to sit with us.

The Rzezaks had gone away beforehand, to Hajnowka. His wife was Jewish, she'd been all along the front, she'd been a Platerowka [In 1943 an Independent Women's Battalion, the Emilia Plater Battalion, was created alongside the First Kosciuszko Division in the USSR. After the war, the 'Platerowkas,' as its members were known, settled near Luban, in a borough that was named Platerowka in their honor]. I think she's still alive, and my age, I think. Since Rzezak's death I haven't kept in touch with her, he died from stomach cancer. I went to his funeral personally, with my wife, in Lomza. Muchowski's dead too. I didn't go to his funeral, but I found out that he'd died. Before that we used to write to both families all the time.

What was my attitude to communism? I don't know. In that initial period in the WOP it wasn't communism as such. In the army I didn't feel that it was communism. Well what was it? I had a position, advocated what was there, what I considered to be the truth. I advocated what for me was true. That's what I was taught in the army, because I got all my education after the war. And what I was taught in high school, and what I learned at the university was true for me. I was never a communist. I said I wasn't a communist. I simply liked a system of society based on what I'd call the theories of Marx and Engels. Communism in the Marxist sense, that everybody had not the same but according to their needs. Back when they'd enlisted me into the PPR, I didn't know what the party was at all. But once I was a party member I did think that it was a party that was doing something, giving something.

Civilian life

After being dismissed into civilian life I didn't want to be out of work, because your pension was such that I had to find a job. Those were the regulations. Otherwise I wouldn't have got my pension because I was supposedly too young. Of pensionable age, but too young, because I had to work until I was 55. And in 1968 I was only 45. And then after transferring to the reserve I had a guaranteed pension. But when they dismissed Jews from the army, unfortunately they had nowhere to go to work. Who took them on? No-one. They didn't particularly want to take people on. At least through the army I'd learned another profession thanks to my degree, and that saved me.

I went to work in a school, because they knew me in Luban and took me on no problem. Knowing that I was a Jew. They knew why I'd been dismissed from the army. Everyone knew. It's a small town and you knew about everything. Well, but they took me on, readily, really. From September 1968 I started working in that Technical High School for Economics and in the vocational school. Really. I felt happiest in that school in Luban, if I were to compare all the schools where I've been employed.

Incidentally, the same people who had once taught me at that technical high were later my colleagues as teachers. I taught almost everything there. Because I'd majored in the economics of industrial enterprises, I taught those subjects. I mean what they called enterprise business, or enterprise economics, book-keeping, and typing. I taught 40 lessons a week. I didn't want to have that much and I couldn't cope. There was a lack of teachers at that time and in the end, somehow... I got into it and taught for two years.

From the time I was dismissed [from the army], though, we wanted to leave Luban. I started trying to get an apartment in Wroclaw, but it was hard to get an apartment being back in civilian life. You know. They don't really want to give you an apartment if you're no longer in the army. In the end we were offered an apartment, a dump. We didn't want it. But it turned out that a colleague of my

wife's from work was in Zamosc, he'd transferred to a newly organized branch of the Warsaw Cora, the clothing factory. He wanted to get my wife to go there as his deputy. I said to my wife, to the proposal: 'Yes, we'll go.' We'd felt it on our own skins then, so I said let's not have the children feel it. And we decided to go to Zamosc.

When I was dismissed from the army the children were still too small to understand what the year 1968 was. I never told the children anything about it and didn't want them to know. The children were one thing, but I didn't want their friends to find out that we are - that I am - Jewish. In Luban everybody knew, but I didn't want anyone to find out in Zamosc. The children didn't suffer in that school in Luban, they didn't experience anything, but I was afraid they would. In 1968 Mariusz was seven and Anita Bozena twelve.

My wife transferred to Zamosc alone first. She became assistant director of the factory, and my wife's friend - he died a long time ago - was the boss. She got a company apartment there. So I had to go after her. I had to leave during the school year. The headmaster, my good friend, advised me against it. He said, 'Don't move your daughter now, during the 8th grade, because that's a very bad thing to do.' I told him I didn't have any other option. And I said that the situation was such that she had to move, because my wife had transferred and I had to go after her.

They said farewell to me decently at school. They didn't know I was leaving; I told them the day before, that the next day, the day after, I wouldn't be working. On the same day they organized a leaving party for me. A truly warm farewell. I moved to Zamosc literally before the Christmas break on the 20-somethingth of December 1970. And I have to say that I didn't have any unpleasantness at that school. Either from the pupils or from the teachers. Nothing at all. They'd known me from Luban for so many years. I'd rubbed shoulders with teaching circles; we even used to meet up on various occasions. I never had any unpleasantness.

And in Zamosc I taught future drivers in the PKS [the state national bus company] Factory Vocational School on a temporary basis. Enterprise economics was what I taught - there was such a subject in those vocational schools - and civic education. I also worked in the same Cora factory as my wife. I was her boss's assistant, and I did everything that was needed.

We didn't want to stay in Zamosc permanently. For our daughter's sake we wanted to move to Cracow; she was finishing high school and in Zamosc there were no prospects for her. For us education was very important, because the thing was that we wanted the children to grow up into at least decent people. And in the end my daughter graduated in applied mathematics from the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy [now AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow] and is a programmer, and my son is a driver and mechanic.

Even before that I had written an application to the army construction service with a request for allocation of an apartment in Cracow. I received the answer that I could have an apartment, but a co-operative one. I even came to visit Cracow and look at the apartment under construction at the same time. We waited nearly four years for it. I came to Cracow with the children in February 1974. I think it was 28th February to be precise. My wife stayed on a little longer there in Zamosc. We occupied that apartment from the beginning until the present moment.

It was an army apartment, a co-operative apartment bought by the army. The army was no longer building many of its own apartment blocks then, just wherever a co-operative block was being built

they bought up apartments for their officers, and not only officers. After some time I bought that apartment for myself. I announced to the army that I was relinquishing my army apartment. In exchange you received a lump sum, relative to the number of people living there. And with that lump sum I bought the apartment.

And how did I come to teach in schools in Cracow? Because I taught in two. First in Nowa Huta [from 1949-1951 a separate town and from 1951 a borough of Cracow, over 200,000 residents], on the Kalinowe estate in Economics Schools Complex no. 3. Except that they didn't have a full-time position for me. So I took on typing. It went reasonably. I taught there about five years. Then after that I moved to Economics Schools Complex No. 1 on Kapucynska Street, and as there was a vacancy for a teacher in their college of further education in shorthand and correspondence in a foreign language, and they didn't have a teacher who could both type and speak German, they took me on. I was on a contract all the time, every year that contract was renewed.

In all I taught in schools for 15 years. After I was dismissed into civilian life at first I had to work, and later I didn't have to but I took the work because I wanted to earn some money on the side, and so I worked in the school until 1983. I'll tell the truth, if I'd been younger I'd probably have preferred that teaching career. But because I was a bit of an age, it was hard for me at school.

Before the introduction of martial law 51 I already knew that something had to happen, because things were looking very bad in Poland. In every respect. I was never a supporter of Solidarity 52 and I still am not. From the outset I knew what it was, that it was saturated with clergymen. And I didn't like the unrest that it provoked either. Beforehand everyone had lived peacefully, and they suddenly upset everything. My family isn't in favor of Solidarity either. But the neighbor upstairs was. He's dead now. But our officer neighbor on the 4th floor is against everything. What's going on now is bad to him.

But my political convictions are none now. Well, what political convictions have I got now? I'm simply in favor of it being better. I'm a left-winger at this moment. That's simply the spirit I was educated in the army. Before the army I don't really know what I was, but I don't think I was either right or left-wing. I only know that that pre-war poverty led to a hopeless situation. And so that's why, because of that poverty that I experienced, I'm left-wing. I haven't got any real right-wingers or left-wingers in the family.

Since the children came back from Israel their convictions are these: the democracy in Israel is real. Mariusz was there about two months, and Anita Bozena and her family nearly eight years. In my opinion it's an abnormal situation there, because the wars go on for so long. There are too many political parties there and that's bad. How can some party, religious, for instance, or any other, dictate its conditions in the Knesset 53? They dictate. I was listening about Sharon recently [Ariel Sharon, b. 1928, Israeli prime minister from 2001-2006], that he had to bow to the left, because the left is against the financing of religious life in Israel.

I remember the fall of communism. To tell the truth I was afraid that something unpleasant might happen to me because I was supposedly a communist. Here's Solidarity, and this and that. And those anti-communist slogans and so on. And I was afraid, that who knew whether they might not take my army pension off me? I was worried about that. Really, that they were going to root out that I'd been a political officer. After all, they wrote in the papers about how political officers were fervent enemies and so on. I was afraid of the beginnings of Solidarity, although there were a few

Jews in Solidarity too. And the reaction of the church to Jews, and then all that anti-Jewish stuff and the clergy's speeches. How many times has Jankowski 54 come out against the Jews? Several times.

I was convinced that I would have problems because I have a military pension and I am a Jew not a Pole. But afterwards I came to terms with it all. My fears were unfounded. But they were well founded in relation to some of my friends. Yes, that they had their combatants' privileges withdrawn, and for that reason all sorts of benefits were taken off them too.

I know this guy, who lives in Wroclaw now, but before that worked in Luban in the structures of the so-called Zwiad. And he hasn't got combatant's rights any more because he was connected with the secret security. He worked to protect the border, in the WOP, and was involved in intelligence among the civil population in order to gather information about possible border crossings or intentions to cross the border for spying or even smuggling. They had these informers of theirs among the civilian population, just like in every intelligence or counter-intelligence organization. They could sometimes be criminals persuaded to co-operate, who get their crimes 'forgotten' in return. So they worked to the detriment of the Polish state, as they now put it - they worked to protect the border. I knew those people, who were totally loyal to everyone. And that they acted to the detriment - of who? Hard to say of who, but apparently of the Polish state. And that's what's happened to them. It didn't happen to us, fortunately, and it won't happen to me now before I go to my grave. Even now there are so many trials in relation to people who aren't even here any more.

Not long ago, perhaps two years ago it'll be that he left Poland, this former commandant of a penal camp in Jaworzno, rank of general. He was a Jew, but I don't remember what he was called. It was a camp for Poles who were 'Volksdeutsche' or collaborated with the Germans. They were ones that weren't taken into the Polish Army in view of them having such a past. They worked in mines there. And now the Polish authorities are demanding his extradition. [Editor's note: Mr. Glazer is talking about Samuel Morel, commandant of a post-war labor camp in Swietochlowice (not Jaworzno) near Katowice. In April 2004 Poland gave Israel, where Morel now lives, a request for his extradition. The prosecutor with the Institute of National Remembrance (the IPN, which is responsible for tasks including bringing Nazi and Stalinist criminals to justice) has charged Morel with committing crimes against humanity, which are not subject to a statute of limitation. Morel allegedly used torture against the prisoners and according to the prosecutor is responsible for the deaths of over 1,500 people, Poles and Germans who signed the 'Volksliste.' To the end of January 2005 Israel had not responded to Poland's request for Morel's extradition].

My daughter

My daughter asked me herself. Actually not me, first my wife, if she had Jewish roots. So my wife says, 'Ask your dad.' She was already married, and had children, and although we'd never talked about the matter before at all, I know that she certainly knew before that. She'd noticed it all herself, started to understand. She'd been to high school, to university; she knew what was what. But when exactly she found out, it's hard for me to say. And so in the end she asked me, because it turns out she wanted to go to Israel.

She'd thought about it before, I think, because I noticed that this letter had been written to the Israeli embassy. There was a reply from there too, that the embassy didn't organize emigration to Israel, but the Sochnut 55 agency. That's this organization that deals with Jewish emigration from

countries like Russia, Ukraine and Poland. And then, in 1993, my daughter started trying to get the papers. She needed a certificate that she was of Jewish descent. Here in the community organization they didn't really want to issue it to her, because I'm not a member of the community organization. I don't know why I'm not, I'm just not.

So I said, 'Go to Warsaw, the papers are there in the Historical Institute, some trace is still there, and you'll get it.' And she did go there. She got some document off them, the most important she could present them with, and on the grounds of that document, which confirmed that I am a Jew, her whole family got an immigration visa. Although it's not on her mother's side, at least on her father's side she's got Jewish descent.

My daughter told me where in Warsaw it is, and there, in that Institute, I found the book that was in Bielsko in 1945, and my name. Why did I go to the Institute? Because I wanted to have some extra documents made out, because all I had were those about that Ruff guy, the SS-man, and I wanted them to count me a longer period for the compensation, because there I only had that period from the camps. That time, in the Institute, my daughter found out that they issue certificates for that compensation for the Polish- German Reconciliation Fund. And I got compensation. The highest that you could get. I split it all between the children.

My daughter and son-in-law wanted to emigrate because of marital problems, just to change something in their lives. My son-in-law is called Andrzej Pankowski. They have two children: Paulina, who's 15 now, and Daniel, he's at university. They went away in January 1994; at that time it was still fairly calm in Israel. They went there literally on the off-chance, and stayed eight years. They lived in Kiryat Yam at first, and then in Kiryat Chaim near Haifa.

When they left, none of them spoke Hebrew. First they had a language training course, a short one. My grandson picked the language up quickest, then my son-in-law. Yes, it's true. And my son-in-law could speak fantastic Hebrew there. Better than my daughter even. My granddaughter, Paulina, picked the language up quickly in kindergarten too. But I couldn't understand anything when I went to Israel. I felt very bad with that. It was only when I met some Jews from Poland that I somehow managed to communicate with them.

After six months we went there to visit them. It was after Rosh Hashanah and before Yom Kippur. The customs official in the port, in Haifa, asked us where we intended to spend Yom Kippur. And I say, 'At home, I think - we'll make it.' There was such a control, it was awful. Like never. Well, by then it was that unsettled time. That first time the whole family went, my son, my daughter-in-law Danuta, and my granddaughter Dominika, a year older than Paulina. We were there two months. By car to Greece and then by ferry to Haifa.

And on the ferry, we looked, and there was this family, and with them a little girl who latched onto my granddaughter. It turned out they were French people living in Israel. And so I'm talking to this Frenchman - how was I to know if he was a Jew or a Frenchman? And we were talking about the occupation. And we mentioned the Blechhammer camp 56. In the sheet metal works. He was a prisoner there and was liberated on the same day as me! A strange coincidence. And I ask him how life was. And he says that he didn't want to live in France, because there was anti-Semitism there. That's why he and his whole family had gone to Israel. He's retired, has a very good life, because he had a high-ranking position. And we sailed to Haifa with them.

That was an unforgettable trip, really. I don't know, what plan I had? To see. To see Israel, for the first time in my life. It was hard to imagine it all, how people live in Israel. I was impressed with Israel, that it was so beautiful. Well everything was beautiful, really. Well, sea like sea, but the shops and the cafes - it was a totally different life from ours. In Poland, it was still a bit of a mess back then. They still weren't doing to well for themselves at that time. They didn't have work yet, at first they were on this kind of benefit and they were living in this big apartment block for immigrants. We'd taken them a bit of money in dollars: well, how could we go to visit our children without taking them anything?

My daughter and son-in-law didn't have a car back then, so we did the sightseeing on the bus. That time I tried to find my name there in Yad Vashem 57, but there was no way, because there are so many names there. I happened to be there with a guided tour, and we didn't have too much time to look through all those names. But even my grandson looked there afterwards, and he did say that there were some names, Glaser, Glazer, but I say that I don't think I can have anyone in Israel. Definitely not. But we did find someone else there. My wife said to me once: 'You know my production boss, Ustianowski, he's called, from back in Gryfow, and his father hid a Jew or some Jews. And I know that sometime back he used to go to Israel somewhere.' So I say OK, let's look for him, because in Yad Vashem, if nowhere else, there must be some tree of his planted or his name listed on plaques. And we found the plaque. We took a photograph and when we got back we sent it to his son, because his father was no longer alive.

Back then in Israel, that prime minister Barak was in power [Ehud Barak, head of the Israeli government in 1999-2000]. I liked that. Barak appeared on television later - I didn't understand much of it, but they translated it for me. A very human sort of guy. Really, he had his views.

My daughter and son-in-law were friendly with this couple who'd been living there since 1958. I even met them too. Very nice people. They speak Polish too. He'd emigrated after graduating from a technical high school for electrics in Szczecin, and works for the army there in an armaments factory; he'll be retiring before long now. She's called Dora and is a nurse. My daughter and son-in-law even lived with them privately. One year my wife and I even went to visit them at Rosh Hashanah. They held this little party for us with gefilte fish. They got their Polish citizenship back. They got this notification from the Polish embassy that all those who'd been forced to relinquish their Polish citizenship, if they want, can get it back 58.

I'll be honest. My daughter and son-in-law had it very good over there. My daughter made very good money. My son-in-law had some transportation firm. Really, they came back to Poland because of Daniel, my grandson. He was turning 18. They didn't want him to go into the army there. Terrible, what was going on there. My wife couldn't bear it. 'What are they doing there? God! They'll get killed!'

But that wasn't the only reason why they came back. They were homesick. Not my son-in-law. My son-in-law is Polish, but he says that he'd go back to Israel today. Really, he talks everything in Israel up. He can't make ends meet here. He's got a secondary education and works in a computer shop. And my daughter the same. And since she's been back she's had a rotten job, she's on 2,500 zloty gross [the average wage in Poland in Q3 2004 was 2,296 zloty gross]. They thought it would be different when they got back.

Paulina is at middle school. Daniel is studying international relations at a private college, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Cracow College. He didn't get into the UJ [the Jagiellonian University], to do American studies. Unfortunately. Even today I've been out round the second-hand bookshops. A second-hand textbook I wanted to buy him on the history of the United States. Couldn't get it. It costs 80 zloty new. But I have to help them, really, because they haven't got enough to keep them.

All four got Israeli citizenship and passports, only my grandson's passport has expired. Daniel didn't have his bar mitzvah there; he's not interested in his roots. My daughter still is. She's really getting into her roots; she wants to know everything about me and all. My granddaughter sort of likes it a bit; she even went with her parents to the festival 59, in Kazimierz 60. Now my daughter, my grandson and my granddaughter can speak perfect English. Paulina has just entered an English competition. She came first in her school. Very good marks in all her subjects. And she still keeps in touch with her classmates from Israel, but in Hebrew. And I go to the post office to post the letters.

All in all we've been to Israel to visit three times. In the summer of 1995 my wife and I went on our own. Without our son, because my son won't fly; he says he won't get in a plane, although he's a taxi driver. The third time my wife and I flew too, in the summer of 1996. Now I'm not planning to go to Israel, because I've got no-one to go to. I could go to those friends of mine, but there's not really any way anymore, because it's the age thing too.

And how did it come about that I found my friends again? I found two - or in fact three school friends again in Israel. First Horowitz. Once I went to Bielsko with my wife, I went into the Jewish Social and Cultural Society, and there this Mrs. Wiewiora was sitting. I asked her to tell me something about people from Bielsko who might have turned up. She told me that in Israel there was this Bielsko Locals Group 61. And I wrote to the group asking them to reply if I could find anyone from Bielsko. And my friend Horowitz wrote back to me.

It was after two of my visits to Israel that I found my best friend from my Bielsko days. And it wasn't until I was in Israel for the last time that I met up with Henryk. He's called Tsvi Horowitz now. To be exact, he lives in Qiryat Motzkin. That's a small town outside Haifa. It turned out he only served about three years in the navy, I think, and then he had his own firm, a big one, but I don't know what line it was in. I don't know where his wife is from, but she was born in Israel. Anyway, she doesn't know Polish, because she couldn't understand us at all.

Well, and through Horowitz I met another friend too - Benio Richtman. He knew me, but I didn't remember him. Because he was a grade higher than me, I think. He told me a lot about himself. He likes to talk a lot. He was in hiding in a Pole's house, round here in Myslenice. And he told me that the Germans shot his father in front of him. He went into the army even before me. He stayed at the officers' school in Cracow and as an officer even went to the front. And the family that hid him, he had them move to Bielsko, and is still in touch with them.

Then he was serving in Zary, but when the state of Israel began to emerge, he wrote a report to Marshal Zymierski [Michal Rola-Zymierski (1890-1989), the minister of national defense and commander-in-chief of the Polish Army at the time], saying that 'I fought for Poland at the front, and now please would you let me fight for the Jewish state.' And Zymierski let him. He went as an officer to Israel together with Horowitz. They just met on the training course near Dzierzoniow. I didn't meet his wife, because she was sick at the time, but I know that she's Italian. She knows Hebrew, Italian and German.

From the two of them I found out about Liban. I didn't meet up with Liban, because my friends said he isn't really in control of himself any more. He's got this nervous breakdown. They didn't want me to meet up with him. Yes, I think things got to his head a bit. They told me that he worked in the army all the time. In fact, it turned out that all three live right near each other. Horowitz is a left-winger, but Richtman is a right-winger. And they argue about that. In jest, but they argue. And they talk at each other like this: you're a left-winger, I'm a right-winger.

As for friends, Rappaport turned up earlier, but unfortunately I didn't get to see him. I got news of him through a woman friend. About ten years ago she wrote me that he'd died in Jerusalem. She was apparently a school friend of mine, but I don't remember her. I still have that letter.

From Horowitz I found out about one more friend from our class, Beniek Bernkopf. Before the war his parents had an optician's shop in Bielsko. We were even friendly a bit, we played together. His family were pre-war communists, so they went straight to Russia in 1939. I don't know how he got it, but after the war - so Horowitz told me - he became Polish ambassador in Moscow. Ambassador or... in any case he was in some fairly high-up position there and he was a party guy. And he stayed there until 1968, until that March period, and then he came back to Bielsko apparently. To Bielsko, or to Warsaw? I don't know exactly. He came back and said, 'I've come back, now please could you give me a job?', but they said, 'Oh no, if you want to get any kind of job with a position, you'll have to leave Poland, because you're a Jew.' That I don't know, whether he did emigrate then, or whether he stayed in Poland, because I didn't meet up with him.

While she was in Israel my daughter kept trying to find some of our family, just on the off chance... But she didn't find anybody. But, this one episode, from Cracow. Some time ago, it was five years or so ago, somebody called me and started speaking English. Unfortunately I don't know English and I couldn't really communicate with him. So then he went into Yiddish. The Yiddish I understood, but couldn't speak either. And he asks me, 'Which Glaser are you from?', and I said to that, 'What do you mean? From Ignacy Izaak Glaser.' 'And I'm from the other Glaser,' he says to me.

I didn't remember that brother of my father's that lived in Bielsko having a son, but he certainly must have had a son. 'I've come to Cracow on a trip from the United States and I'm staying here in a hotel at the moment in Cracow,' that's what he said to me. It really surprised me. I didn't remember having anyone in the United States. But I thought to myself: I'd go the next day to the hotel and find out what trip it was. The receptionist confirmed to me that it had been a trip from the States, and they'd left for Hungary.

They'd left literally before I'd got there. I never met him. I tried to get the address at least from the receptionist. She didn't want to give it me. She just says: 'It's a secret. I won't give you a name or an address.' And from that moment I lost touch. I thought that he'd write to me, call, but nothing. And I know that there's certainly some of my father's family in the United States. Presumably there is, because a Glaser is a Glaser, right? If he told me he was 'that' Glaser's son! I don't remember if or how he introduced himself, but I might not have heard, mightn't I? I'm a little deaf, and I can't really hear very well on the telephone; I have to put the receiver to the other ear.

And now we just live our lives quietly. I joined the Jewish Social and Cultural Society at the beginning of the 1990s. I just started going to their meetings and I liked it. At first I went alone, and then with my wife. Not too often, because we don't really feel like going into town at night much. We're at the age where really we sit at home and in front of the television. Now the family is a little

bigger, because they've come back from Israel, so we visit each other a lot. Mariusz and his family live close by too, in Nowa Huta. We have a little plot of land for leisure near Myslenice. And that's how we're set up.

Glossary

1 Polonization of Jewish first and last names

The Polonization of first and last names in the 19th century was mostly an effect and a symptom of assimilation. Representatives of the so-called assimilatory trend changed their names or added a Polish element to the name. Later, this tendency was not restricted to the assimilatory circle. In the interwar period Jews often had two names: the Jewish name (in the Hebrew or Yiddish version), the official name, written down on the birth certificate and the Polish name, used in everyday contacts with Poles, but also among family. The story of the Polish-Jewish historian Schiper is an interesting case of the variety of names used by Polish Jews. Schiper published his works under three different names: Izaak, Icchak and Ignacy. After WWII many Jews who survived the Holocaust in hiding under false names never returned to their pre-war names. Legal regulations after the war enabled this procedure. Such a situation was caused by the lack of a feeling of security and post-war trauma, which showed itself in breaking off ties with one's group. Another reason for the Polonization of names after WWII was the pressure exerted by the communist authorities on Jews - members of the communist party and employed in the party apparatus.

2 Hitlerjugend

The youth organization of the German Nazi Party (NSDAP). In 1936 all other German youth organizations were abolished and the Hitlerjugend became the only legal state youth organization. At the end of 1938, the SS took charge of the organization. From 1939 all young Germans between 10 and 18 were obliged to join the Hitlerjugend, which organized after-school activities and political education. Boys over 14 were also given pre-military training, and girls over 14 were trained for motherhood and domestic duties. In 1939 it had 7 million members. During World War II members of the Hitlerjugend served in auxiliary forces. At the end of 1944, 17-year-olds from the Hitlerjugend were drafted to form the 12th Panzer Division 'Hitlerjugend' and sent to the Western Front.

3 Poland's independence, 1918

In 1918 Poland regained its independence after over 100 years under the partitions, when it was divided up between Russia, Austria and Prussia. World War I ended with the defeat of all three partitioning powers, which made the liberation of Poland possible. On 8 January 1918 the president of the USA, Woodrow Wilson, declaimed his 14 points, the 13th of which dealt with Poland's independence. In the spring of the same year, the Triple Entente was in secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary, offering them integrity and some of Poland in exchange for parting company with their German ally, but the talks were a fiasco and in June the Entente reverted to its original demands of full independence for Poland. In the face of the defeat of the Central Powers, on 7 October 1918 the Regency Council issued a statement to the Polish nation proclaiming its independence and the reunion of Poland. Institutions representing the Polish nation on the international arena began to spring up, as did units disarming the partitioning powers' armed

forces and others organizing a system of authority for the needs of the future state. In the night of 6-7 November 1918, in Lublin, a Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland was formed under Ignacy Daszynski. Its core comprised supporters of Pilsudski. On 11 November 1918 the armistice was signed on the western front, and the Regency Council entrusted Pilsudski with the supreme command of the nascent army. On 14 November the Regency Council dissolved, handing all civilian power to Pilsudski; the Lublin government also submitted to his rule. On 17 November Pilsudski appointed a government, which on 21 November issued a manifesto promising agricultural reforms and the nationalization of certain branches of industry. It also introduced labor legislation that strongly favored the workers, and announced parliamentary elections. On 22 November Pilsudski announced himself Head of State and signed a decree on the provisional authorities in the Republic of Poland. The revolutionary left, from December 1918 united in the Communist Workers' Party of Poland, came out against the government and independence, but the program of Pilsudski's government satisfied the expectations of the majority of society and emboldened it to fight for its goals within the parliamentary democracy of the independent Polish state. In January and June 1919 the first elections to the Legislative Sejm were held. On 20 February 1919 the Legislative Sejm passed the 'small constitution'; Pilsudski remained Head of State. The first stage of establishing statehood was completed, despite the fact that the issue of Poland's borders had not yet been resolved.

4 Pilsudski, Jozef (1867-1935)

Polish activist in the independence cause, politician, statesman, marshal. With regard to the cause of Polish independence he represented the pro-Austrian current, which believed that the Polish state would be reconstructed with the assistance of Austria- Hungary. When Poland regained its independence in January 1919, he was elected Head of State by the Legislative Sejm. In March 1920 he was nominated marshal, and until December 1922 he held the positions of Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army. After the murder of the president, Gabriel Narutowicz, he resigned from all his posts and withdrew from politics. He returned in 1926 in a political coup. He refused the presidency offered to him, and in the new government held the posts of war minister and general inspector of the armed forces. He was prime minister twice, from 1926-1928 and in 1930. He worked to create a system of national security by concluding bilateral non-aggression pacts with the USSR (1932) and Germany (1934). He sought opportunities to conclude firm alliances with France and Britain. In 1932, owing to his deteriorating health, Pilsudski resigned from his functions. He was buried in the Crypt of Honor in the Wawel Cathedral of the Royal Castle in Cracow.

5 Jews in the prewar Polish Army

Some 10% of the volunteers who joined Pilsudski's Polish Legions fighting for independence were Jews. Between the wars Jews were called up for military service just like all other citizens. Like other ethnic minorities, Jews were hampered in their rise to officer ranks (other than doctors called up into the army) for political reasons. In September 1939 almost 150,000 Jews were mobilized within the Polish Army (19% of the fully mobilized forces). It is expected that losses among Jewish soldiers in the September Campaign were approaching 30,000, and the number of prisoners of war is estimated at around 60,000. Like Poles, Jews were also isolated in POW camps in the Reich. They were separated from the Poles and imprisoned in far worse conditions. At the turn of 1939 and 1940 Jewish privates and subalterns started being released from the camps and sent to larger

towns in the General Governorship (probably as part of the 'Judenrein' campaign in the Reich). Jewish officers of the Polish Army, protected by international conventions, remained in the Oflags [Rus.: officer POW camps] until the end of the war. This was not the case for Jewish soldiers who were captured by the Russians. More than 10% of the victims of the Katyn massacre were Jews, mostly doctors.

6 Endeks

Name formed from the initials of a right-wing party active in Poland during the inter-war period (ND - 'en-de'). Narodowa Demokracja [National Democracy] was founded by Roman Dmowski. Its members and supporters, known as 'Endeks,' often held anti-Semitic views.

7 Polish Socialist Party (PPS)

Founded in 1892, its reach extended throughout the Kingdom of Poland and abroad, and it proclaimed slogans advocating the reclamation by Poland of its sovereignty. It was a party that comprised many currents and had room for activists of varied views and from a range of social backgrounds. During the revolutionary period in 1905- 07 it was one of the key political forces; it directed strikes, organized labor unions, and conducted armed campaigns. It was also during this period that it developed into a party of mass reach (towards the end of 1906 it had some 55,000 members). After 1918 the PPS came out in support of the parliamentary system, and advocated the need to ensure that Poland guaranteed freedom and civil rights, division of the churches (religious communities) and the state, and territorial and cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities; and it defended the rights of hired laborers. The PPS supported the policy of the head of state, Jozef Pilsudski. It had seats in the first government of the Republic, but from 1921 was in opposition. In 1918-30 the main opponents of the PPS were the National Democrats [ND] and the communist movement. In the 1930s the state authorities' repression of PPS activists and the reduced activity of working-class and intellectual political circles eroded the power of the PPS (in 1933 it numbered barely 15,000 members) and caused the radicalization of some of its leaders and party members. During World War II the PPS was formally dissolved, and some of its leaders created the Polish Socialist Party - Liberty, Equality, Independence (PPS-WRN), which was a member of the coalition supporting the Polish government in exile and the institutions of the Polish Underground State. In 1946-48 many members of PPS-WRN left the country or were arrested and sentenced in political trials. In December 1948 PPS activists collaborating with the PPR consented to the two parties merging on the PPR's terms. In 1987 the PPS resumed its activities. The party currently numbers a few thousand members.

8 National Alliance (Stronnictwo Narodowe, SN)

Polish political alliance founded in 1928. The SN's program was right-wing and nationalistic; the alliance advocated the creation of a nationalist Catholic state and the hierarchical organization of society, and promulgated slogans demanding the curtailment of Jews' civil liberties and rights (including access to higher education). It was the largest political party in pre-war Poland; in 1938 it had over 200,000 members.

9 Anti-Semitism in Poland in the 1930s

From 1935-39 the activities of Polish anti-Semitic propaganda intensified. The Sejm introduced barriers to ritual slaughter, restrictions of Jews' access to education and certain professions. Nationalistic factions postulated the removal of Jews from political, social and cultural life, and agitated for economic boycotts to persuade all the country's Jews to emigrate. Nationalist activists took up posts outside Jewish shops and stalls, attempting to prevent Poles from patronizing them. Such campaigns were often combined with damage and looting of shops and beatings, sometimes with fatal consequences. From June 1935 until 1937 there were over a dozen pogroms, the most publicized of which was the pogrom in Przytyk in 1936. The Catholic Church also contributed to the rise of anti-Semitism.

10 Unemployment in prewar Poland

As in other countries, the economic crisis in Poland deepened from the end of 1929; sales of goods and output dwindled, and unemployment climbed. The drop in central budget revenues caused a budget deficit, and problems with export and foreign investors withdrawing their capital worsened the balance of payments. In the 1930s the protracted economic crisis compounded the dissatisfaction in society. The majority of the rural population was living in abject poverty, and in the towns there was vast open unemployment among both manual and white- collar workers, and hidden unemployment among traders and artisans bereft of a clientele. The deteriorating situation led to mounting social and ethnic-related tension and increasing openness to the influences of radical political groups.

11 Akiba - Hanoar Haivri

Zionist youth scouting organization founded in Cracow in the early 1920s, subordinate to the Zionist Organization. Its program was moderately right-wing; it advocated the dissemination of the Hebrew language and Jewish religious tradition, which it considered a key element of the national identity. The first Akiba groups left for Palestine in 1930. In 1939 the organization numbered 30,000 adherents in Europe and Palestine. During WWII it was active in the resistance movement. Armed Akiba units took part in campaigns in Cracow (1942) and in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1943). After the war it did not resume its activities in Poland, but continued to operate in Palestine until the foundation of the State of Israel (1948).

12 Hanoar Hatzioni

(Heb.: Zionist Youth), a youth scouting organization founded in 1931 by a break-away from the Hanoar Haivri organization Akiba. It aligned itself with the centre-right current of Zionism, and its program placed great importance on educating young people in accordance with the principles and values of the Judaic tradition.

13 Betar

Brith Trumpledor (Hebrew) meaning Trumpledor Society; right- wing Revisionist Jewish youth movement. It was founded in 1923 in Riga by Vladimir Jabotinsky, in memory of J. Trumpledor, one of the first fighters to be killed in Palestine, and the fortress Betar, which was heroically defended for many months during the Bar Kohba uprising. Its aim was to propagate the program of the revisionists and prepare young people to fight and live in Palestine. It organized emigration through

both legal and illegal channels. It was a paramilitary organization; its members wore uniforms. They supported the idea to create a Jewish legion in order to liberate Palestine. From 1936-39 the popularity of Betar diminished. During WWII many of its members formed guerrilla groups.

14 Poalei Zion (the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers' Party Workers of Zion)

In Yiddish 'Yidishe Socialistish-Demokratishe Arbeiter Partei Poale Syon.' A political party formed in 1905 in the Kingdom of Poland, and operating throughout the Polish state from 1918. The party's main aim was to create an independent socialist Jewish state in Palestine. In the short term, Poalei Zion postulated cultural and national autonomy for the Jews in Poland, and improved labor and living conditions of Jewish hired laborers. In 1920, during a conference in Vienna, the party split, forming the Right Poalei Zion (the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party Workers of Zion), which became part of the Socialist Workers' International and the World Zionist Organization, and the Left Poalei Zion (the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers' Party Workers of Zion), the radical minority, which sympathized with the Bolsheviks. The Left Poalei Zion placed more emphasis on socialist postulates. Key activists: I. Schiper (Right PZ), L. Holenderski, I. Lew (Left PZ); paper: Arbeiter Welt. Both fractions had their own youth organizations: Right PZ: Dror and Freiheit; Left PZ - Jugnt. Left PZ was weaker than Right PZ; only towards the end of the 1930s did it start to form coalitions with other socialist and Zionist parties. In 1937 Left PZ joined the World Zionist Organization. During WWII both fractions were active in underground politics and the resistance movement in the ghettos, in particular the youth organizations. After 1945 both parties joined the Central Jewish Committee in Poland. In 1947 they reunited to form the strongest legally active Jewish party in Poland (with 20,000 members). In 1950 Poalei Zion was dissolved by the communist authorities.

15 Maccabi in Poland

Clubs of the Wordwide 'Maccabi' Jewish-Sports Association were created on Polish lands since the beginning of the 20th century, for example the club in Lwow was created in 1901, the club in Cracow in 1907, the club in Warsaw in 1915. In 1930, during a general assembly of the 'Maccabi' clubs, it was decided that 'Maccabi' would merge with the Jewish Physical Education Council and create one Polish Branch of 'Maccabi' with a strong Zionist character. 241 clubs were part of 'Maccabi' in 1931, with 45,000 participants. All Zionist youth organizations were part of 'Maccabi.' 'Maccabi' organized numerous sports events, including the 'Maccabi Games,' parades, instructors' workshops, camps for children. The club has its own libraries, choirs, bands and the Kfar ha-Maccabi fund for settling in Palestine.

16 Hasid

Follower of the Hasidic movement, a Jewish mystic movement founded in the 18th century that reacted against Talmudic learning and maintained that God's presence was in all of one's surroundings and that one should serve God in one's every deed and word. The movement provided spiritual hope and uplifted the common people. There were large branches of Hasidic movements and schools throughout Eastern Europe before World War II, each following the teachings of famous scholars and thinkers. Most had their own customs, rituals and life styles. Today there are substantial Hasidic communities in New York, London, Israel and Antwerp.

17 Jagiellonian University

In Polish 'Uniwersytet Jagiellonski,' it is the university of Cracow, founded in 1364 by Casimir III of Poland and which has maintained high level learning ever since. In the 19th century the university was named Jagiellonian to commemorate the dynasty of Polish kings. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagellonian_University)

18 German Invasion of Poland

The German attack of Poland on 1st September 1939 is widely considered the date in the West for the start of World War II. After having gained both Austria and the Bohemian and Moravian parts of Czechoslovakia, Hitler was confident that he could acquire Poland without having to fight Britain and France. (To eliminate the possibility of the Soviet Union fighting if Poland were attacked, Hitler made a pact with the Soviet Union, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.) On the morning of 1st September 1939, German troops entered Poland. The German air attack hit so quickly that most of Poland's air force was destroyed while still on the ground. To hinder Polish mobilization, the Germans bombed bridges and roads. Groups of marching soldiers were machine-gunned from the air, and they also aimed at civilians. On 1st September, the beginning of the attack, Great Britain and France sent Hitler an ultimatum - withdraw German forces from Poland or Great Britain and France would go to war against Germany. On 3rd September, with Germany's forces penetrating deeper into Poland, Great Britain and France both declared war on Germany.

19 Germans in Silesian towns after 1945

After the war the Polish- Czechoslovak border was returned to its 1920 line, while the part of Silesia previously belonging to Germany was annexed to Poland. The vast majority of the German population was expelled to Germany, and Poles and Jews settled in the area (over 2,630,000 people by January 1947), largely people repatriated from Poland's prewar eastern territories. An exception to this in the years immediately after the war was the town of Walbrzych (Waldenburg). The population structure by nationality there was markedly different from that of the rest of the country. Poles and Jews constituted only 14 percent of the population in the district, and 31 percent in Walbrzych itself; apart from them there were also Germans and Czechs (but mostly Germans). Between 1945 and 1948 there were several campaigns to settle the area with Poles, expel Germans, and resettle Czechs on a voluntary basis.

20 Volksdeutscher in Poland

A person who was entered (usually voluntarily, more rarely compulsorily) on a list of people of ethnic German origin during the German occupation was called Volksdeutscher and had various privileges in the occupied territories.

21 German occupation of Poland (1939-45)

World War II began with the German attack on Poland on 1st September 1939. On 17th September 1939 Russia occupied the eastern part of Poland (on the basis of the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact). The east of Poland up to the Bug River was incorporated into the USSR, while the north and west

were annexed to the Third Reich. The remaining lands comprised what was called the General Governorship - a separate state administered by the German authorities. After the outbreak of war with the USSR in June 1941 Germany occupied the whole of Poland's pre-war territory. The German occupation was a system of administration by the police and military of the Third Reich on Polish soil. Poland's own administration was dismantled, along with its political parties and the majority of its social organizations and cultural and educational institutions. In the lands incorporated into the Third Reich the authorities pursued a policy of total Germanization. As regards the General Governorship the intention of the Germans was to transform it into a colony supplying Polish unskilled slave labor. The occupying powers implemented a policy of terror on the basis of collective liability. The Germans assumed ownership of Polish state property and public institutions, confiscated or brought in administrators for large private estates, and looted the economy in industry and agriculture. The inhabitants of the Polish territories were forced into slave labor for the German war economy. Altogether, over the period 1939-45 almost three million people were taken to the Third Reich from the whole of Poland.

22 Annexation of Eastern Poland

According to a secret clause in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact defining Soviet and German territorial spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union occupied Eastern Poland in September 1939. In early November the newly annexed lands were divided up between the Ukranian and the Belarusian Soviet Republics.

23 Armbands

From the beginning of the occupation, the German authorities issued all kinds of decrees discriminating against the civilian population, in particular the Jews. On 1st December 1939 the Germans ordered all Jews over the age of 12 to wear a distinguishing emblem. In Warsaw it was a white armband with a blue star of David, to be worn on the right sleeve of the outer garment. In some towns Jews were forced to sew yellow stars onto their clothes. Not wearing the armband was punishable - initially with a beating, later with a fine or imprisonment, and from 15th October 1941 with the death penalty (decree issued by Governor Hans Frank).

24 Kenkarta

(German: Kennkarte - ID card) confirmed the identity and place of residence of its holder. It bore a photograph, a thumbprint, and the address and signature of its holder. It was the only document of its type issued to Poles during the Nazi occupation.

25 Pustkow

The largest forced labor camp in the Rzeszow [SE Poland] region, subject to a regime similar to those in concentration camps. It was set up in response to the needs of the armed forces in 1940. It included an experimental training ground for the Waffen-SS, where missiles tested included the V-1 and V-2. The camp was divided into 2 separate sections, one for Poles and one for Jews. The Jewish camp periodically housed more than 4,000 people. The Jewish camp was liquidated in July 1944, and the prisoners were transported to Auschwitz. More than 7,000 Jews died there. The Polish camp was established in September 1942 on the site of a Russian POW camp that had been

liquidated and operated until July 1944. Some 2,500 Poles died there. After that camp was liquidated the remaining Polish prisoners were taken to camps in the Third Reich.

26 Tarnow Ghetto

The population of Tarnow was 52,000 in 1939, out of which 48 percent were Jews. In March 1941 they were forced to move into a designated area, which was turned into a ghetto in February 1942. Later Jews were also brought in from the surrounding towns and villages, as well as from the Czech lands and Germany; altogether some 40,000 people were deported there. From the summer of 1942 until September 1943 there were continuous deportations to the death camp in Belzec. In September 1943 the ghetto was liquidated; 2,000 people were sent to the camp in Plaszow, and 8,000 to Auschwitz. A few hundred workers employed in the town managed to survive there until 1944.

27 SS Galicia division

A Ukrainian formation set up in April 1943 by the Ukrainian Central Committee in Cracow to fight on the eastern front. It was made up of Ukrainian volunteers and numbered 16,000 men, half of who came from Galicia. It was smashed in July 1944 at Brody, but reformed in Silesia. From March 1945 it functioned as the First Division of the Ukrainian National Army under the control of the Ukrainian National Committee, which was recognized by the Germans. It was used in combat in Austria's Styria province (in Graz), but surrendered to the British, who interned its members in Italy. After the war its veterans, as Polish citizens (which they had been until 1939) were not handed over to Stalin under the repatriation of USSR citizens. In 1948 they obtained the right to British citizenship.

28 Stalingrad Battle

17th July 1942 - 2nd February 1943. The South- Western and Don Fronts stopped the advance of German armies in the vicinity of Stalingrad. On 19th and 20th November 1942 the Soviet troops undertook an offensive and encircled 22 German divisions (330,000 people) and eliminated them. On 31st January 1943 the remains of the 6th German army headed by General Field Marshal Paulus surrendered (91,000 people). The victory in the Stalingrad battle was of huge political, strategic and international significance.

29 Birkenau (Pol

: Brzezinka): Also known as Auschwitz II. Set up in October 1941 following a decision by Heinrich Himmler in the village of Brzezinka (Ger.: Birkenau) close to Auschwitz, as a prisoner-of-war camp. It retained this title until March 1944, although it was never used as a POW camp. It comprised sectors of wooden sheds for different types of prisoners (women, men, Jewish families from Terezin, Roma, etc.), and continued to be expanded until the end of 1943. From the beginning of 1942 it was an extermination camp. The Birkenau camp covered a total area of 140 ha and comprised some 300 sheds variously used as living quarters, ancillary quarters and crematoria. Birkenau, Auschwitz I and scores of satellite camps made up the largest center for extermination of the Jews. The majority of the Jews deported here were sent straight to the gas chambers to be put to death immediately, without registration. There were 400,000 prisoners registered there for

longer periods, half of whom were Jews. The second-largest group of prisoners were Poles (140,000). Prisoners died en mass as a result of slave labor, starvation, the inhuman living conditions, beatings, torture and executions. The bodies of those murdered were initially buried and later burned in the crematoria and on pyres in specially dug pits. Due to the efforts made by the SS to erase the evidence of their crimes and their destruction of the majority of the documentation on the prisoners, and also to the fact that the Soviet forces seized the remaining documentation, it is impossible to establish the exact number of victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau. On the basis of the fragmentary documentation available, it can be assumed that in total approx. 1.5 million prisoners were murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau, some 90% of who were Jews.

30 Women's camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau

A separate women's camp in Auschwitz was created on 26th March 1942; until mid-August 1942 transports of women arriving at KL Auschwitz were housed in blocks no. 1-10, which were separated from the rest of the camp by a concrete wall; between March and August 1942 approx. 17,000 female prisoners arrived in Auschwitz, and by the time the women's camp was transferred to Birkenau (16th August 1942) 5,000 of them had died. In Birkenau women prisoners occupied 30 sheds in sector BIa, from July 1943 they also occupied sector BIb, and until November 1944 they made up the women's concentration camp. A total of 131,000 women prisoners were registered there, including approx. 82,000 Jews and 31,000 Poles. Approx. 4,000 women survived until the liberation (27th January 1945).

31 Gleiwitz III

A satellite labor camp in Auschwitz, set up alongside an industrial factory, Gleiwitzer Hütte, manufacturing weapons, munitions and railway wheels. The camp operated from July 1944 until January 1945; around 600 prisoners worked there.

32 Death march

In fear of the approaching Allied armies, the Germans tried to erase all evidence of the concentration camps. They often destroyed all the facilities and forced all Jews regardless of their age or sex to go on a death march. This march often led nowhere and there was no specific destination. The marchers received neither food nor water and were forbidden to stop and rest at night. It was solely up to the guards how they treated the prisoners, if and what they gave them to eat and they even had in their hands the power on the prisoners' life or death. The conditions during the march were so cruel that this journey became a journey that ended in the death of most marchers.

33 Belzec

Village in Lublin region of Poland (Tomaszow district). In 1940 the Germans created a forced labor camp there for 2,500 Jews and Roma. In November 1941 it was transformed into an extermination camp (SS Sonderkommando Belzec or Dienststelle Belzec der Waffen SS) under the 'Reinhard-Aktion,' in which the Germans murdered around 600,000 people (chiefly in gas chambers), including approximately 550,000 Polish Jews (approx. 300,000 from the province of Galicia) and Jews from the USSR, Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Norway and

Hungary; many Poles from surrounding towns and villages and from Lwow also died here, mostly for helping Jews. In November 1942 the Nazis began liquidating the camp. In the spring of 1943 the camp was demolished and the corpses of the gassed victims exhumed from their mass graves and burned. The last 600 Jews employed in this work were then sent to the Sobibor camp, where they died in the gas chambers.

34 Stutthof (Pol
Sztutowo): German concentration camp 36 km east of Gdansk. The Germans also created a series of satellite camps in the vicinity: Stolp, Heiligenbeil, Gerdauen, Jesau, Schippenbeil, Seerappen, Praust, Burggraben, Thorn and Elbing. The Stutthof camp operated from 2nd September 1939 until 9th May 1945. The first group of prisoners (several hundred people) were Jews from Gdansk. Until 1943 small groups of Jews from Warsaw, Bialystok and other places were sent there. In early 1944 some 20,000 Auschwitz survivors were relocated to Stutthof. In spring 1944 the camp was extended significantly and was made into a death camp; subsequent transports comprised groups of Jews from Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Lodz in Poland. Towards the end of 1944 around 12,000 prisoners were taken from Stutthof to camps in Germany - Dachau, Buchenwald, Neuengamme and Flossenburg. In January 1945 the evacuation of Stutthof and its satellite camps began. In that period some 29,000 prisoners passed through the camp (including 26,000 women), 26,000 of whom died during the evacuation. Of the 52,000 or so people who were taken to Stutthof and its satellites, around 3,000 survived.

35 Production of soap in the German concentration camp in Stutthof
Soap made from human fat was not produced in Stutthof. During the war rumors were widespread that the Germans were making soap from the bodies of Jews murdered in the concentration camps. On the basis of evidence given by an employee of the Gdansk Institute of Anatomy (in a collection of short stories entitled Medallions), Zofia Nalkowska, who participated in the work of the Central Committee for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland in 1945, described experiments by Prof. Spanner, who allegedly manufactured such soap there. This soap was intended for use in the disinfection of medical instruments in the Institute. In 2002 the Gdansk branch of the Committee for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish Nation reopened an investigation which aims to prove or refute unequivocally the hypothesis surrounding soap production.

36 Kielce Pogrom
On 4th July 1946 the alleged kidnapping of a Polish boy led to a pogrom in which 42 people were killed and over 40 wounded. The pogrom also prompted other anti-Jewish incidents in Kielce region. These events caused mass emigrations of Jews to Israel and other countries.

37 Regained Lands
Term describing the eastern parts of Germany (Silesia, Pomerania, Eastern Prussia, etc.) annexed to Poland after World War II, following the Teheran and Yalta agreements between the allies. After 1945 Germans were expelled from the area, and Poles (as well as Jews to some extent) from the former Polish lands annexed to the Soviet Union in 1939 were settled in their place. A Polonization campaign was also waged - place names were altered, Protestant cemeteries were destroyed, etc.

The Society for the Development of the Western Lands (TRZZ), founded in 1957, organized propaganda campaigns justifying the right of the Polish state to the territories, popularizing the social, economic and cultural transformations, and advocating integration with the rest of the country.

38 Haganah (Heb

: Defense): Jewish armed organization formed in 1920 in Palestine and grew rapidly during the Arab uprisings (1936-39). Haganah also organized illegal immigration of Jews to Palestine. In 1941 illegal stormtroops were created, which after World War II fought against the army and the British Police in Palestine. In 1948-1949 Haganah soldiers were trained in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

39 Foundation of the State of Israel

From 1917 Palestine was a British mandate. Also in 1917 the Balfour Declaration was published, which supported the idea of the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Throughout the interwar period, Jews were migrating to Palestine, which caused the conflict with the local Arabs to escalate. On the other hand, British restrictions on immigration sparked increasing opposition to the mandate powers. Immediately after World War II there were increasing numbers of terrorist attacks designed to force Britain to recognize the right of the Jews to their own state. These aspirations provoked the hostile reaction of the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states. In February 1947 the British foreign minister Ernest Bevin ceded the Palestinian mandate to the UN, which took the decision to divide Palestine into a Jewish section and an Arab section and to create an independent Jewish state. On 14th May 1948 David Ben Gurion proclaimed the creation of the State of Israel. It was recognized immediately by the US and the USSR. On the following day the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon attacked Israel, starting a war that continued, with intermissions, until the beginning of 1949 and ended in a truce.

40 Berling, Zygmunt (1896-1980)

Polish general. From 1914-17 he fought in the Polish Legions, and from 1918 in the Polish Army. In 1939 he was captured by the Soviets. In 1940 he and a group of other Polish officers began to collaborate with the Soviet authorities on projects including the organization of a Polish division within the armed forces of the USSR. In 1941-42 he was chief of staff of the Fifth Infantry Division of the Polish Army in the USSR. After the army was evacuated, he stayed in the USSR. In 1943 he co-founded the Union of Polish Patriots. He was the commander of the following units: First Kosciuszko Infantry Division (1943); First Corps of the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR (1943-44); the Polish Army in the USSR (1944); and First Army of the Polish Forces (Jul.-Sep. 1944); he was simultaneously Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Forces, and dismissed in 1944. From 1948-53 he was commander of the General Staff Academy in Warsaw, and was subsequently retired. He wrote his memoirs.

41 Anders' Army

The Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, subsequently the Polish Army in the East, known as Anders' Army: an operations unit of the Polish Armed Forces formed pursuant to the Polish-Soviet Pact of 30th July 1941 and the military agreement of 14th July 1941. It comprised Polish citizens who had

been deported into the heart of the USSR: soldiers imprisoned in 1939-41 and civilians amnestied in 1941 (some 1.25-1.6m people, including a recruitment base of 100,000-150,000). The commander-in- chief of the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR was General Wladyslaw Anders. The army never reached its full quota (in February 1942 it numbered 48,000, and in March 1942 around 66,000). In terms of operations it was answerable to the Supreme Command of the Red Army, and in terms of organization and personnel to the Supreme Commander, General Wladyslaw Sikorski and the Polish government in exile. In March-April 1942 part of the Army (with Stalin's consent) was sent to Iran (33,000 soldiers and approx. 10,000 civilians). The final evacuation took place in August-September 1942 pursuant to Soviet-British agreements concluded in July 1942 (it was the aim of General Anders and the British powers to withdraw Polish forces from the USSR); some 114,000 people, including 25,000 civilians (over 13,000 children) left the Soviet Union. The units that had been evacuated were merged with the Polish Army in the Middle East to form the Polish Army in the East, commanded by Anders.

42 Severance of Polish-Israeli relations

After the outbreak of the Six- Day-War (5th June 1967), when Israel attacked Egypt, Syria and Jordan, relations between the Eastern Bloc and Israel were severed. On 10th June the leaders of the communist parties of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR and Yugoslavia issued a joint declaration condemning the Israeli attack. The severance of relations between Poland and Israel was one of the symptoms of the Cold War. After 1967 Israel came out clearly in favor of the western side, while the USSR and the Eastern Bloc openly took the Arab side. Poland resumed diplomatic relations with Israel in 1990.

43 Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR)

Communist party formed in Poland in December 1948 by the fusion of the PPR (Polish Workers' Party) and the PPS (Polish Socialist Party). Until 1989 it was the only party in the country; it held power, but was subordinate to the Soviet Union. After losing the elections in June 1989 it lost its monopoly. On 29th January 1990 the party was dissolved.

44 Polish Workers' Party (PPR)

A communist party formed in January 1942 by a merger of Polish communist groups and organizations following the infiltration of an initiative cell from the USSR. The PPR was not formally part of the Communist Internationale, although in fact was subordinate to it. In its program declarations the PPR's slogans included fully armed combat to liberate the country from the German occupation, the restoration of an independent, democratic Polish state with new eastern borders, alliance with the USSR, and moderate socio-economic reform. In 1942 the PPR had a few thousand members, but by 1944 its ranks had swelled to some 20,000. In 1942 it spawned an armed organization, the People's Guard (renamed the People's Army in 1944). After the Red Army invaded Poland the PPR took power and set about creating a political system in which it had the dominant position. The PPR pacified society, terrorized the political opposition and suppressed underground organizations fighting for independence using instruments of organized violence. It was supported by USSR state security organizations operating in Poland (including the NKVD). After its consolidation of power in 1947-48 the leadership of the PPR set about radical political and socio-economic transformations based on Soviet models, including the liquidation of private ownership,

the nationalization of the economy (the collectivization of agriculture), and the subordination of all institutions and community organizations to the communist party. In December 1948 the party numbered over a million members. After merging with the Polish Socialist Party it changed its name to the Polish United Workers' Party.

45 Gomulka Campaign

A campaign to sack Jews employed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the army and the central administration. The trigger of this anti-Semitic campaign was the involvement of the Socialist Bloc countries on the Arab side in the Middle East conflict, in connection with which Moscow ordered purges in state institutions. On 19th June 1967, at a trade union congress, the then First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party [PZPR], Wladyslaw Gomulka, accused the Jews of lack of loyalty to the state and of publicly demonstrating their enthusiasm for Israel's victory in the Six-Day-War. This marked the start of purges among journalists and people of other creative professions. Poland also severed diplomatic relations with Israel. On 8th March 1968 there was a protest at Warsaw University. The Ministry of Internal Affairs responded by launching a press campaign and organizing mass demonstrations in factories and workplaces during which 'Zionists' and 'trouble-makers' were indicted and anti-Semitic and anti-intelligentsia slogans shouted. Following the events of March, purges were also staged in all state institutions, from factories to universities, on criteria of nationality and race. 'Family liability' was also introduced (e.g. with respect to people whose spouses were Jewish). Jews were forced to emigrate. From 1968-1971 15,000-30,000 people left Poland. They were stripped of their citizenship and right of return.

46 National Armed Forces (NSZ)

A conspiratorial military organization founded in Poland in 1942. The main goal of the NSZ was to fight for the independence of Poland and new western borders along the Oder-Neisse line. The NSZ's program stressed nationalism, rejected fascism and communism, and propounded the creation of a Catholic Polish State. The NSZ program was strongly anti-Semitic. In October 1943 the NSZ had some 72,500 members. The NSZ was preparing for an armed uprising, assuming that the Red Army would occupy all the Polish lands. It provided support for military intelligence, conducted supply campaigns, freed prisoners, and engaged in armed combat with divisions of the People's Army and Soviet partisans. NSZ divisions (approx. 2,000 soldiers) took part in the Warsaw Uprising. In November 1944 a part of the NSZ was transformed into the National Military Union (NZW), which was active underground in late 1945/early 1946 (scores of divisions numbering 2,000-4,000 soldiers), fighting the NKVD, UB (Security Bureau) task forces, and divisions of the UPA. In 1947 most of its cells were smashed, although some groups remained underground until the mid-1950s.

47 Birobidzhan

Formed in 1928 to give Soviet Jews a home territory and to increase settlement along the vulnerable borders of the Soviet Far East, the area was raised to the status of an autonomous region in 1934. Influenced by an effective propaganda campaign, and starvation in the east, 41,000 Soviet Jews relocated to the area between the late 1920s and early 1930s. But, by 1938 28,000 of them had fled the regions harsh conditions, There were Jewish schools and synagogues up until the 1940s, when there was a resurgence of religious repression after World War II. The Soviet government wanted the forced deportation of all Jews to Birobidzhan to be completed by the

middle of the 1950s. But in 1953 Stalin died and the deportation was cancelled. Despite some remaining Yiddish influences - including a Yiddish newspaper - Jewish cultural activity in the region has declined enormously since Stalin's anti-cosmopolitanism campaigns and since the liberalization of Jewish emigration in the 1970s. Jews now make up less than 2% of the region's population.

48 Union of Polish Youth (ZMP)

Polish youth organization founded in July 1948 as a result of the fusion of the Youth Organization, the Society of the Workers' University, the Union of Democratic Youth, the Union of Fighting Youth, and the Union of Rural Youth ("Call to Arms"). The ZMP was politically and organizationally subordinate to the PPR and subsequently to the PZPR. It was responsible for putting into practice the communist party's youth policy, and for ideological indoctrination designed to mould the consciousness of young people and set them against older generations. It mobilized young people to work on vast industrial construction sites, organized rivalry at work, controlled discipline at work among young people, participated in the collectivization of the countryside, monitored school curricula from the ideological standpoint, and kept strict control of the work of teachers in secondary schools and at universities. In 1948 it had some 0.5 million members, in 1951 over a million, and in 1955 around 2 million. During the October political power struggle in 1956 the ZMP collapsed, and it was disbanded in January 1957.

49 Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (Zwiazek Bojownikow o Wolnosc i Demokracje, ZBoWiD)

Combatant organization founded in 1949 as the result of the forced union of 11 combatant organizations functioning since 1945. Until 1989 it remained politically and organizationally subordinate to the PZPR. In 1990 ZBoWiD was reborn as the Union of Combatants of the Polish Republic and Former Political Prisoners (Zwiazek Kombatantow RP i Bylych Wiezniow Politycznych). ZBoWiD brought together some Polish World War II veterans, prisoners from Nazi camps, soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces (WP, Wojsko Polskie), and officers of the Security Office (UB, Urzad Bezpieczenstwa) and Civil Militia (MO, Milicja Obywatelska), as well as widows and orphans of others killed in action or murdered. For political reasons, many combatants were not accepted into ZBoWiD, including some AK (Home Army) soldiers (especially before 1956). It had several hundred thousand members (1970 approx. 330,000; 1986 almost 800,000).

50 Jaruzelski, Wojciech (b

1923): Politician and general, First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party and President of Poland. From 1943 he served in the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, and from 1944 in the Polish Army. In 1956 he became the youngest general in the Polish People's Army. From April 1968 to November 1983 he was minister of defense, from November 1983 to December 1990 Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in time of war. He was responsible for the use of the army in the bloody suppression of the December incidents on the Baltic coast in 1970. From October 1981 to July 1989 Jaruzelski was the First Secretary of the PZPR's Central Committee, and then until December 1990 President of the Polish People's Republic (subsequently the Republic of Poland). He took the decision to enforce martial law in Poland in 1981-83 and later made unsuccessful attempts at moderate political and economic reforms, while keeping the state system intact and applying limited repression against the political opposition. In

1988-89 he was one of the initiators of the Round Table negotiations. Following the parliamentary elections in June 1989 he did not oppose the relinquishment of state power to the opposition.

51 Martial law in Poland in 1981

Extraordinary legal measures introduced by a State Council decree on 13th December 1981 in an attempt to defend the communist system and destroy the democratic opposition. The martial law decree suspended the activity of associations and trades unions, including Solidarity, introduced a curfew, imposed travel restrictions, gave the authorities the right to arrest opposition activists, search private premises, and conduct body searches, ban public gatherings. A special, non-constitutional state authority body was established, the Military Board of National Salvation (WRON), which oversaw the implementation of the martial law regulations, headed by General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the armed forces supreme commander. Over 5,900 persons were arrested during the martial law, chiefly Solidarity activists. Local Solidarity branches organized protest strikes. The Wujek coal mine, occupied by striking miners, was stormed by police assault squads, leading to the death of nine miners. The martial law regulations were gradually being eased, by December 1982, for instance, all interned opposition activists were released. On 31st December 1982, the martial law was suspended, and on 21st July 1983, it was revoked.

52 Solidarity (NSZZ Solidarnosc)

A social and political movement in Poland that opposed the authority of the PZPR. In its institutional form - the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity (NSZZ Solidarnosc) - it emerged in August and September 1980 as a product of the turbulent national strikes. In that period trade union organizations were being formed in all national enterprises and institutions; in all some 9-10 million people joined NSZZ Solidarnosc. Solidarity formulated a program of introducing fundamental changes to the system in Poland, and sought the fulfillment of its postulates by exerting various forms of pressure on the authorities: pickets in industrial enterprises and public buildings, street demonstrations, negotiations and propaganda. It was outlawed in 1982 following the introduction of Martial Law (on 13th December 1981), and until 1989 remained an underground organization, adopting the strategy of gradually building an alternative society and over time creating social institutions that would be independent of the PZPR (the long march). Solidarity was the most important opposition group that influenced the changes in the Polish political system in 1989.

53 Knesset

Parliament of the State of Israel. It has 120 elected members and the debates are in both Hebrew and Arabic. The structure of the Knesset was created by Icchak Grunbaum along the lines of the Polish Sejm of the inter-war years.

54 Jankowski, Henryk

Catholic parish priest of St. Bridget Church in Gdansk until November 2004. He became famous by openly expressing his anti- Semitic view and staging shocking projects such as the use of anti-Semitic slogans as Easter decoration in church. Charged with pedophilia and embezzlement of church property, his activities greatly attracted the attention of the Polish media.

55 Sochnut (Jewish Agency)
International NGO founded in 1929 with the aim of assisting and encouraging Jews throughout the world with the development and settlement of Israel. It played the main role in the relations between Palestine, then under British Mandate, the world Jewry and the Mandatory and other powers. In May 1948 the Sochnut relinquished many of its functions to the newly established government of Israel, but continued to be responsible for immigration, settlement, youth work, and other activities financed by voluntary Jewish contributions from abroad. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the Sochnut has facilitated the aliyah and absorption in Israel for over one million new immigrants.

56 Blechhammer (Auschwitz IV)
Was established in April 1942 near Kozle, a town 18.5 miles (30 km) west of Gliwice, Poland. Blechhammer was initially a labor camp for Jews. The original 350 prisoners built a synthetic gasoline plant for the Oberschlesische Hydriewerke (Upper Silesia Hydrogenation Works). When 120 prisoners contracted typhus, they were transferred to Auschwitz, where they were killed. That June the remaining prisoners were transferred to a new and larger camp that had been built nearby. The camp was populated primarily by Jews from Upper Silesia; however, among the 5,500 prisoners were people from 15 different countries. They were housed in wooden barracks under appalling conditions, with no toilet or washing facilities. Some 200 female Jewish prisoners were put into a separate section of the camp. Hunger and disease were rife, especially diarrhea and tuberculosis. A crematorium was built, in which were cremated the bodies of 1,500 prisoners who had died from "natural" causes or had been killed. (Source: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Blechhammer.html)

57 Yad Vashem
This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and 'the Righteous Among the Nations', non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their 'compassion, courage and morality'.

58 Restoration of Polish citizenship
According to § 2, Article 8 of the Polish Citizenship Act (5 February 1962) foreigners may be granted Polish citizenship at their own request in justified cases, even in case they have not been resident in Poland for longer than five years. In 2000 the Polish Sejm (Parliament) issued an act specifying that this article is applicable to former Polish citizens forcibly resettled abroad or who emigrated during the Communist period (including, for instance, Jews forced to emigrate to Israel in 1968). Interest in restoration of Polish citizenship among Israelis increased most recently, following Poland's accession to the European Union.

59 Jewish Culture Festival in Cracow
One of the most varied and largest festivals of Jewish culture in the world, organized annually in June and July since 1988 in Kazimierz, the former Jewish district of the city of Cracow. It hosts

outstanding representatives of Jewish culture and art, from all over the world, in the fields of music, film, dance, literature, visual arts, etc.

60 Kazimierz

Now a district of Cracow lying south of the Main Market Square, it was initially a town in its own right, which received its charter in 1335. Kazimierz was named in honor of its founder, King Casimir the Great. In 1495 King Jan Olbracht issued the decision to transfer the Jews of Cracow to Kazimierz. From that time on a major part of Kazimierz became a center of Jewish life. Before 1939 more than 64,000 Jews lived in Cracow, which was some 25% of the city's total population. Only the culturally assimilated Jewish intelligentsia lived outside Kazimierz. Until the outbreak of World War II this quarter remained primarily a Jewish district, and was the base for the majority of the Jewish institutions, organizations and parties. The religious life of Cracow's Jews was also concentrated here; they prayed in large synagogues and a multitude of small private prayer houses. In 1941 the Jews of Cracow were removed from Kazimierz to the ghetto, created in the district of Podgorze, where some died and the remainder were transferred to the camps in Plaszow and Auschwitz. The majority of the pre-war monuments, synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in Kazimierz have been preserved to the present day, and a few Jewish institutions continue to operate.

61 Association of Bielsko Jews in Israel

The seat of the association is in Ramat Gan. The organization brings together former inhabitants of Bielsko and their families. Its present chairman is Michael Mechaof.