Emilia Leibel

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Cracow
Poland
Interviewer: Jolanta Jaworska
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Mrs. Misia [Emilia] Leibel is 95 and lives alone in a two-room apartment not far from the center of Cracow.

She is sick, and has been housebound for 8 years. She has 2 private carers, who are with her in shifts around the clock.

Mrs. Leibel is almost blind. When we come to selecting the photographs to go with her story, I first have to tell her what is on each one.

She has spent her whole life among children, and now they, though scattered all over the world, take care of her, visit her, and write her letters.

- **My family background**

My great-grandfather on my father’s side I remember, because I was about 3 or 4 at his funeral in Lagiewniki [a district in the south of Cracow]. Great-Grandfather was called Jekutiel Grossbart. His son was Ozjasz, that was my father’s father. My father’s name was Bencyjon, ‘Son of Cyjon.’ And I was his daughter. We all lived together in Great-Grandfather’s house, which was opposite the railroad station [Borek Falecki; a district of Cracow in the southern part of Podgorze, an area originally a separate town to the south of Cracow] in Lagiewniki.

No, I didn’t go to Great-Grandfather’s funeral. I just remember the coffin being brought out. It was there, in that house in Lagiewniki, that my great-grandfather died. I can see it in my mind’s eye, and I remember it, because it was the first funeral in my life. Back then you went on foot to the cemetery, in Podgorze, I think it is. I know that Great-Grandfather’s family came from Lacko [approx. 150 km from Cracow, near the town of Nowy Sacz, known to Jews as Zants].

There was this big article in the Dziennik Polski [the Polish Daily, a popular daily newspaper in the south-eastern Polish provinces of Malopolska and Podkarpacie] about this great-grandfather of mine, Grossbard, who was the first to produce that slivovitz [Ed. note: one Samuel Grossbard began production of slivovitz, a strong plum brandy, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries; Mrs. Leibel's maiden name was written 'Grossbart', not 'Grossbard', hence this is likely a coincidental similarity of names]. I don't know when or why they moved away from Lacko, but I remember my great-grandfather in Lagiewniki, though he was probably born in Lacko. My great-grandmother, his wife, I don't remember at all.

My grandmother on my father's side was called Sara. I don't remember her maiden name. And I don't remember where she came from, either. She had heart trouble, she was always going to this place called Wiesbaden [a spa town in Germany known for its hot springs], to spa towns. She had heart trouble, but she outlived her husband by a few years. She wasn't too slim. She wasn't fat, either. Nicely rounded, you might say. She was handsome, and kept herself looking nice.

No, she wasn't a housewife – oh no, they did very well for themselves. There was a Jewish cook, and Leoska, the maid, and Grandma sat in her armchair. I think she must have been very selfish – that's how I see it today. Well, as a child, what could I think? – Grandma was Grandma. I used to sit with Grandma, I would always do up her buttons on her dress so she didn't have to bend down. She had sweets in a drawer. I was the daughter of her beloved son, her only son, so she was free with her sweets.

Grandfather Grossbart was a very handsome Jew. He wore a gray beard, short peyot and a hat. I thought he was very nice. Not strict, though once I did get a hiding. I was into everything, you see. And there were some people [laborers] doing something in the fields – Grandfather had a farm – and I asked this one man to sit me up on the hay wagon. And I fell off. I went running home crying, and it was then I got a hiding: 'What do you think you were doing there? That's not girl's work! That's no place for a girl!'

Grandfather was well liked, his grandchildren would come – everybody would come – 'to Grandma's,' we used to say, but it was more Grandfather who spent time with you than Grandma, because Grandma was… well, evidently she really did have heart trouble.

The whole family traded in leather, skins: they bought up raw hides. Great-Grandfather, Grandfather, even my father was in the business. They were cattle hides. Used to make shoes. I remember how my father used to go places and bring back cattle hides, or somebody would bring them to him. We had a big farmyard in Lagiewniki and I remember there was this brick drying house, coal- and wood-fuelled. When the hides came in – still fresh, or part dried, they would hang there on the poles to finish drying out. Father and Grandfather, they would hang them out themselves.

All I remember is the dry skins being taken down and taken to railroad wagons somewhere. They would be sold to a tannery somewhere. I couldn't tell you – maybe there was somebody who came in to help with drying the hides. But I don't think so – I don't remember any other men.

My grandfather was a farmer as well, really. He had a vast estate – a working farm. Lots of fields. All the fields right down to the Wilga river, to Zaborze [formerly a hamlet on the outskirts of the

village of Lagiewniki, now a residential suburb of Cracow] – all that was his property. In the summer, for the harvest, haymaking and potato digging, he would hire people. I remember how Aunt Ela [Mrs. Leibel's father's sister] used to carry a sieve with these hunks of bread in it, and coffee in a jug, out to the people in the fields.

I don't know whether my great-grandfather built that house in Lagiewniki or bought it. What I do know is I was born there, but I was 5 years old when we moved away from there. But maybe he did build it, because that house was wisely designed, and the outbuildings were in a square. The house fronted onto the street – like so. A very decent house, stone.

When you went in off the street, first there was this porch – we didn't call it a hallway, we didn't call it a hall. Straight in front of you was a shop. Not an inn, so much, but an off-license, you couldn't drink in the shop. It sold beer and wine, that I remember – I remember these barrels and kegs standing there, probably for a wedding somewhere or something. Maybe they sold vodka there too. I think some man worked there. Perhaps an assistant hired by Grandfather. Next to the entrance to the shop was a pantry where there was a big cupboard.

From the porch, off to the right you went into a huge dining room. The dining room window looked out onto the street. Right beyond that was Grandfather's room, there he had his cashbox, his desk – today we'd call it an office. It was a nice room, furnished – masculine; Grandfather slept there. Then there was the parlor. That was a beautiful, very big room, several windows onto both sides – the front and the yard. And in that room, in the parlor, Grandma slept, she had her own door out into the yard.

From the parlor there was a passage to my parents' room, and then there was another, smaller room, Aunt Ela's. I lived [slept] in with Aunt Ela, and my brother Jehuda with my parents. And there was also this glassed-in verandah, that was where we played when my cousins came. The Wieners, for instance, from Cracow. The verandah gave out onto the yard. Yes, we played there in the winter, and if the weather was bad in the summer, we didn't play outside, but on the verandah.

In front of the house, from the street side, was a large summerhouse. Yes. And parallel to the house was a stable. We called it a stable, but there weren't any horses there, just a trap, because my father's sisters used to ride to town, to Podgorze to school. Next to that was the drying house where the hides were dried. And at right angles was this outhouse. Further on was the wash house, and in it a bath and everything needed for the washing. A barrel stood underneath the guttering to collect rainwater for the washing. The washerwoman came once a week. There was a cellar too, where there was an ice-house – part of the cellars were clad in ice. In the winter ice would be brought from the Wilga so they could keep it cool in the summer. The Jews eat kosher meat, and so when they killed a calf they had to have ice to keep the meat fresh.

As Grandfather was a wealthy man he had a brick booth [sukkah]. It was incorporated into the building of the house. It had a hinged roof that they could raise and lay branches on top. And only Father and Grandfather ate their dinner there at the holidays. Yes. Just the men.

The farmyard was square shaped. There was a garden there, and in the center a very pleasant little summerhouse with a swing that Grandfather had made for his grandchildren. My father was his only son, so his children were the apple of his eye, of course. In the garden there were flowers and

fruit trees. There were peaches growing up against the wall of the house, a south-facing one. No-one was allowed to touch, only Grandfather himself picked them. He would gather them into this sieve, and then I remember that my mother pricked them, I don't know what for – so that the juice would come out or what – and made jam with them. There were sour cherries and apples in the garden, there were blackcurrants that my brother and I picked – that was allowed, but not the peaches.

In my grandparents' family boys didn't thrive, somehow. The sons died as children, and when my father was born, Grandfather, to assure him a future – at least that was what he believed – took my father to some tzaddik, I don't know which one, some miracle-worker. He blessed him and gave him another name: Dziadek [Pol.: Grandfather]. So that he would live to see his own grandchildren, so that he could be a grandfather. My mother called her husband Grandfather. The children, my cousins – my father's sisters had children – they called him 'Uncle Grandfather.'

Father had 5 sisters. Their marriages were arranged – I don't know that for certain, but I suspect so, that was the method then. The eldest was Taube. Taube in Yiddish means 'dove.' Yes, and her name by her husband, who was from I think Debica [approx. 120 km east of Cracow], was Gewuertz. They had a shop in Borek Falecki that she ran. And I think he was something to do with the 'Royal' or the 'Cracovia' cafe. All day he used to sit there. I don't know, perhaps he was a co-proprietor? Those cafes were next to each other, opposite Wawel [the royal castle in Cracow, built in the 11th c.]. They had a daughter, Balka, and a son Mojzesz, or Moniek. That Moniek, when he was about 6, found my father his wife!

Marysia, who was known as Mancia, had a husband called Rajch. I don't know who he was. Some merchant, too. They lived on Krakusa Street in Podgorze. They had 3 little girls: the eldest Pepa [Paulina], Mala [Amalia] and Mila [Emilia]. Mila, the youngest, emigrated to Palestine for personal reasons long before the war [1939]. And she painted, drew and took photographs. We were both called Emilia after the same grandmother [Ed. Note: Mrs. Leibel must have been called Emilia after a great-grandmother, because her grandmothers were called Sara and Jenta]. The Rajchs had a lawyer son too, Mendel.

Then there was Helena, who married a Wiener. What was his name, Uncle Wiener? Izydor, or... Izaak. I don't know what he did... He didn't have a shop, but I know he traveled to Vienna a lot. Maybe he was a sales rep... They lived on Augustianska Street [in Kazimierz, the Jewish district of Cracow]. Both their sons were lawyers – that Maurycy Wiener was a well-known lawyer in Cracow after the war, and his brother emigrated to Palestine. I was friends with Maurycy from being a child.

The next sister was Estera, Auntie Escia, we used to say. Her husband was an only child, son of these rich Jews from Limanowa [approx. 70 km south-east of Cracow]. Goldzwinger, he was. And then they had a shop on the A-B line [a local name for one side of the Main Square in Cracow], and they lived on Grodzka. What kind of a shop they had I don't remember now. They had a daughter Fela, and then two boys.

The youngest was Aunt Ela, who was unmarried and lived with us in Lagiewniki. Opposite the house in Lagiewniki was a convent [the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy], but at that time [during World War I; 1914-1918], there was a hospital in that convent run by the nuns. As the festival of Pesach was drawing near in 1915, and Grandfather was a devout Jew, and wealthy, he

invited the invalid Austrian Jewish soldiers from the convent to spend the holidays with him.

Dinner was served outside, in the summerhouse. There's even a photograph of that dinner, but because they couldn't take the photograph in the summerhouse, because it was too dark, they took the table outside – even the tablecloths weren't laid straight, in a hurry, while it was still light. Yes. Behind the table, on the wooden wall of the summerhouse, hung a portrait of the Austrian emperor, Franz Joseph 1. Well, it was Austria, and Grandfather was a loyal subject. The Jews prospered under Austria. In the center sat my grandfather, this gray-bearded Jew, and all around him soldiers. My grandmother, mother, and father were there too, and my brother in his sailor's cap. My Mama was in a white apron, because she'd been helping to serve dinner. Afterwards she was most outraged that they hadn't told her to take her apron off for the photograph. My 2 cousins Mala and Pepa, were there too, and Aunt Ela. I remember that one of the soldiers taught me to dance, and that they were very grateful for being made so welcome. And the soldier whose knee I sat on to pose for the photograph – well, he fell in love with my Aunt Ela, and she would have married him, Aunt Ela. Those wounded soldiers were a long time in that hospital, you see. A few weeks at least. But then he recovered and left as her fiance, and was killed in Bukovina, because it was war. I remember so much because those were really big emotions.

My parents met in a romantic way. My mother came from Debica, and my father went to Debica from Cracow because he'd been found a match, some girl called Fryda. But in Debica was my father's nephew Moniek, who was brought up by his grandparents. He was maybe a 6-year-old child at the time, with his nose into everything and ears like pitchers. And that nephew said to him: 'Why do you want to go and marry that Fryda! That Fryda's got a beau!' He told him which boy she used to go down to the river with. 'You'd be better marrying Dasia, she's so pretty.' My mother was called Dasia Leibel, in her papers she had Ernestyna, but she was Ester, Hadasa, in Hebrew. And Father, when he saw my mother, fell in love with her on the spot, because Mama was a beautiful woman.

It was supposed to be an arranged marriage, but nothing came of it. And how I know about this at all I don't remember, but my mother never told me. I don't know when my parents were born, but the age difference between them wasn't very big, my father was maybe 2 years older. After their wedding my parents moved into Lagiewniki.

And later on my parents were the closest of friends with that Fryda and her husband, the one she used to go down to the river with. Rakower, he was called, that husband of hers. They were very friendly with us and came round a lot. Their two sons went to gymnasium with me.

My Mama didn't have an education. That was typical for a marriageable girl in Debica. But she did embroider beautifully, crochet and knit all sorts of things, exquisite things. Not to mention that she could cook and bake – all in all a true housewife.

My father didn't go to school, but Grandfather, with him the only one [ed. note: the only son], laid out on him so he could get an education. Father used to go to Vienna and take examinations there. But he didn't do a high-school final exam, because back then they had some other examinations. I remember that as a grown-up girl I saw Father's certificates from Vienna around the house: in German, math, correspondence – I remember that, there was such a subject. Yes, they were some kind of commercial subjects. So Father was an educated man, he spoke German well, and wrote it,

too. He knew Hebrew. I don't know, can't say what political views my father had. I know he wasn't a member of any party. Definitely not.

Father was a very handsome Jew, he was similar to his father. He always wore this little beard. He was graying, went gray very young. Graying was a family trait altogether, I think, because Father's sisters were gray-haired too. He was very tall and slim. He only put on more weight shortly before I got married. He developed heart trouble and the doctors forbade him to smoke cigarettes. Before that he'd smoked a lot. By then my grandfather was no longer alive, and Grandma used to say: 'What a shame he didn't live to see this, because he was always worrying that his son was so thin.'

My parents were a very loving couple, so much so that we children saw it. When Mother was ill or something it showed especially. Father was a very good man, very kind, to the extent that I remember one time, after my brother's death it was, this conversation I overheard. The thing was that Father would sign bills of exchange for anyone who asked him. And then he'd have to pay the bills, because people didn't pay. And I remember how Mother used to reproach him, that he had a grown-up daughter and they had to watch their money. Not give it away to people, because they had none too much of it themselves.

- **Growing up**

I was born on 30th July 1911 in Cracow, in Grandfather's house in Lagiewniki. It is our custom, the Jewish custom, to name girls after their grandmothers, and there were two of us Emilias. The other one was Mila, because she was older, and I was Milusia [two diminutive forms, the latter used for younger children]. And later on, at school, 'Milusia' became 'Misia.' My brother's name was Jehuda. He was two years older than me. I was born in 1911, so he was born in 1909. Apparently he was born dead – I only know this from being told – and the midwife threw him up in the air or something – suffice it to say that he was lame after that. That one leg didn't develop properly.

Father worked, Grandfather worked, Mother looked after her little boy, and I spent most of my time with Grandma and Aunt Ela, because I wasn't at school yet. Mother spent more time looking after him than me – obviously, the only son. I was healthy, I ran around, charged around, and played. I was into everything. I was a very lively child.

Polish was spoken in Grandfather's house. They knew Yiddish, Grandfather even Hebrew, but for every day Polish was spoken. Only when Jews came, merchants, did I on occasion hear them speaking Yiddish. I knew it from listening rather than from learning. I understood it, but it wasn't as though anyone ever taught me Yiddish. My grandparents spoke German, of course, because this was Galicia 2.

In my grandparents' kitchen everything was kosher. There were separate dishes for meat and dairy. The cook was Jewish. We kept hens, chicks and turkeys. A butcher would come, a carver, we used to say, and he would cut the throat, and only then would we cook it. We didn't have cows, but as far as I remember Grandfather used to buy meat somewhere, I mean he bought a live animal, and the butcher killed it at our house.

There was a maid, too, Leoska, because water was carried in pails. The well was by the street, a municipal well. Leoska was lame, but she carried the water, cleaned, scrubbed the floors, did

things like that. Well, it was a big farm.

All the festivals were celebrated at my grandparents'. Oh, very, very much. Their daughters would come with the grandchildren for some of the festivals. Families lived close to each other then, we met up a lot. For Shabbas, the big table in the dining room was laid: white tablecloths, silver candlesticks, candleholders. There were 6 candlesticks, I think. 4 certainly, and maybe 6. And the candles were lit. We ate off a special service. It was laid more fully, more festively, you could say.

My grandparents used to go to the synagogue to Podgorze on foot [approx. 3-4 km], because you weren't allowed to use transportation on Saturday. On foot to the synagogue and on foot to funerals, because the Jewish cemetery was even further. The synagogue was Rabbi Skawinski's, at Celna Street.

My parents went to that synagogue too, but later Mama was thrown out of it, because she didn't wear a wig. Those were personal things, all I know is that she stopped going to pray there, and that there was talk of it being because she didn't wear a wig. And anyway, she only went to the synagogue at the festivals, but not on Saturdays. Father went on Friday evening and Saturday.

We didn't go to Lagiewniki by rail, though there were trains, but by horse. There were hackney cabs. Jewish cab drivers, they stood on Podgorze market square, just in front of the church. Arrangements were always made with the cab drivers in advance, and a cab would come to our house in Lagiewniki. I don't remember his name, but there was this one driver who would always come on the day arranged and take Aunt Ela if she wanted to buy herself a hat or go on an errand in Cracow.

There were no other Jews in Lagiewniki. Not far from our house, on the other side of the road, was a brickworks – those were Poles living there. I don't know what that couple were called, but I used to play with their children. There was a girl and a boy. On our side of the road, across the Wilga, was Liban's factory [Bernard Liban, well-known entrepreneur, owner of factories including the Portland Cement Factory opened in 1888]. He had a daughter, Dola Liban, who was a friend of Aunt Ela's. She, I know, was Jewish.

Across the river there was also a big shop and a big tenement house – that was in Borek Falecki – and there were some Jews living there too. We used to swim in the Wilga. My Mama used to swim there. There weren't any swimming costumes, just these shirts. And somewhere nearby there was a bridge, because that was the way you went to Borek Falecki.

Grandfather on Mama's side was called Leibel, like me – I married a distant relative of the same name, you see. My grandparents came from Debica, and my husband from Wadowice [approx. 50 km south-west of Cracow]. I know that Grandmother was called Jenta, Grandfather... I don't know that he wasn't Chaim. He might have been, though I can't vouch for it. What did that grandfather do? Probably had a shop or something... aha, I know, I remember: Mother always said that it wasn't an inn but a tavern. When I first went to Debica I think my grandparents were long dead. There was just Aunt Ida, Mother's eldest sister. I went there maybe twice. I don't remember much – after all, I was a small child at the time.

My mother had a large family, 4 sisters and 3 brothers. One was Mojzesz. I think he had some inn, or something like that, in Tarnow [approx. 70 km east of Cracow]. Another was Dawid, he was a

teacher in a Hebrew gymnasium in Tarnow. The third, Mendel, was a town councilor in Glogow near Rzeszow [approx. 160 km east of Cracow]. Those were the brothers.

The sisters, well, there was Aunt Ida. Yes, the eldest. She was the one who stayed in Debica. Then there was Aunt Mania from Trzebinia [approx. 40 km west of Cracow]. There was also the aunt in Jaslo [approx. 180 km east of Cracow]. Aunt Dora. And there was Aunt Sabina in Podgorze. My mother was the youngest but one.

Aunt Ida was widowed and left alone with 6 daughters. I hardly remember her husband. After his death her sisters wanted to help her, so one of her daughters, Gusta, who went to university in Cracow, lived with us in Podgorze. They all were appealing and found husbands.

The eldest, Syna, Synonia, married a Polish Jew but who lived in Berlin. Then Gusta married a relative of that brother-in-law and went to live in Berlin too. Anka worked in the Jewish hospital in Cracow [8 Skawinska Street, now part of the University Hospital]. Stefa worked in a well-known shop on Florianska [a shopping street in downtown Cracow], 'Tyrkel.' Silk, that kind of materials they sold there. Klara went to live with friends in Belgium or Holland and got married there.

And Fela came to Cracow as a companion to an elderly lady, Mrs. Natelowa. That was a well-known Cracow family, wealthy. Her daughter was a doctor, unmarried. They had a house on Orzeszkowej Street. Fela had very good conditions there – she used to drive with Natelowa by cab to take walks on the Planty [a strip of park ringing Cracow's Old Town, established in 1822] – she did well for herself. After that, a friend of hers got married and went to Czechoslovakia [ed. note: Bohemia at that time, before 1918] –

I don't know whether she didn't go to Prague, or somewhere else – and she made her a match with a friend of her husband's. So Fela went too. I even met her husband-to-be, because she came to Debica with him, to her mother's. I went to visit them, with my husband by that time, and give them my wishes. Later, she perished, of course, like so many Jews in Czechoslovakia [Bohemia].

Aunt Mania married a guy Lieblich from Trzebinia. They had 2 sons and a daughter Zosia. I remember that the eldest was Jozek – he perished. The younger one was called Stefan, I met him after the war. And Aunt Dora married Goldstein of Jaslo. They were wealthy people. I don't know, he must have been some big merchant, because their son studied medicine in Prague. One of the daughters did a university degree too. So they must have been earning. They were wealthy, so the daughters came to Cracow for their gowns. The youngest of Mother's sisters was Sabina. Written 'Sabina,' but we used to call her Auntie Bila. She lived in Podgorze. Her married name was Wolf. Janek, their first son, left the country. He went to a Hebrew gymnasium and when the anti-Semitic excesses began, he packed up, said he was off to Israel, Palestine then. And he went, and after a couple of years had his sister Ewa go out there, so after the war I already had 2 relatives there.

I remember that I was 5 when we left Lagiewniki, because my brother and I were to start school in Cracow. We moved with our parents to a two-story house in Podgorze, at 19 Krakusa Street. Podgorze was altogether different from Kazimierz [the neighboring Jewish district] 3, because Kazimierz was typically Jewish, but Podgorze wasn't. Podgorze was kind of... mixed.

We had a rented room with a kitchen and we all slept in that one room. The WC was in the yard. It was a very modest little apartment. I remember that there were some Jews living on the second

floor, and next to us there was an actor who worked in the theater on Rajska. He was called Lason. And we played with Stefek and Irena, Lason's children. Yes. Poles, Catholics. It was thanks to him that I went to the theater for the first time, he took us to see Cinderella. I met up with that Irena Lason again after the war.

In Podgorze there was a park [the W. Bednarski Memorial Park, partly on the site of a former quarry]. I used to go there with the maid, because Mother spent more time looking after my brother. That maid was with us for years. I don't remember what she was called. She slept in the kitchen. I remember that Mama did the shopping herself, I would go with her sometimes, when I was bigger. No, I didn't help Mama in the house – I went to school. Only when my aunt came up from Jaslo with her daughters for clothes, they went shopping and I saw to the kitchen. I was a young lady by then.

When we lived in Podgorze, Mother and Father went to Zuckier's synagogue [at 5 Wegierska Street, the synagogue of the Bet Ha-Midrasz Chasidim Association of Prayer and Support; now restored, it functions as a contemporary art gallery]. I remember it was on a street corner, but I don't remember which street. Nobody taught me religious matters. I didn't go to the synagogue, although... maybe Mama did once take me to 'the trumpets' [Rosh Hashanah], but other than that I didn't go. Oh no! Young girls didn't go to the synagogue.

I was 6, perhaps not quite, and Father was in the Austrian army. In 1917 I was in first grade, and I remember going with my brother and Mama to the railroad station in Grzegorzki [a district of Cracow] to say goodbye to Father, because he was going to the front. I remember him in uniform and in his cap.

And I remember that he was sent to Olomunc [a Czech town in northern Moravia]. Yes. Then, after some time, he came back, he had varicose veins and couldn't take the marches. So then he was in the army but in a commissariat in Cracow, in Zablocie [a district of Podgorze], I remember perfectly. He came home often, sometimes slept at home. Did he talk about the war? No. At least not to me – after all, I was a child. He came back home after the war ended. I just remember that when the war ended, they announced at school that we wouldn't be learning German from 3rd grade. Yes, because before that they learnt it from 3rd grade, but I didn't start learning it until 5th grade.

After we moved out, my grandparents and Aunt Ela stayed in Lagiewniki. I remember that I still used to go there on vacation. Aunt Ela lost her fiance in the war, but a few years later she did get married. That gentleman was called Laufer. They moved to Warsaw. He was some entrepreneur, a wealthy man. No, they didn't have children. And the year the war broke out, in 1939, he contracted the flu and died.

After Aunt Ela's wedding my grandparents sold the house and the farm and they were going to buy a house in Cracow. Their last daughter had gotten married and they were elderly, didn't want to stay in Lagiewniki on their own. But that was that moment – the end of the war – and there was such a huge devaluation that Grandfather, for the money that he sold such a huge property for, could barely afford to rent a room with a kitchen [Ed. note: the house likely was not sold until 1922 or 1923, during the worst inflation of the interwar years; this is also suggested by the sequence of events in Mrs. Leibel's family]. So after that the children helped them out. I don't know exactly how

it was. First, for a short time, they were with us, of course. With their son. Then they lived at 10 Jasna Street, on the corner with Sebastiana [Ed. note: this intersection does not exist; probably Mrs. Leibel means the corner of Sebastiana and Ciemna, in Kazimierz ('Jasna' means 'light' in Polish and 'Ciemna' dark, hence the confusion)].

On Jasna [Ciemna] they had a first-floor mezzanine room with a kitchen. There was a maid, because after all the stove had to be lit, water brought. But there was no Jewish cook, because there were just the two of them. I can't imagine Grandmother stood at the stove. No. She didn't do any work in the kitchen or the house. We used to go there, to Jasna [Ciemna], to visit Grandmother. That was compulsory. I know that Saturday afternoons, her daughters and grandchildren gathered there. I went too. I was already dating a boy, but before that I went to Grandmother's, and only afterwards on my date. In her room we all sat around and talked. Nothing else.

When my grandparents sold Lagiewniki and moved to Cracow, Grandfather was constantly saying that Cracow stank, and 2 years later, he died. He never could get his breath. And yet before that he'd been a lively, healthy man. He woke up in the night, said that he couldn't breathe, and died. I think he was 63. He was buried in Podgorze, in the Jewish cemetery. I think I was in gymnasium when Grandmother died. She survived Grandfather by maybe 2 or 3 years. She was perhaps 64 when she died. And that house of theirs in Lagiewniki remained standing long after the war. I used to see it as I went past that way. Even recently I could still remember the name of the guy that bought that house. He was an Austrian, he'd come in from somewhere and set up a factory there.

I went to a Polish elementary school in Podgorze, it wasn't called an elementary school but the Queen Kinga Common School, on Jozefinska Street. I went to a public school, but my brother Jehuda went to a Protestant school, because there were small classes there – 15 people. That was a private school, whereas in a state school Father was always worried that someone might knock him over – he was an invalid. He was a cripple. Yes, Jews were taken in that school, there was no problem. That school was on Grodzka Street [founded 1826; closed down in November 1939]; to this day there is still a Protestant congregation there.

I remember 3 teachers from elementary school. Mrs. Tarnowska was our class teacher. Mrs. Jarosz taught math – in the first years of school I was very good at mathematics. Miss Swierzowna probably taught Polish, or history. Polish was my favorite subject. I liked history too, but Polish most of all. I read a lot altogether. Devoured books. Because there weren't enough Jewish girls, all the Jewish girls in Podgorze had religious instruction together. I don't remember which school in Podgorze it was in, but not ours. Our teacher was called Jonas. To me back then, he seemed like an elderly man, but he certainly wasn't old. I worked just hard enough in religious instruction to get by.

My best friend was Renia Seelerfreund. She only joined us in 2nd grade, because they'd moved from somewhere, I don't know where. And they came to live in Podgorze, opposite us, on Krakusa Street. And Renia went to the same school and the same class as me. Mrs. Tarnowska put us together and somehow we just got along. She was a steady type, while I was a wild thing. I sat with Renia from 2nd grade right up to my high school finals.

There were lots of Jewish girls in my class. There were 3 rows of double desks. One row were all Jewish girls. I sat in the middle row, at the back desk, because I was tall. The teachers always said

that the Jewish girls only sat separately because we didn't go to school on Saturdays. A strange kind of explanation? Well, not really, it was a very decent explanation, that it wasn't about segregation, but just because, so that there weren't empty places on Saturday, so that one row wasn't used. It was clear who's at school today and who isn't.

Because we didn't go to school on Saturdays, of course, though school was open. So I had this friend in Podgorze – her surname was Harnikowna – and I would go round to her house on Sunday mornings to find out what the homework was, so I could be prepared at school on Monday. And all the girls who hadn't been at school on Saturday had to be prepared for Monday. There was no anti-Semitism at elementary school – I hardly even knew the word. On the part of the teachers decency, on the part of my classmates – absolutely none at all. We got along very well.

Renia and her elder brother used to go to gymnastics to the ZTG, the Jewish Gymnastics Society [founded 1917; president: Dr. Ludwik Goldwasser], and I started to go with them. The three of us walked there from Krakusa Street, well, there wasn't the traffic on the roads. Before you got to Jozefinska there was the old bridge [a wooden one, known as Podgorze bridge; in 1933 the construction of the steel J. Pilsudski Memorial Bridge was completed], and just after the bridge, in the kehile [Jewish community buildings, at 2 Skawinska Street; the seat of the community headquarters to this day] was gymnastics. The gymnastics rooms were in the basement of the kehile building. You went about twice a week or something. I went to those gymnastics classes for a long time. In fact, on the whole my brother was healthy... but he had the one leg shorter and so he couldn't do gymnastics like me. But he was talented and drew beautifully. Our drawing teacher at gymnasium favored him specially, because he was so gifted.

I think I was in 5th grade, I was 11, when my parents took the apartment at 6 Czarneckiego Street [near Krakusa Street]. It was a whole floor that had been added onto an old two-story tenement house. That was a larger apartment, 3 rooms. So I had a room with my brother, there was a bedroom, a dining room, a bathroom and a WC – something else altogether. A modern apartment. It didn't have gas. The water was heated in a boiler in the bathroom. The maid lived in the kitchen, yes. In some apartments there was this kind of recess for the maid's bed, but not in that one. It was a warm house, an open house. Friends would come by, and cousins. They would drop by, because my parents were hospitable and liked young people, and they themselves were liked.

Because my brother and I sat for a private Hebrew gymnasium in Cracow, 2 years beforehand we started learning Hebrew. Although he was older than me, we were to go at the same time, because the thing was, my brother, as a cripple, was always given special protection. And my father wanted us to go together because we had to go by tram. The Hebrew lessons were private – a teacher came to our house and taught my brother and me to read Hebrew. He was called Bencyjon Katz, and he was later a lecturer at the Jagiellonian University (and an older friend of mine, Klara Goldsztof, married him). Did I like those lessons? I don't know... I worked at them. I was a good student. A few years ago I heard that Katz was a lecturer in Israel somewhere, at some university in Jerusalem.

At gymnasium it turned out that we didn't know anything, because we'd been taught Hebrew like Latin is taught. We had an excellent knowledge of the grammar, and spelling, but we couldn't speak a word. At the entrance exam the teacher is talking to me and I don't know the first thing that he's saying. I could write, I could read, though I didn't really understand, and I got to school

and it turned out that you had to be able to speak Hebrew fluently, like Polish. But because there was a very big influx of children like that, who couldn't speak it, there was an 'A' and a 'B' class, if you like. Jehuda and I were in the same class.

I don't remember what we were called, but we were in the class that couldn't speak. The two classes had all the lessons together, and then we stayed behind for a 7th lesson, of Hebrew. To catch up, to be able to speak, because history of the Jews was taught in Hebrew, and we couldn't say anything, not a word. It was a co-educational gymnasium, and was at 5 Brzozowa Street [Ed. note: that was the address of the Jewish elementary school; the Chaim Hilfstein Gymnasium was in the same building, but the entrance was at 8/10 Podbrzezie Street]. That school exists to this day, but not as a gymnasium, it's some technical high school [Vocational Schools Complex].

I remember we had a wonderful Polish teacher. He was called Juliusz Felzhorn, he had a doctorate [Ed. note: Dr. Julius Feldhorn]. A very well-educated, marvelous man. He was murdered by the Germans. In 6th grade at gymnasium the math teacher didn't like me and I got a '2' [equivalent to a 'D' grade in the Polish school system]. I think it was simply because he didn't like me, because when he taught physics in 8th grade, I had a '2' in physics. He was the headmaster. But it wasn't so bad that I had to repeat the year.

We were in 5th grade at gymnasium, and I remember, it was appendicitis, Jehuda had an operation, and after that operation he died. In those days an operation on your appendix was a serious illness. My father had a complete breakdown. Before that he'd had some tannery, I don't remember that, I just know from having heard, that it was in Plaszow. I never went there, I just knew that he had it with some partner.

When my brother died, Father lost his head, and that partner swindled him. And after that we had nothing, because Father lost everything. My father had been so jovial, so smiling, but after my brother's death all the life went out of him. For a long time. Always, really. And Mama said that she had several years of mourning all together. Because first her father-in-law died, then her son, and Grandmother Sara survived my brother by maybe a year.

My father had no head for business, so hard times fell on our house. When I was at the private gymnasium I had a reduction, because there'd been 2 of us, with my brother. And although I went to classes by myself after that, the reduction remained. But to pay for my school, I gave lessons. For the money I earned, I paid for part of my gymnasium. I couldn't cover the whole cost, because school was expensive – 35 zloty, I think. A month. But I could always contribute something, buy myself a notebook or a textbook [a school textbook might cost around 6-8 zloty]. Later, I had to have help for my Hebrew finals, so I paid for my own lessons.

I was maybe 15 then, and I had this one little girl, whose parents had moved there from Czechoslovakia or somewhere, who was due to go to school the next year, and she couldn't speak Polish. And I taught her to speak Polish. In the afternoons, after school, I used to go there, perhaps not everyday, I can't remember. All I remember is that on Fridays I was always given tea with milk and fresh cake. On Friday afternoons, because they baked it for Saturday. They were Jews. I even remembered what they were called until not long ago… it was a well-known, wealthy Jewish family. They lived on the corner of Dietla and Augustianska Streets. They were all killed during the war.

There were 2 sets of high school finals. I was the class of 1928-1929. First, sometime in February, was the Hebrew examination. In the exam we had history of the Jews and Hebrew literature, that was in Hebrew – the whole exam. And our normal finals, the state finals, were in May, I think. There were exams in 4 subjects. Polish definitely, history definitely, Latin definitely, and mathematics. I took my exams the first day.

Because our gymnasium didn't have full state accreditation, I remember that the chairman of the examining panel was from the board of education. That caused absolute terror, because it was a kind of extra level of scrutiny. And the same day as me, one of the top students, Sara Bester, was sitting too – 'B,' at the beginning of the alphabet. She only had to sit one subject, because she was exempt from the rest.

And that chairman decided he wanted to examine a student who was exempt from all the subjects. She was suddenly called in and, being taken by surprise, must have given very poor answers. And she didn't pass her finals. She took it terribly. And she died that same vacation. They said afterwards that it was because of that experience. She was an excellent student, maybe not so very intelligent, but incredibly hardworking.

Before the war my cousin emigrated to Palestine. Mila had a beau in Cracow, a medical student, and medicine was hard to get into. His surname was Lezer, but I don't remember his first name. He came from Rozwadow [approx. 22 km north of Cracow] and lived in a student dorm. And when his mother found out that he was dating a girl who didn't have a dowry, she came down and started threatening to withdraw him from medical school. And at that my cousin packed her things on the spot and went to Palestine. There she married a boy from Cracow, called Tisch – which means 'table' in German. But in Israel [Ed. note: Palestine] he changed his name to Tischbi. And she was called Mila Tischbi.

Lezer stayed in Cracow, graduated, and he and Mila only met up again after the war [in Palestine]. He was deported to Russia – I don't know that he didn't go into Anders' Army there 4, because after all a lot of people went into the Polish army. It was those Jews who made it to Palestine later. It's possible that he did too, I don't remember. And then later he and Mila were the closest of friends.

When my brother died I had the room to myself for some time, and then my mother's niece, Gusta, passed her high school finals in Debica and came to Cracow to go to the Jagiellonian University 5. There were 3 rooms in the apartment on Czarneckiego and she moved in with me in my room. She was older than me, maybe 3 years. She was a beautiful girl, blond. We liked each other a lot, and were like best friends. At that time the system was that if you studied, say, history, as she did, then your minor was German.

To practice her German, in the summer vacation she went to stay with her elder sister Syna, the one who'd married a Polish Jew living in Berlin. And there some relative of Syna's husband fell in love with her and married her, so she didn't finish her studies, only went back to Berlin. Her married name was Ulman. And she had maybe a 2-year-old boy when the Polish Jews were kicked out of Germany 6. They walked. Gusta's husband arrived without any shoes, on foot. He turned up in Cracow, and first off Anka, Gusta's sister, took care of him. She was a nurse in the Jewish hospital. She bought him some shoes and he went on to Debica, because I think he came from there too. But she was such a beautiful blonde that the Germans took a fancy to her, and so she

managed to wangle her furniture and apartment back. She brought the child and the furniture back to Poland, to Debica, where her mother was. And then the Germans murdered them all.

After my finals I tried to earn a living, because we had no money. First I spent 6 months doing a commercial course on Florianska Street, because it looked as though I was going to have to go out to work instead of to university. I only went to university a year later. I don't even know that I took an exam… I don't think there was an exam, just your school-leaving certificate.

I went for Polish, out of curiosity, out of interest, because I liked Mr. Felzhorn [Feldhorn], who'd taught us Polish at gymnasium. I have pleasant memories of my time at university, though I didn't really take too much interest in my studies. We had Greek in the first year. Just the first year. And because you had to have a minor, and I'd learnt German at gymnasium, I enrolled for German. I already had the basics.

I only came into contact with anti-Semitism acutely at the university. There were these riots, Jewish pogroms – this one Jewish guy was even killed in Cracow, that was in 1932. They even closed the University down. That happened in the spring sometime, because it was a bit warmer. This funeral, terrible. I went – all of Cracow went, not just the Jewish youth. 2,000 people, apparently.

All the socialist youth, communist – you didn't say 'communist' out loud at that stage. I don't remember his name. What he studied? I don't remember, law probably, because the Jews mostly did law – Jews weren't accepted onto medicine. I didn't complete the third year, because just before the end was when all that trouble erupted, and in the end I got married in 1933, in March, I think. In March, because it was just before Easter.

- **My marriage**

Julek Leibel was friendly with my father. They had common business interests. He was his 'gesheft freund.' 'Geschaeft' [Yid.: gesheft] means 'business' in German. And he used to come to our apartment, to see Father. He was a lot older than me, born in 1896, and I was in love with him, I gazed at him like a dog at the moon. All I used to do was serve tea or something, as you do for guests. It didn't occur to me that he took any interest in me at all. I was a modest girl. What was I? A young girl without a penny, without a dowry, and he was rich, had a car. What that meant back then!

Julek was an independent leather exporter, and my father was a modest Jew, bought the hides himself and then dispatched them. And I was completely surprised and amazed when one day my mother called me into the dining room, where my distant uncle was sitting, the father of my future husband, and Mother said that he'd come to ask whether I would marry Julek. And I was speechless. I said that of course I would. He liked me, and that was it. He even bought me a trousseau. He didn't buy it, he gave Father money, so that nobody would know, and Mother got me some linens together, what I had to have, so that I'd have a trousseau.

After he proposed to me, Julek was back and forth from Kalwaria Zebrzydowska [approx. 25 km from Cracow], where he lived with his parents, to me in Cracow all the time. It was winter. Along the Kalwaria-Cracow road there were woods nearly all the way, and attacks on travelers happened all the time.

My mother-in-law was afraid that something would happen to him and refused to let him go to Cracow. She demanded a quick wedding: 'It's not like you met each other yesterday, you can get married, let her come to you here and that's the end of it.' My mother-in-law was called Anna, and my father-in-law Markus.

The wedding was 3 months after the marriage proposal. Actually, it wasn't a big wedding, just a quiet ceremony in my parents' apartment. The rabbi came, married us, and that was it. No reception, because there was no money. There were just a few people: my Aunt Ela, the one who'd really brought me up, came down from Warsaw, and the 2 cousins of mine that were in Cracow.

After my wedding my parents didn't need 3 rooms. They moved to Rekawka Street, because Father had heart trouble, and that was nearer Podgorski Park – the air seemed to be better there and he found it easier to breathe.

Before we moved to Kalwaria we went to Italy – that was a beautiful honeymoon. We traveled on trains, just the 2 of us. First we went to Vienna, because my husband had an uncle there. From Vienna we went to Venice, then to Rome, as everyone does, to Naples and to Capri. Karol, my husband's brother, traveled a lot, because he was a confirmed bachelor, and he drew us up an itinerary, where we had to go, what we had to see, and we followed his lead.

We were going to go to Yugoslavia as well, but it was 1934 [Ed. note: Mrs. Leibel got married in 1933] and Hitler had started operating in Germany 7 – he'd woken up, so we came back to Poland. The expulsion of the Jews and all those troubles had started... And then I went to Kalwaria... and as soon as I arrived, I broke my leg. There were these twisted stairs there, and I was running down the stairs fast...

Julek was the youngest of his family. He had 2 brothers and a sister. Karol was the eldest and was a doctor. The second, Heniek, was a lawyer in Bielsko. He was married and had a child. Their sister was called Giza, and the brother-in-law was Jozef Krygier, he was an engineer and came from Jaroslaw [approx. 200 km east of Cracow]. They had a daughter, Irena. Our daughter, Halinka, was born on 14 June 1934.

There were a lot of Jews in Kalwaria. There was a synagogue there, but we didn't go. My parents-in-law went, my father-in-law. We rented an apartment straight away, and at my behest the apartment was altered. There were 2 large rooms and a huge kitchen, but no WC and no bathroom. Only at my request was the kitchen divided, and a hall, bathroom and WC made. That engineer, the brother-in-law, designed how it would be. That apartment was in a good spot, on the town square near the church, in a farmer's house. I don't remember what his name was.

Julek's grandparents and my in-laws lived in a house across the square, at right angles. My in-laws came from Kalwaria, but they'd later moved to Wadowice [approx. 40 km from Cracow]. My husband was born in Wadowice and had even been at high school back in Wadowice – the same high school that the Pope 8 went to. I don't know why they moved back to Kalwaria. I got on very well with my mother-in-law, and my father-in-law was very fond of me. He was no longer working, but they were all still taken up with the leather business. Wouldn't I have preferred to stay in Cracow? If he had business there, I went there to be with him. I'd have gone to hell to be with him, not just to Kalwaria. I was madly in love. What my husband's firm was called? It wasn't called

anything – there was just a wagon full of goods, off it went, and that was it. Abroad. I don't know exactly where those wagons went.

When I got married, our maid from Czarnieckiego Street went with me to Kalwaria, but she lasted it a few months and then left. Said she was bored. There were 3 or so people from the village working for my husband, so the daughter of one of them came – and shortly afterwards got married. And after that I had local maids – they were very easy to hire. The working conditions were good at our house: there were 2 rooms, one child, good pay, board, the washerwoman came to take the linen – the maid wasn't overworked. She used to go with me and Halinka for walks – a little further up the hill there was a place where you could go for walks, because further on, to the [Bernadine] monastery, you couldn't go, because Jews were not allowed in. So we had to turn back before the monastery. On the whole we cooked kosher food, which wasn't to say that we didn't buy ham, but we had kosher crockery so that my father could eat with us when he came to visit.

My husband had a Tatra, a Czech car, he'd had it since 1926 or 1928, I think. He only bought a Mercedes right before the war, in 1939. First he taught me to drive himself, and then later, when there was this automobile course in Kalwaria, he invited 2 examiners round, and told them I wanted to take the exam, that I hadn't been on a course, but he'd taught me everything himself. There were 2 examiners, my husband sat in on it as well, and I drove the car. There wasn't any traffic as such in Kalwaria, but this beggar, this invalid, an old man, happened to be crossing the road, and I swore, something vulgar, like: 'Darn, goddammit! He had to go and get in my way!' And the examiner found that very funny: 'Well, now you're a real driver!' No, my husband wasn't afraid to give me the car… My husband would have given me anything. He was a wonderful man, a very good son, husband and father. His mother worshipped him. And my parents, no question – obviously.

In the winter we would go skiing in Zakopane. My husband skied better than me, because I only learned to ski with him. Before my wedding I hadn't been able to afford skis. Skis and boots cost money. I had my own gear, but bought by my husband. I used to go skiing with Zosia Tygner too – they had this big hide store in Cracow on Grodzka Street. We were kind of friendly through my friend Renia Seelerfreund, because Zosia was her aunt.

- **During the war**

One day, in August 1939, my sister-in-law's husband Jozek, who was a reserve officer in the Polish Army, said that Giza and her daughter and their parents were to leave Kalwaria at once and go to Cracow, because Kalwaria was a small town and who knew what might happen there. And unexpectedly I went with them from Kalwaria to Cracow – I really was going only for a day to visit my parents, but they, on my brother-in-law's instruction, were to take the train from Cracow to Jaroslaw, to Jozek's parents', because even if war did break out, the Germans wouldn't get that far. So we went to my parents' house on Rekawka Street.

Well, when my parents heard that, they insisted that I go with Giza. Father literally wouldn't let me get out of the car. He wouldn't even let me change – he packed me off in what I was wearing. That was the Monday, and war broke out on the Friday. I didn't want to leave Cracow.

With the child, the nurse, and my little case, which I have to this day, and in that one dress, Father put me in the carriage and sent me off to Jaroslaw with Giza. My husband didn't know about any of this. He thought I was on a shopping trip in Cracow, and that day he was at work as normal.

I only managed to take my trunk with my furs and some silver, which had been at my parents'. My parents stayed. My father was as patriotic as anything! He said he wouldn't leave Cracow, wouldn't shift. The train was incredibly packed, because it had come from Silesia, where people were fleeing en masse. We all had cases. At the station in Jaroslaw it turned out that my things, which had been sent on, had disappeared. It had all gone, and I was left with what I was standing up in.

We went to Giza's parents'-in-law – well, Halinka and I to a hotel, and Giza and her parents to their in-laws. Then in the morning it transpired that I had nothing to pay for the hotel with, because after all that they'd forgotten to give me any money. I'd gone from Kalwaria to Cracow thinking I was going for a half-day shopping – I usually had 100 or 150 zloty with me. And here I was in a strange town, alone, with my child and the nurse, and I had 9 zloty. And I dashed off to my mother-in-law in tears – mother-in-law didn't have any money either, but I remember that she said sharply to Giza, who didn't really want to lend me any money: 'Do you know what a scene there'd be if Julek saw Misia crying?' Giza reached into the till and gave me some money, and I paid the hotel bill.

And soon my husband arrived in Jaroslaw in the car. He'd come just as he was, too, in plus fours, because he wore short trousers for work, and a jacket. Without a coat, even – and he had a leather coat hanging in the garage. All he told me was that on the way to Jaroslaw he'd jettisoned his pistol in some orchard. He had this small pocket revolver that he always carried. But he was afraid that if they'd caught him and searched him and found he had a gun, they'd have shot him. Because that was the first day of the war.

On the Sunday we drove further east in the car. Heniek and his family and their parents went separately, so this time we only had Giza and Irena with us. And Giza's things – and my, she sure did have some things. She had 6 cases, because she had Karol's clothes, his linen, his money… because Karol had gone into the army convinced that he was going for 2 weeks. As a doctor, a major. Jozek had been called up as well; I think he was a colonel. Both of them had served in the Austrian army, you see.

We had all sorts of escapades. First we headed for Romania – where the government had gone 9. Przemyslany [then a Polish-Romanian border crossing], that was the place, and there they told us straight off that they wouldn't let us through Romania in a car. And then, as it later turned out, Karol's regiment passed right under our noses, as they say. And Giza's husband went past too. No, they weren't serving in the same regiment, but they met up later in Romania. At that time everything was going through Przemyslany, but who was looking? There were crowds of troops marching past, but it never occurred to us that our relatives were among them.

In the end we landed up in Lwow, and there we were advised to destroy our passports. So of course we did, both I and my husband. In Lwow we stayed in a rented apartment. Giza had Karol's money. We had the car for the time being. My husband earned a living with the car, he used it as a taxi, though he didn't have the sign.

Once, he picked up a passenger, from somewhere in town, I don't know, and they got talking and found they were both from Cracow, and my husband told him that he was driving without a license. He was an actor from the Slowacki Theater in Cracow [founded 1893, building designed by Jan Zawiejski]. I don't remember what that actor's name was, all I remember is that his wife's surname was Potocka. And he employed him, on the basis that it was his car and my husband was just his driver. And in that way there was no danger that his car would be taken. Nobody suspected that the Russians would get dug in so comfortably in Lwow.

I don't know when exactly it was that they deported us 10 from Lwow, but it was no longer winter. It was March, April 1940. They [the Russians] came in the night and said: 'Sobierayties' [Russ.: pack your things – form used to more than one person]. That was it. So when they said that, I knew they weren't taking my husband, but that we were all going. I was happier, because usually they only took the men. All together – well then, we'll go. I don't know how it happened, but that night they passed my in-laws' apartment by. Among those Russians there was one Pole. He came up to me and said: 'Take everything.' So I took everything – bedding, Halinka had this folding camp bed, and I took that too. The only thing I didn't take was food. With us they took my husband's brother Heniek, who was there by chance visiting his parents – we lived in the same building as my in-laws. His wife and son were killed after that.

We were taken straight to the station – it was getting light. Later that same day, in the evening, my mother-in-law, with father-in-law, Giza and Irena in tow, all joined us at the station. When mother-in-law had found out in the morning that we were being deported, she had set up a great lament, apparently – my husband was her favorite son, the youngest. And she would never have forgiven herself that she'd let him be taken away and not gone after him herself. She was an incredibly loving mother.

Remarkable. She wanted to go with her son, so what was Giza (who lived with her) to do? And so in that way we all ended up in the goods wagon. And not just us – two other families besides. I remember there was a couple called the Zubrewiczes – I don't know where they were from, but that lady cried all the time, because she'd already been deported once and so she knew what awaited her.

We were traveling for a terribly long time. About 3 weeks. They would stop for a moment, sometimes in the day, sometimes at night, so that people could jump out to relieve themselves. During the journey we were treated very well, I must say, only we weren't allowed to get out for long. I got out once to relieve myself under the wagon, and it was 'Davay nazad!' [Russ.: Get back in!] with a machine gun pointed at me. It was a good job I had a child, because we had a potty, so at least we could do a pee and pour it out of the window.

They'd give us some soup once in a while. As it happened, in Lwow at the station it had turned out that they were putting these neighbors of ours from back in Kalwaria on the same train. They were young people, and they realized what was going on, so they jumped off and bought bread. So on the way we ate that bread, as long as it lasted.

We were taken to this port on the Volga, this small town. I don't remember the name. From there we sailed all night by ship to Koz'modem'yansk [approx. 150 km. from Kazan]; that was a very nice port on the Volga, and there was a railroad station there. That was in the Mariy El Autonomous

Soviet Republic [in December 1941 there was a Polish population of 4,000 there]. Apparently 500 people arrived with us on that train. Later that same day we were taken 35 km into the forest.

Mr. Zubrewicz already had a certain amount of experience, so as soon as we stopped, as soon as we were allowed to get out, he and my husband ran off to find us somewhere to live. They managed to hook this cottage. I remember we arrived there in the early morning, and the previous night they had expelled some Russians from there for being against the government or something... I don't know exactly what for. So we all piled into that cottage: the Zubrewicz family – he had 2 daughters, a son and his daughter-in-law, and his wife – some other couple, and then there were quite a few of us too. So we had one room, the Zubrewiczes had the other room, and in the kitchen – I've forgotten what they were called, that couple, quiet people. Jews.

The kitchen was huge, with a Russian 'piechka' [Russ.:stove]. Well, when that stove was lit it heated both the rooms. Zubrewicz helped us get organized somehow, kit the house out. It was livable-with. Yes, it was wooden, but it was a proper house, not a hut. I remember that when we arrived everything was in bloom. We drew water from this stagnant, dead backwater of the river. We didn't know that there was a well perhaps...I don't know... maybe 300 m away. It was only one of the Russians, one of the ones who were guarding us, who told us that that water was unhealthy, to drink water from the well... after all, some of them were human. Oh, a great time was had by all.

Men and women worked in the forest. My husband worked, my husband's brother, and Irena. She had just passed her school-leaving exams. Yes. I mean, women didn't fell trees, they just sawed branches or felled trees into smaller blocks, and then stacked the blocks. I had a small child, and there were the in-laws, elderly people, so I didn't have to work in the forest. Neither did Giza, because she was... I don't know how old. Over 50. Later on, by coincidence, my cousin Maurycy Wiener was also deported to Koz'modem'yansk, and worked in the same gang as my husband.

My husband was chopping wood for a factory. And one time he mentioned to his director that I wanted a job. What we wanted was for me to have the right to exist there, to have a bread ration. And that director, a woman, hired me first of all as a gardener. I had no idea about gardening! They showed me the shears and told me to cut the tomatoes as they started to ripen. So I spent maybe 2 weeks on the tomatoes. Then my director said that I wasn't going to be in the garden, but in the mill. I spent half a day there theoretically getting experience. They taught me which grain was for what – before that I knew next to nothing. What it was called, what my title was at that mill? I can't remember. I was paid well, every week I would get a small bag of flour, every Saturday. That was a fortune. There was a free canteen.

I had very pleasant conditions at work, ideal. It was a company with 5 different things: there was a mill, there was a buffet, there was a fishery, I can't remember the rest. My superior, the director of that company, was from Moscow, she'd been resettled there from territory occupied by the Germans. That was how the Russians protected people, because her husband was a Jew and was at the front, and she, her mother and her child were in Koz'modem'yansk. She was a party member. Treated me very decently. She was a teacher by profession, a very cultured woman.

One evening, it was a terrible winter, this Russian came by, this local intellectual, and said that some people had arrived for resettling from Poland, and that they'd been traveling 100 km through some forest, and there were 2 young men with them, but that he was only interested in workers,

and he didn't have anywhere to put them up. He asked us to let him put them in the spare room (the Zubrewiczes had already moved out, into town). Of course we agreed at once. This tall woman came in, this decent fur coat hanging off her. Behind her a short guy, eaten away but also in a decent, well-heeled fur, and 2 young boys, tall as oak trees. And a whole pile of cases and things. And they took their things into the empty room, but we were just eating dinner, hot potatoes, what we had.

Them just in from the road, we sat round the table talking, and at one point my husband says to me 'Misia, have you got any more potatoes?' or something like that. And the woman says: 'You're called Misia?' I say: 'Yes, why?' 'Well, my daughter-in-law had a friend called Misia.' 'Who's your daughter-in-law?' It turned out that she was my classmate, who had married this woman's son, who had been at school with us. We got friendly. They were called the Kurtzes. They were wealthy, had money. Later they got a decent apartment and went to town before we did, and their boys went into the army, to the front.

A few 'odkritki' [Russ.: postcards] came to me in Koz'modem'yansk from Cracow, from my parents. Before the war my father had worked – I mean traded – with a Jew from Hamburg. And that Jew – don't remember his name – had this employee, a German, and they used to come over to see us. Sometimes that man, and sometimes that employee of his. And later, when the Germans entered Cracow, that German guy helped my father a lot, so that for some time Father worked legally. He was employed in a slaughterhouse as an expert on hides. An expert, yes.

A letter came from Jozek, Giza's husband, too, that he was in an oflag 11. Just brief: 'I'm alive and well,' just 'Oflag'... some town, I don't remember where. Karol had ended up in an oflag too. They'd met up by chance, and so of course from then on stuck together, and because Karol was a doctor he was treated slightly differently there. And because of that letter from Jozek, Irena was arrested. They reckoned that if he was a Jew, an officer, and still alive, then he must be collaborating for sure with Hitler.

Irena was taken to prison in Koz'modem'yansk with this guy she worked with (don't know what he was arrested for). He was called Genek Waks. Maybe they were in love – I don't know. In any case, 2 young Poles, however you look at it – I mean, he was a Jew too. Shortly after the arrest, the Polish Army 12 came into being, and that Genek signed up for the army from prison, and went to the front. Irena was released after a while too. No, Giza wasn't arrested, and her grandparents were already dead. Granddad had been standing in line, caught a cold and got influenza. And Grandma had had heart trouble for years.

My husband contracted heart problems too. He worked very hard. Before that he'd been a physically healthy, handsome man, but chopping wood in a forest in sub-zero temperatures... and what kind of nourishment did we have? I called a doctor whose grandfather had been a Polish exile, he was 3rd-generation, still understood some Polish. A very decent man. What was his name? I can't remember. Because he saw the conditions we were living in, he took my husband into the hospital.

There were no patients on the men's ward at all, just one patient and my husband the second, because there was a war on and all the men were at war. He was in hospital for a long time, and in the end, the doctor said to me: 'Take him home, because he won't live.' He died in March 1944. He

was buried in a Russian cemetery. No, it wasn't a Jewish cemetery. It was this neglected cemetery, a few people died, so they were buried there. The cemetery wasn't looked after very well there.

The Union of Polish Patriots 13 organized a Polish school in Koz'modem'yansk. I'd only done 3 years of my degree course [out of 5], but I had my teaching qualifications, and there were an awful lot of Polish children. Polish… I mean Jewish, mostly Jewish. And I taught the children in Koz'modem'yansk along with this Mrs. Hajdukiewicz, a teacher from Lwow. Me up to 4th grade and her up to 7th grade. We were just allocated days and classrooms in a Russian school, and we went there and taught. My Halinka went to that school too. I had something like 15 children in each class.

Irena and a friend worked in the forest, and as young girls, there with those Russian soldiers guarding them – there weren't a lot of them, maybe 4 – well, one of them fell in love with Irena and used to come round. He didn't come round for long, though, because they sent him to the front and he was killed. After all, contacts with Polish prisoners were not allowed, so his mates must have split on him [Polish citizens resettled in April 1940 had 'administrativno vyslannyie' – 'expelled pursuant to administrative decision' status; this meant they were prohibited from changing their place of residence, and were under the supervision of field divisions of the NKVD].

And one day the girls came running home and Irena shouts: 'The war's going to end! We'll be leaving here soon. I heard on the radio that peace has been signed.' We looked at her: what's she talking about – we knew nothing. What was a newspaper, a radio? Well, and it was true. Very shortly, a few weeks later, Genek, Irena's fiance, came back. They had the right to leave the front and take their families back to Poland, you see. And they all – Genek and his brother, their parents, Irena, Giza and Heniek – went to Moscow, and from Moscow smart as anything went back to Poland. Yes, later on Irena married Genek.

Halinka and I stayed. We moved from the cottage into a little room in a Russian woman's apartment. I surrendered my driving license, as the only document proving that I was a Polish citizen, so that I could return to Poland. In spring 1946 we traveled in goods wagons to Poland. We could only leave when they put on an 'eshelon' [a military transport unit, in this case a train]. They gave us 24 hours to get to the railroad station, too. People went in horses and carts. Not everybody had to, but everybody left.

- **After the war**

We traveled to Cracow in the same wagon as the Kurtzes; their 2 sons were still in the army. There was another Jewish family traveling with us, but not from Cracow. They were with their son, who had been in the army but had been thrown out, because he wasn't suitable for some reason. Mrs. Hajdukiewicz, who was traveling with us as well, tried to get out in Lwow. She got off, but very soon came back to the wagon, because it was impossible – when she went into her apartment, when she saw what was going on there – and it was the Russian army… She didn't go to Cracow with us, but went somewhere where another eshelon was going.

Back in Koz'modem'yansk I'd gotten a letter from a very close friend of mine, a schoolfriend, Karola Wetstein, whose son was the same age as my daughter. She wrote me that she had survived the camps, and that she was starting over from nothing in Cracow. She had her own house on

Starowislna Street, and when she came out of the camp and retrieved her son, and found her brother (he had been in the camps somewhere, too), they moved back into their apartment on Starowislna. In her house.

She wrote me also that my parents were dead, that they'd perished in the last-but-one deportation from Podgorze – the ghetto had been in Podgorze 14. The ghetto was liquidated in September [1943], and they'd died in March, taken to Belzec 15. I have no family. After the war I was just me and my daughter. My parents had perished. Karola wrote also that when I came back to Poland, to Cracow, that I should head for her place, simply because I would find shelter with her.

My first steps on arriving in Cracow were to the Jewish Committee on Dluga Street [the Provincial Jewish Committee was set up in 1945 at 42 Dluga Street]. At the Committee I met Wiener, my cousin, and together we looked through the photo albums, and it was he who recognized them, I didn't recognize: 'Well look, this is your father and your mama.' I hadn't known my father without a beard. He hadn't known him either, but somehow he'd remembered better. The Germans had taken those photographs in the ghetto.

It was a record of the people who had died – I don't know, Jews in general. They let me make copies. Before the war my parents had had nothing. Their rented apartment in Podgorze had been in the ghetto, and there was no question of my going in when I got back even just to take a keepsake from home. I tried. I wasn't let into the apartment and that was it. No, nobody opened up.

I went to Karola's, and there it turned out that there was some other woman living in her apartment. She told me Karola had taken the child and gone somewhere to help him recover. Karola's child had been hidden in some shed and couldn't speak. He was also retarded. And after the war our children were 10 years old [Ed. note: in 1946 Halinka was 12].

And then that Mr. and Mrs. Kurtz took me to the house of some relatives or friends of theirs. In the evening a few people came round – a few young men who had survived the war. One of them kind of looks at me, looks, and says: 'Aren't you Juliusz Leibel's wife?' 'I was Juliusz Leibel's wife, but Juliusz died a few years back now.'

And what it turns out, he was this guy from Kalwaria, before the war he'd been 15 or 16 and he attended his father's gasoline station. And he remembered me, and remembered my husband, that he'd sold us gasoline. And Halinka and I slept that night at those people's house, the 2 of us in a cot, and in the morning he took care of me. He told me that he would take me to this woman who would help me find a job and an apartment.

He took me to 6 Slowackiego Avenue. He told me some name, there was a card on the door. I looked at her and I thought, 'I know this woman from somewhere.' And she turned out to be this Mala Rubinstein, who opened the first kindergarten for Jewish children in Cracow. The first. You see other than that, kindergartens were run by convents, by nuns, so Jewish children didn't go to them. Before the war she'd been in Germany somewhere, in some school for kindergarten teachers, and then later, together with some wealthy Jewess (Mala wasn't rich) she opened that kindergarten.

I spent one more night with those strangers, and then it turned out that Mala helped me to get my daughter into a children's home – because I didn't have anywhere to go – and found me a job in the

same children's home. On Dluga Street. At the Jewish Committee there was this group of women that traveled round Poland specially looking for children like that [Jewish] – because there were people who'd taken children in simply out of pity.

There was this one, Salus, came from Mazovia, but during the war he'd been in Ukraine with his father, his mother had perished somewhere, then the Russians had taken the father into the army, and the boy had gone along with the regiment because he'd had nowhere to go. And Mrs. Marianska, the chair of the Jewish Committee, had taken him in off the streets in Cracow.

There were these two sisters, too, Paulina and Dora, who'd originally had a father, the father had lived somewhere outside Cracow, because he'd had a job with some horses. Then he died and they'd been left alone. Salus and those two sisters were the first 3 children in the children's home. Unfortunately there were only a few rooms there on Dluga Street.

And there, on Dluga Street, by chance, I met a cousin of mine, my father's niece, Fela Goldzwinger. I met her on the corridor as I was taking my daughter to the children's home. About the time I got married, she was still in gymnasium. I didn't recognize her, because I remembered a schoolgirl, and here was a woman in a long coat and hat. A typical Jew, through and through, with a crooked nose.

Handsome, she was. And she'd been in the Podgorze ghetto, and when the elderly people had been taken to the camps in Plaszow, [the first transports left the ghetto for the Plaszow labor camp in February 1943; this was the start of the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto] 16, she'd been sent to work in Czechoslovakia somewhere. She'd been about 18 then. She lived through various camps, and came back from the camp naked, barefoot, and penniless – and generally with nowhere to go. Her parents and brothers and sisters had perished.

And she met a friend who she'd worked with back before the war, and she took her in, on Lubicz Street. And she found her a husband, took care of her very nicely. When I met her she was already married. She lived for a little while on Wolnica Place. She already had a little boy when she went to Israel. After that she worked there, in some children's home somewhere, and I think he was a carpenter or something. Terribly poor, they were, but they got by. I saw her when I was in Israel.

This distant relative of mine in Cracow, who was the Jewish community's assignee, came to see me one day and says: 'Listen, there's this young guy getting married, all alone, his whole family killed, and for him to get married they need two witnesses. Come with me.' He didn't even know the guy's name. So we turned up – the wedding was at the rabbi's place – I look... and it's my cousin Lieblich, Stefan Lieblich [the second son of Mrs. Leibel's maternal aunt Mania]. He didn't know I was alive, and I didn't know he was alive. He was the only one out of all that family deported way out into deepest Russia that survived. And he was getting married to this painter, Lea Weingruen. Her mother died shortly afterwards and they emigrated. Yes, to Palestine. I went to see them in Israel. There's a picture hanging over there [on the wall] that she painted and gave me.

We got a whole 4-story building, where the Jewish Children's Home was opened. Cracow, 1 Augustianska Boczna Street [now 6 Chmielowskiego Street; the building houses Care and Educational Complex No. 2]. That was the address. The house had been built before the war [1936-1938, commissioned by the Jewish community organization in Kazimierz] as an old people's home,

but there were no old people left, because they'd been murdered by the Germans. Then it had been a barracks, and apparently a brothel for the German officers.

The back of that house butted up more or less against the Jewish hospital on Skawinska Street through the courtyards. And that's almost right on the Vistula [River]. It was a beautiful building, very decently fitted out, just damaged. It was equipped for our needs – there were washrooms, and a washbasin in every room. Bathrooms in the corridors. Luckily, in spite of the damage we were able to move the children in straight away. Because it had been a barracks, there were these army beds there. The painters went in; there was broken glass everywhere, window panes had to be put in..., as you'd expect after a war.

The children helped to clear up, because 80 or more than 80 children arrived from the Soviet Union. A very large group, a whole carriageful came. There were boys and girls. More girls, of course. Jewish children. All Jewish. What 80 children meant?! All different ages! Some of them were so wild.

There was even a time when there were 130 children in the children's home – that's the maximum number I'm giving, because after that there were more or less 70-80, or 80-something. It varied. Of them, there were about 20-30 of the little ones, the under 3's in the nursery. They lived up on the 4th floor, they had their own nurses up there. There was a veranda up there, and the little ones played up there on that veranda. They never came down from the 4th floor. And downstairs we had a kindergarten, from 4 to 6 years old. And other than that we had children even up to school-leaving age. I didn't live in the same room as my daughter, she was with the other children.

No, I never got involved in looking out the children; they were brought to me. I was in the house, as a mom – I had a lot of children, each one different. I was there as the carer for the eldest group officially, but in practice I was the director. The real director was a very party man – he spent more time in the party 17, and in effect I ran the home. He's been dead for years. He was called Dawid Erdestein, a German graduate. I worked in that children's home 5 years. Some of the staff were Polish women. The carers were Jews.

There was this one Polish woman, an older woman, who rescued Jewish children, everyone called her 'Nanny'. I can't remember what she was called, but in return for what she had done the Jewish community office gave her an apartment for life and work in our home. The children called me 'Pani Misia.' And it's stuck to this day.

The Jewish Children's Home was kept up by American Jews, and we would get parcels of clothing. The children were dressed very nicely, except I always tried to make sure that my daughter was dressed more modestly than the others. And a deputation of American Jews came to visit us, and the Cracow and province authorities were there. After a while a wagon came from America with decent beds, mattresses, clothes and bedding in it – everything we needed. Yes, and they didn't want to let that wagon through, because it was addressed in the name of the director, and they thought it was him trying to do some private deal, and he was nearly arrested. That guy Wiener, that cousin of mine, saved him. He went to the militia and explained it.

You weren't allowed to adopt Jewish children after the war. The communist authorities wouldn't allow it; that was the official position. By way of exception we managed to get just 2 children

adopted. One little girl, who writes to me from Israel now – oh, I must write back to her. She even comes to visit me. And Teresa, who was adopted by a friend of mine, a teacher in High School No. 5 in Cracow.

Jonasz Stern 18 was a friend of the director of the children's home. They'd grown up together, in the same town, Kalusz (that's outside Poland now [now Kalush, Ukraine, approx. 100 km south-west of Lwow]). And Stern used to come to our Children's Home. We got friendly. His is a long story. He was rescued from a death camp; some people took him in somewhere, and when he came back from Hungary or wherever it was he'd been, after the war, he literally painted for bread. And other than that he would come to the Children's Home, to see the children. He liked children very much.

He taught the children drawing, played with them, organized shows. And he made the costumes for all kinds of shows. He was a wonderful friend. A friend of the home. Once he painted this picture that he gave me as a present. And just after that he became rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow and after that he didn't come round so much, because he didn't have the time any more.

I was fired on the pretext of smuggling children to Israel [Mrs. Leibel isn't sure what organization smuggled children to Israel, but it was probably Aliyyat No'ar (Youth Aliyah)] 19. Somehow they found out that I corresponded with relatives in Israel, which means somebody must have informed on me.

They knew I was a Zionist, and that I had never been a communist. I worked there for 5 years, so it must have been 1951 or 1952 when they fired me. No, it wasn't Erdestein who fired me, because he'd been moved before that. Some higher level teacher training course had been set up in Cracow – he was a teacher by profession and was made manager there. I moved to the Friends of Children Society 20. In my place they put some ex-head of a children's home in Lodz or somewhere. I don't remember his name any more.

And when the children invited me to some get-together later, they said something about going away, but he said that his children weren't going anywhere. I said to them then: 'I'm going to Israel, so when I come back I'll tell you what it's like.' But when I came back they weren't there any more. They'd gone to Israel. The children who were still in the children's home invited me to some special occasion, and only then did I find out that there'd been some big campaign – organized from Israel – and they'd been taken. And the new director, who'd been so against them leaving, had been the first to go. Yes, with the children. And he died there shortly afterwards, apparently, because when I went to Israel he had already died.

There was this foursome in the children's home, 3 girls and a boy, siblings. They'd come from Russia in the biggest group of children. And 2 of the girls went to Israel that time. I remember that one of them, Regina, married there – a Jew, but from Sweden. Jews used to go to Israel to work, to help, and he'd gone too, and fallen in love with Regina, and he married her. And her sister Sara stayed in Cracow, got married here, to a carer from the children's home – he was an orphan too. She graduated from the Jagiellonian University and worked there. What was her married name? I just found out, yesterday or a few days ago, that she died suddenly, in Cracow.

There was another couple in Israel, a girl and a boy from the children's home, got married. I think he's dead, and she's stopped writing to me. They came to visit me lots of times too. Her father was an officer, a Jewish officer, but he was killed during the war. As a Jew, I mean, not as an officer. A friend of her father's took her in and pretended she was his daughter. And everyone thought she was a bachelor's daughter. Then he fell in love with some woman and got married, and that woman put the girl in our children's home. And the girl used to come back to Poland because she was looking for her father's papers. She got all his papers back, some orders, and so on.

My parents-in-law had left a house in Kalwaria, and in 1949 I sold that house. My husband had brothers and sisters, but somehow they all ceded at least part of it to me, so I had a little money and I was able to go on a trip to Israel. For a month, that was how much leave I had. That trip cost a lot.

Actually, I'd wanted Halinka to go to Israel instead of me – after the war she was grown up. But she didn't want to, and we wouldn't both have got permission to leave the country. They didn't let people go to Israel, because they were afraid to let their precious Jews go. I had a lots of problems, I was refused permission to go several times, but in the end I succeeded and I went. That was in maybe 1952 or 1953. I thought that in time I'd persuade Halinka; I was brought up in a very Jewish home, but she wasn't.

As far as I remember, I flew from Warsaw. I got on a plane that landed in Haifa. Janek, my cousin, came to the airport for me. He and his sister Ewa left Poland before the war. And we went back from Haifa by car to… where was it they lived? That famous lake… [the Sea of Galilee]. His wife worked in the municipal offices as a translator, because she was a Jew from England. She was 3 when she arrived there, so she knew English, and Hebrew of course. Ewa had a family there too, but she lived somewhere else.

The first time, I just stayed with Janek. No, for the first few days I couldn't understand the Hebrew, but within a few days it all came back to me. They tried to persuade me to stay, but I said: 'I can't, because I've got my daughter in Cracow.' I didn't want to part with my daughter, and she desperately didn't want to emigrate – she was a Pole. Did I bring my daughter up in the Jewish faith? I didn't bring her up to be a Jew at all. She just has 'Jew' written in her papers. I'm not religious either, but I am a Jew by nationality. She doesn't feel Jewish at all.

I had plans to move to Warsaw, I had the chance of a good job, but Halinka didn't want to go; I had all sorts of problems. I took her to Warsaw, and she came back. So then I said: either you go to work, or you go to school. She was 18. She went out to work in her final year at school, took her school-leaving exams while she was working.

Well, what did I have to live on? She worked 3-4 years in Huta [the Lenin Steelworks, built 1954, the largest industrial plant in the Cracow region, now the T. Sendzimir Steelworks]. Then she worked in Cracow as a Russian translator – after all, she'd been at school in Russia for several years. Then she did a part-time university degree, in Russian.

After we had to leave the children's home, Halinka lived with me at first. I found a tiny room at 48 Karmelicka Street. Then, while she was doing her degree she got married and I lived with her and her son [Ryszard Bronislaw, b. 1959], and her husband, a medical student, lived with his parents.

Oh, it was all kinds of fun. The owner of the apartment was a very pleasant Mrs. Jenerowa, an Italian woman who'd married a Pole who worked in Cracow in the days when it was Galicia [i.e. before World War I]. So to the time we knew her, she didn't speak Polish perfectly.

A very genteel, immensely pleasant, good person. It was a 3-room apartment. She lived in one room with her maid, in the second room was a Mrs. Tatarowa, who'd been married to a Jew, but her husband had perished in the occupation, and in the third room us, together with my grandson.

When a room came free in my friend's apartment on Slowackiego Avenue, I moved in with her, and at least they could live together. Shortly afterwards Halinka divorced him. He moved out. His parents wouldn't let him back in their apartment. In the meantime, Ryszard was with me more than he was at home with Halinka, because Halinka was working. I worked too, but we managed somehow. He was sick a lot, had high fevers, so he didn't go to school, but stayed with me. I was constantly taking him on vacation or on trips. When Halinka was in Russia, he lived with me. She was there for 7 or 9 years, working as a translator. In Smolensk somewhere, then in the Crimea – various, in different places.

After I was fired from the children's home I worked a few years in the Friends of Children Society [FCS] 20, where I was responsible for childcare in children's homes. It was my job to go round and inspect those children's homes. I also had to oversee the programs of the summer camps that schools organized. I only went on inspections. There were a lot of summer camps like that in Murzasichle [a popular vacation resort in the Tatra Mountains in southern Poland]. The whole village was basically just 11 FCS summer camp centers.

After the FCS I worked in Vocational Training [the Vocational Training Institute, est. 1915] on Dietla Street. For a while I worked there as course director. Then I moved to the Polish Economic Society. From there I was fired by the director, who I'd previously hired myself as a lecturer on courses, because I didn't have the qualifications and I couldn't lecture. He was called Nedzowski, an economics graduate. They wanted to fire him too, but in the end he joined the party and stayed, but I wasn't a party member, and I was fired. What year was it when they fired all the Jews? [1968] 21. Ah, well that was when they fired me. Why? The usual: Jewish.

So then I went back to Training on Dietla Street, but not as course director any more, but in the library, part time, because I got a doctor's certificate that I was sick. Then the library was closed down and I worked afternoons enrolling students on courses. When Solidarity 22 started up, they came to get me to enroll in Solidarity.

They started trying to persuade me, but I never joined either Solidarity or any other party. And the employee who came to me was a guy I knew was a drunk – in fact he was drunk when he came to me that time. I thought to myself: if he's going to be in it, then that's no place for me, because I've never had anything to do with drunks. And I refused, and then I was fired. Ahead of Martial Law 23. Under Solidarity they fired the director too.

The new director had been working there maybe 6 months, maybe not even that, when they came to me and asked me to go back. I wanted to go back, but my daughter wouldn't let me: 'What's that supposed to mean? If they've asked you to leave once, don't go.' I was already retired before that, it had just been a part-time job. Oh, I worked for a long time, because when I retired, I was

nearly 70. At 55 I was entitled to retire, but I worked to 60 normally, and then went part time. I remember the end of communism in Poland 24, but it wasn't any big deal for me. I knew it was finished and I was pleased, and that was it. Good riddance.

I was a member of the Polish Teaching Union for years and years. I never went on any vacations or anything. And then, when they started demanding money for subscriptions and I was sick, every 50 zloty counted, I stopped being a member. It's 6 years I haven't been out of the house now. I have my pension, but I have 2 carers – a day nurse and a night nurse. Private. My pension wouldn't cover that – my friends pay.

Yes, I must say I keep in touch with the children from the children's home. Paulina, who lives in Brussels, is always calling me – she phoned me a few days ago. I even have a photograph of her grandson. I went to stay with her a few times. The other one, her sister Dora, lives in Paris, and I went to stay with her too. Just now I got a card from one of the girls in the children's home for Jewish New Year. And best wishes. It's very nice that the children remember me and come to visit me.

I have these friends, not Jews, they're called Wasilewski. Wojtek is a young man, younger than me, younger even than my daughter. He's a sculptor and his wife's a painter. Artists. And a few times they organized get-togethers at Jewish festivals. And they asked me to light the candles, the Friday ones, at their house. They live on the way to Nowa Huta. We're very close. We've known each other for about 20 years now. No, there aren't many older Jews in Cracow. And if there are, I'm not in touch with them. After the war I went to the synagogue a few times, for anniversaries, but not many times. I'm always a member of the community organization, just because. Of course. I get my matzah every year.

- **Glossary:**

1. Franz Joseph I Hapsburg (1830-1916): emperor of Austria from 1848, king of Hungary from 1867. In 1948 he suppressed a revolution in Austria (the 'Springtime of the Peoples'), whereupon he abolished the constitution and political concessions. His foreign policy defeats – the loss of Italy in 1859, loss of influences in the German lands, separatism in Hungary, defeat in war against the Prussians in 1866 – and the dire condition of the state finances convinced him that reforms were vital.

In 1867 the country was reformed as a federation of two states: the Austrian empire and the Hungarian kingdom, united by a personal union in the person of Franz Joseph. A constitutional parliamentary system was also adopted, which guaranteed the various countries within the state (including Galicia, an area now largely in southern Poland) a considerable measure of internal autonomy. In the area of foreign policy, Franz Joseph united Austria-Hungary with Germany by a treaty signed in 1892, which became the basis for the Triple Alliance.

The conflict in Bosnia Hertsegovina was the spark that ignited World War I. Subsequent generations remembered the latter part of Franz Joseph's rule as a period of stabilization and prosperity.

2. Galicia: Informal name for the lands of the former Polish Republic under Hapsburg rule (1772–1918), derived from the official name bestowed on these lands by Austria: the Kingdom of

Galicia and Lodomeria. From 1815 the lands west of the river San (including Cracow) began by common consent to be called Western Galicia, and the remaining part (including Lemberg [Lwow]), with its dominant Ukrainian population, Eastern Galicia. Galicia was agricultural territory, an economically backward region.

Its villages were poor and overcrowded (hence the term 'Galician misery'), which, given the low level of industrial development (on the whole processing of agricultural and crude-oil based products) prompted mass economic emigration from the 1890s; mainly to the Americas. After 1918 the name Eastern Malopolska for Eastern Galicia was popularized in Poland, but Ukrainians called it Western Ukraine.

3. 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.

4. 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 30 July 1941 and the military agreement of 14 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.

5. Jagiellonian University: (Pol.: Uniwersytet Jagiellonski), Cracow's premier university, founded in 1364 by King Casimir III of Poland, it has maintained a high standard of learning ever since. In the 19th century the university was designated "Jagiellonian" to commemorate the dynasty of Polish kings of the same name.

6. Zbaszyn Camp: From October 1938 until the spring of 1939 there was a camp in Zbaszyn for Polish Jews resettled from the Third Reich. The German government, anticipating the act passed by the Polish Sejm (Parliament) depriving people who had been out of the country for more than 5 years of their citizenship, deported over 20,000 Polish Jews, some 6,000 of whom were sent to Zbaszyn. As the Polish border police did not want to let them into Poland, these people were trapped in a strip of no-man's land, without shelter, water or food. After a few days they were resettled to a temporary camp on the Polish side, where they spent several months. Jewish communities in Poland organized aid for the victims; families took in relatives, and Joint also provided assistance.

7. Hitler's rise to power: in the German parliamentary elections in January 1933, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) won one-third of the votes. On 30 January 1933 the German president swore in Adolf Hitler, the party's leader, as chancellor. On 27 February 1933 the building of the Reichstag (the parliament) in Berlin was burned down. The government laid the blame with the Bulgarian communists, and a show trial was staged. This served as the pretext for ushering in a state of emergency and holding a re-election.

It was won by the NSDAP, which gained 44% of the votes, and following the cancellation of the communists' votes it commanded over half of the mandates. The new Reichstag passed an extraordinary resolution granting the government special legislative powers and waiving the constitution for 4 years. This enabled the implementation of a series of moves that laid the foundations of the totalitarian state: all parties other than the NSDAP were dissolved, key state offices were filled by party luminaries, and the political police and the apparatus of terror swiftly developed.

8. John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla, 1920-2005): Polish Catholic cleric, archbishop of Cracow, cardinal and from 1978 pope. Ordained in 1946. Lecturer at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and subsequently at the Catholic University of Lublin. In 1963 became archbishop of Cracow. Elevated to the rank of cardinal in 1967. On 16 October 1978 elected pope. During his pontificate he made more than 100 pilgrimages to countries all over the world. His first pilgrimage to Poland in 1979 is of especial significance, as it was intended to fortify the spirit of resistance to the communist regime. Pope John Paul II devoted much energy to ecumenical dialogue both within the Christian church and with other religions, including Judaism. He was the first pope to visit Rome's synagogue, he established diplomatic relations with the state of Israel, and in the year 2000 he made a historic confession of the Church's sins, including the sin of centuries of anti-Semitism.

9. Flight of the Polish government in 1939: On 17 September 1939, when fighting was still going on against the Germans, Soviet forces invaded Polish territory, which spelled the ultimate failure of the defensive war. The Polish government, president, and commander-in-chief of the army took the decision to evacuate the Polish authorities to Romania, with the intention of subsequently getting

to France. The Romanian ambassador assured the government right of transit.

On 18 September the supreme Polish authorities crossed the border in Zaleszczyki to Czerniowice. From there, President Ignacy Moscicki delivered an address to the Polish nation in which he announced that the state authorities had been transferred to an allied country. The dispatch of the address constituted a violation of the Hague Convention and provided the Romanian authorities with a pretext to intern the Polish authorities, which the Germans were pressing them to do. On the same day the members of the Polish authorities were placed in isolation in several different locations throughout Romania.

The Polish constitution of 1935 gave the president the right to nominate his successor in a situation of war. Ignacy Moscicki nominated as president Wladyslaw Raczkiewicz, who succeeded in getting to France. The new president appointed Gen. Wladyslaw Sikorski prime minister of the emigre Polish government in Paris.

10. Deportations of Poles from the Eastern Territories during WWII: from the beginning of Soviet occupation of eastern Poland on 17th September 1939, until the Soviet-German war which broke out on 21st June 1941, the Soviet authorities deported people associated with the former Polish authorities, culture, church and army. Around 400 000 people were exiled from the Lwow, Tarnopol and Stanislawow districts, mostly to northern Russia, Siberia and Kazakhstan. Between 12 and 15 April as many as 25 000 were deported from Lwow alone.

11. Polish Jews in Oflags: among the 420 000 soldiers of the Polish Army taken prisoner in September 1939 there were ca. 60 000 Jews, while among the 17 000 Polish officers there were 600-700 Jews (defined according to the Nuremberg laws). They were put in more than a dozen POW camps along with their Polish comrades. In the spring of 1940 the Germans registered all the Jewish officers in Oflags and transferred them to Stalag II B – Hammerstein, planning to send them home, that is, to ghettos in the General Government.

After a few weeks the Germans changed their minds: the Jews were sent back to the Oflags. Officers were protected under the 1929 Geneva Convention, which guaranteed decent living conditions, and the right to send and receive letters and parcels and to participate in educational and cultural activities in the camp. Prisoners of war were under the power of the Wehrmacht. The Convention was breached by the Germans, as they created ghettos (separate barracks) in four Oflags: Woldenburg, Murnau, Neubrandenburg, and Dossel, despite protests from the Polish officers and the Red Cross delegations.

Living conditions in the ‘ghettos’ were worse than those in the Polish barracks, and Jews were also temporarily deprived of the right to receive Red Cross parcels. It is known that Himmler was trying to deprive Jews of prisoner-of-war status, but was blocked by Oberkommando Wehrmacht. The Jewish commissioned officers generally survived the war in the Oflags. Jewish soldiers and non-commissioned officers were treated completely differently: most of them perished in the Holocaust.

12. The 1st Kosciuszko Infantry Division: tactical grouping formed in the USSR from May 1943. The victory at Stalingrad and the gradual assumption of the strategic initiative by the Red Army strengthened Stalin’s position in the anti-fascist coalition and enabled him to exert increasing influence on the issue of Poland. In April 1943, following the public announcement by the Germans

of their discovery of mass graves at Katyn, Stalin broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish government in exile and, using the Poles in the USSR, began openly to build up a political base (the Union of Polish Patriots) and an army: the 1st Kosciuszko Infantry Division numbered some 11,000 soldiers and was commanded first by General Zygmunt Berling (1943-44), and subsequently by the Soviet General Bewziuk (1944-45). In August 1943 the division was incorporated into the 1st Corps of the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, and from March 1944 was part of the Polish Army in the USSR. The 1st Division fought at Lenino on 12-13 October 1943, and in the Wasaw district of Praga in September 1944. In January 1945 it marched into Warsaw, and in April-May 1945 it took part in the capture of Berlin. After the war it became part of the Polish Army.

13. Union of Polish Patriots (ZPP): Political organization founded in March 1943 by Polish communists in the USSR. It served Stalin's policy with regard to the Polish question. The ZPP drew up the terms on which the communists took power in post-war Poland. It developed its range of activities more fully after the Soviet authorities broke off diplomatic contact with the government of the Republic of Poland in exile (Apr. 1943). The upper ranks of the ZPP were dominated by communists (from Jan. 1944 concentrated in the Central Bureau of Polish Communists), who did not reveal the organization's long-term aims. The ZPP propagated slogans such as armed combat against the Germans, alliance with the USSR, parliamentary democracy and moderate social and economic reforms in post-war Poland, and redefinition of Poland's eastern border. It considered the ruling bodies of the Republic of Poland in exile to be illegal. It conducted propaganda campaigns (its press organ was called 'Wolna Polska' - Free Poland), and organized community care and education and cultural activities. From May 1943 it co-operated in the organization of the First Kosciuszko Infantry Division, and later the Polish Army in the USSR (1944). In July 1944, the ZPP was formally subordinated to the National Council and participated in the formation of the Polish Committee for National Liberation. From 1944-46, the ZPP resettled Poles and Jews from the USSR to Poland. It was dissolved in August 1946.

14. Podgorze Ghetto: There were approximately 60,000 Jews living in Cracow in 1939; after the city was seized by the Germans, mass persecutions began. The Jews were ordered to leave the city in April; approx. 15,000 received permission to stay in the city. A ghetto was created in the Podgorze district on 21st March 1941. Approx. 8,000 people from suburban regions were resettled there in the fall. There were three hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes, several synagogues and one pharmacy run by a Pole operating in the ghetto. Illegal Jewish organizations began operating in 1940. An attack on German officers in the Cyganeria club took place on 22nd December 1942. Mass extermination began in 1942 – 14,000 inhabitants were deported to Belzec, many were murdered on the spot. The ghetto, diminished in size, was divided into two parts: A, for those who worked, and B, for those who did not work. The ghetto was liquidated in March 1943. The inhabitants of part A were deported to the camp in Plaszow and those of part B to Auschwitz. Approximately 3,000 Jews returned to Cracow after the war.

15. Belzec: Village in the 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.

16. Plaszow Camp: Located near Cracow, it was originally a forced labor camp and subsequently became a concentration camp. The construction of the camp began in summer 1940. In 1941 the camp was extended and the first Jews were deported there. The site chosen comprised two Jewish cemeteries. There were about 2,000 prisoners there before the liquidation of the Podgorze (Cracow) ghetto on 13th and 14th March 1943 and the transportation of the remaining Jews to Plaszow camp. Afterwards, the camp population rose to 8,000. By the second half of 1943 its population had risen to 12,000, and by May-June 1944 the number of permanent prisoners had increased to 24,000 (with an unknown number of temporary prisoners), including 6,000-8,000 Jews from Hungary. Until the middle of 1943 all the prisoners in the Plaszow forced labor camp were Jews. In July 1943, a separate section was fenced off for Polish prisoners who were sent to the camp for breaking the laws of the German occupational government. The conditions of life in the camp were made unbearable by the SS commander Amon Goeth, who became the commandant of Plaszow in February 1943. He held the position until September 1944 when he was arrested by the SS for stealing from the camp warehouses. As the Russian forces advanced further and further westward, the Germans began the systematic evacuation of the slave labor camps in their path. From the camp in Plaszow, many hundreds were sent to Auschwitz, others westward to Mauthausen and Flossenburg. On 18th January 1945 the camp was evacuated in the form of death marches, during which thousands of prisoners died from starvation or disease, or were shot if they were too weak to walk. The last prisoners were transferred to Germany on 16th January 1945. More than 150,000 civilians were held prisoner in Plaszow.

17. 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.

18. Jonasz Stern (1904-1988): painter and printmaker. Studied at the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts. Co-operated as a set designer with the "Cricot" Theater. Co-founder of the artistic "Krakow Group." Active in the Communist Party of Poland, for which in 1938 he was interned in the camp in Bereza Kartuska. During the war he was in the Lwow ghetto and subsequently in the Janowska Street camp. He escaped and managed to reach Hungary, where he was liberated. After the war he settled in Cracow. From 1959 he was vice-rector of the Academy of Fine Arts; removed in 1968 during the anti-Semitic purges. Few of his prewar works have survived: landscapes, genre scenes and grotesque compositions. In his postwar work he began to employ innovative techniques, incorporating into the structure of the picture fragments of other materials: fish bones, small bones, skins, photographs and fabric. Many of his works from this period address the theme of the Holocaust and death.

19. Aliyyat Noar (Youth Aliyah): organization founded in 1933 in Berlin by Recha Freier, whose original aim was to help Jewish children and youth to emigrate from Nazi Germany to Palestine. The

immigrants were settled in the Ben Shemen kibbutz, where over a period of 2 years they were taught to work on the land and Hebrew. In the period 1934-1945 the organization was run by Henrietta Szold, the founder of the USA women's Zionist organization Hadassa. From that time, Aliyyat Noar was incorporated into the Jewish Agency. After World War II it took 20,000 orphans who had survived the Holocaust in Europe to Israel. Nowadays Aliyyat Noar is an educational organization that runs 7 schools and cares for child immigrants from all over the world as well as young Israelis from families in distress. It has cared for a total of more than 300,000 children.

20. Friends of Children Society (Towarzystwo Przyjaciol Dzieci, TPD): a childcare and educational society founded in Cracow in 1911 by, among others, B. Bobrowska, who was its chairwoman for many years. It established and ran children's homes, clinics, youth groups and schools. Before World War II the society operated in the Cracow region only; it was only in 1949, after it merged with the Workers' TPD and the Peasants' TPD, that it became a national organization. At present the TPD has a very broad range of activities: it organizes educational institutions, psychology advisory centers, rehabilitation centers, youth centers, adoption centers, health care, assistance for the disabled, and pedagogical research.

21. 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.

22. 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 postulated 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 13 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.

23. Martial law in Poland in 1981: extraordinary legal measures introduced by a State Council decree on 13th December 1981 in an attempt to protect 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, and gave the authorities the powers to arrest opposition activists, search private premises, and conduct body searches, banned 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 supreme commander of the armed forces. Over 5,900 people were arrested during Martial Law, chiefly Solidarity activists. Branches of Solidarity 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 eased gradually; by December 1982, for instance, all interned opposition activists were released. On 31st December 1982 Martial Law was suspended, and on 22nd July 1983 it was repealed.

24. Poland 1989: In 1989 the communist regime in Poland finally collapsed and the process of forming a multiparty, pluralistic, democratic political system and introducing a capitalist economy began. Communist policy and the deepening economic crisis since the early 1980s had caused increasing social discontent and weariness and the radicalization of moods among Solidarity activists (Solidarity: a trade union that developed into a political party and played a key role in overthrowing communism). On 13th December 1981 the PZPR (Polish United Worker’s Party) had introduced Martial Law (lifted on 22nd July 1983). Growing economic difficulties, social moods and the strength of the opposition persuaded the national authorities to begin gradually liberalizing the political system. Changes in the USSR also influenced the policy of the PZPR. A series of strikes in April-May and August 1988, and demonstrations in many towns and cities forced the authorities to seek a compromise with the opposition. After a few months of meetings and consultations Round Table negotiations took place (6th February-5th April 1989) with the participation of Solidarity activists (Lech Walesa) and the democratic opposition (Bronislaw Geremek, Jacek Kuron, Tadeusz Mazowiecki). The resolutions it passed signaled the end of the PZPR’s monopoly on power and cleared the way for the overthrow of the system. In parliamentary elections (4th June 1989) the PZPR and its subordinate political groups suffered defeat. In fall 1989 a program of fundamental economic, social and ownership transformations was drawn up and in January 1990 the PZPR was dissolved.