

Michal Nadel

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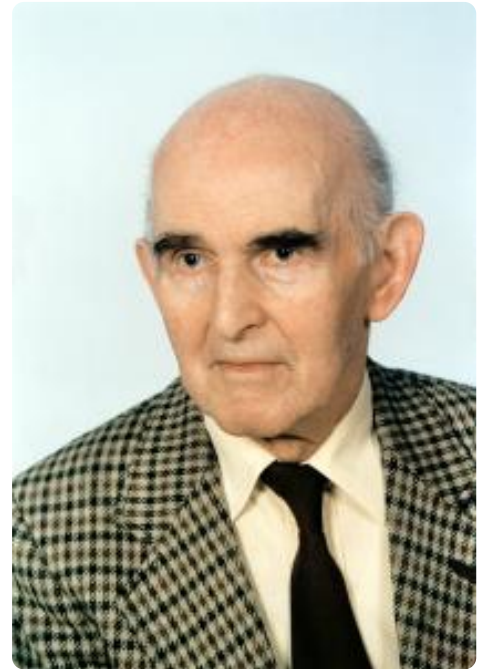
Lodz

Poland

Interviewer: Zuzanna Solakiewicz/ Judyta Hajduk

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Mr. Michal Nadel lives in Lodz; he originally comes from Lwow. He lives in an impressive old building on Narutowicza Street. His apartment is large and well taken care of, filled with old furniture and family pictures. Mr. Nadel is an attorney. He is of average height, slim, very well mannered, a nice gentleman. He speaks in a quiet, calm voice. Before he started talking to me, he forewarned me: 'Many of the things I'll tell you about will seem like a fairy tale.' As I discovered, he didn't mean fantasy, but improbability.



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My family background

We come from Lwow. Once I had a great-grandmother, who had seven generations. That's what we used to call it then; it meant she lived to have seven generations of descendants. It was a great-grandmother from Father's side – my father was the youngest, but his brothers and sisters already had their grandchildren, who were her great-grandchildren. [Editor's note: In fact, this is five generations]. Great-grandmother lived by herself in some small town near Lwow, I can't remember its name. I never met her – she died when I was little.

Grandmother Eilberg, family name Nadel, Father's mother, lived in Zolkiew [today in Ukraine]. I didn't know Grandfather, because he died before I was born. Grandmother had a warehouse with construction articles. She lived in a small house on the market square. Despite her age she was on her own. Independent. Grandma always pleaded our, her grandchildren's, case to our father. I

remember Grandma's visits, I kept this memory about her, that whenever Father didn't want to do something we asked for, she always backed us up: 'I'll tear your ears off' – that's what she used to say to him.

After 1918 there was confusion with last names. In the Austrian partition [1](#) religious weddings were recognized by the government, but after 1918 [2](#) new laws were introduced, according to which the only valid marriages were those registered in the office of civil marriages. Religious marriages weren't recognized, and children who came from relationships where parents had only a religious wedding, had their mother's maiden name as their last name.

My parents got married in 1917 or 1918, before the liberation of Lwow [3](#). Father had his father's last name then – Eilberg. But after 1918 it turned out that the religious wedding of the Grandparents wasn't valid, and since Grandfather was already dead and couldn't marry Grandmother again, Father had to go back to his mother's maiden name – Nadel. Because my parent's wedding wasn't considered valid for some time, at school I had my mother's maiden name – Hamer. Only when my parents' marriage was legalized by the Polish government, my last name became Nadel. In the first years after the liberation [1918] these problems were common.

My father, Abram Aleksander Nadel, was a war veteran, his knee was injured, in fact his entire leg was unfit. He used to serve in the Austrian Army [4](#), but I don't know under what circumstances he got that injury. Because of that he obtained a special trade license. Right after 1918 certain types of businesses were restricted to war veterans only. Father opened a store with colonial articles, on Jagiellonska Street in Lwow. He went bankrupt in the 1920s, when I was very little. It was during the times of depression caused by Grabski. [The interviewee is referring to the economic depression in Poland in 1925 that resulted in inflation, unemployment].

After the bankruptcy Father worked at a bank for a short period of time. He was an office worker, not at some high level, but as a war veteran he had some concession at work, slightly more favorable conditions. Later he worked at a grain company of his distant relative. The firm was called Klarberg and company – purchase and grinding of grain. They used to buy grain from peasants, lease mills, where the grain was ground. They delivered flour to various points, mainly to bakeries.

Father was of a rather gentle disposition, the only punishment he was ever able to give us was pulling our ear. He would grab the ear and pull it upwards. He was traditional, not conservative, but just a traditional Jew. He came from a very religious family. He followed the rules, didn't work on Saturdays, used to go to the synagogue. At home he made sure the kitchen was kosher.

He wore different clothes on holidays from the everyday ones. On a regular day he would put on a dark sheepskin coat, sport style, and a hat. And on holidays he used to wear a special outfit, which was usually stored in the bedroom. It was a black bekeshah and a hat. Bekeshah was a black suit. A black, long, loose coat. It had a collar for sure, but I can't remember if it was velvety. Because there were various bekeshahs. It was a matter of wealth. And of how you wanted to look like. There were also ones for Hasidim [5](#): made of satin, long, elegant. I, as a child, didn't pay attention to it. But I remember Father's black suit for holidays.

Father had a beard, but didn't wear side-locks. He had a lot of siblings, but, unfortunately, I don't remember them at all. Not even their names. Very often, whenever there are prayers for the

deceased in the synagogue, I would like to mention them, but I don't remember their names, I can't recall them.

Father used to go to the synagogue on Zolkiewska Street most often – we lived near by. It was a progressive synagogue. Father had a musical talent and on holidays he prayed as a cantor. Apart from the synagogue there were also small prayer houses – they were called shtibls – Father used to go there for seudah shlishit [Hebrew: third meal]. In Hebrew shalosh seudot means three meals. The first meal was on Friday night, the second one was the Saturday dinner and the third feast was that seudah shlishit which took place between the dinner and supper on Saturday. With herring. With vodka. There was darkness there. Only when stars came out, they could turn the lights on.

Everyone knew each other there. They would sit and sing niguns, traditional parts of psalms – I still remember some melodies. For us, kids, it was all fun, because we used to go and chase each other there in the darkness, under the tables, around the tables. We liked to get into trouble. In the evening Father would go to the synagogue or to the seudah shlishit. And I would go somewhere else. We used to go to the Wzgorze Lwowskie [Lwow Hill, a park complex on a hill in the center of Lwow].

There were also beis midrashes, otherwise called kloizes. They were places to pray, but besides praying, you could also sit in there and study the Talmud. My Father didn't use to sit in beis midrash. He had a family, he had to work. Mainly those who didn't have a job, didn't have a business, would go there. Their poor wives usually worked to support them. Unfortunately, there were cases like that. Next to the beis midrash sometimes there was a shelter for the homeless, they used to warm up near stoves, sleep on benches.

Mother's name was Cywia, her family name Hamer. She came from Scielisko Nowe, a small town near Lwow [ca. 15 km from Lwow]. She had three sisters and a brother. Two sisters lived in Lwow: Rachela and Malka, and one – Cutel, went to America right after World War I [1914-1918]. Uncle's, that is Mother's brother's name, was Hersz – Herman. He was a progressive man. They used to call him Herman, only when they would call for him to read the Torah, then they would call him: Hersz Cwi.

Mom was a blond, but she used to wear a wig. She had a lot of work at home, since the family was large: seven children. I was the eldest child in the family. I had four brothers and two sisters. The second-born was Wilhelm [1920 – 1943], two years younger than me. Then there was Anszel [1922 – 1943]. When the fourth son was born, I asked to call him Szalem [1924 – 1943]. I suggested this name for him because at some point there were some misunderstandings between my parents, and Szalem means peace. After Szalem there was Michael – Michas [1926 – 1943]. Out of the two sisters, one, Cecilia [1932 – 1943], was the youngest in the family, and the second, Chana Anna [1923 – 1943], was between Wilhelm and Anszel, I think.

Cecilia's name was similar to Mother's name, but a bit different, because among Jews you don't give a child the name of the closest members of the family for as long as they are alive. There were about two-year gaps between us. The boys went to cheder. The girls were home-schooled. Father mainly taught them to read in Hebrew. He taught them prayers and blessings. And Mother coached them in matters regarding women's duties.

Wilek [from Wilhelm] was an awful rascal. He kept playing hooky. There were no cars then, just horse carriages. Wilek would get to know the coachmen, other rascals, and was happy when they let him drive such a horse cart, and happiest when they let him ride a horse. There were horrible quarrels about this hooky-playing at home. When Wilek finished elementary school, Father sent him to learn a profession, but in the end my brother went to a conservatory because he was musically talented. He had a superb strong voice.

I was born in Lwow on 15th July 1918. My name was Mosze, they used to call me Miszka, and I became Michal in the Soviet Army. I went to a private Hebrew school. That was for 4 years, after the 4 years I went to a regular, public elementary school.

Just like all my brothers I went to cheder as a child. Those were schools only for boys. My cheder was located on the street I lived on, on Peltewna Street. I lived near Teatr Miejski [Municipal Theater], and the cheder was on the other end of the street. It was the last house on Peltewna where the cheder was. I don't remember the number, but it might have been 31. A short street, a regular house, two-storey, and with classrooms inside.

Grades weren't called by age of the pupils, but by what was taught. [Division was based on the level of knowledge, not on age]. Of course it didn't collide with education in the elementary school. The education in cheder started at the age of three years, and until the 6th year of age classes there ran from morning till evening. It was good, I think, because a young child grasps things differently and absorbs everything faster.

Later, when we went to elementary school, classes in cheder were in the afternoon. We started with the Hebrew alphabet, later we studied the Bible. After the 5th grade, we normally read the Bible. We used to learn it by heart. In the 6th or 7th grade, depending on a child's abilities – we switched to the Talmud. That demanded more knowledge, more intelligence. Talmud was more difficult. The Mishnah was first, then the Gemara. That was the highest level.

The cheder was different from other schools in that there were no desks, just tables. Students sat on both sides. The melamed had his place at the top of the table, but usually walked around. And he taught. Each melamed had his own ways, his systems of teaching. One would want us to read individually, another wanted reading in chorus. Sometimes it happened that one would slap our hands with a ruler. Some of them happened to be better educated, more progressive – that depended on their character.

If somebody was particularly gifted, then after cheder, if he could afford it, he would go to a yeshivah. Usually you would start a yeshivah at the age of eleven, twelve. Depending on the talents of a student. In yeshivah there were no diplomas, certificates, like in other schools, but depending on your talents you would go up a level. Only at the end, if you passed certain exams, you would get a rabbinical diploma.

I went to cheder and elementary school at the same time. The first four years I went there. It was a private school, but had the rights of a public school, was organized by a religious party, 'Mizrachi' [6](#). We were taught normally in Polish, Hebrew language was as a subject, as well as Jewish history. Aside from those, all other subjects that were taught in public schools were taught in the cheder. After school we had lunch at home, a bit of rest and then off to cheder again at 3pm.

After the 4th grade I continued my education at a normal public school. It was located on Stanislawa Street. I remember: the Kon School it was called. But it was also rather a Jewish school. It was financed by Kahal, the Jewish community. There was no Hebrew there, only Polish.

I was a very good student. I remember, in elementary school, in the 6th or 7th grade I was even the top pupil in the class. But when the beautiful spring came, summer, then I used to play hooky. There were hills in Lwow, and Piaskowa Gora [Sandy Hill] between them, and we used to play ball there. And it would happen that we played hooky for one, two days, but once it went on for two weeks. In the end we were afraid to go to school. And I don't know how it would have ended, but one day we played ball, and above us, on top of the hills, stands the religion teacher. A handsome man. 'How's the game, boys?' I don't know if he came to us on purpose, or whether it was a coincidence, but then it was all out, and we went back to school the next day. Other than that I think I was a good kid. A Lwow 'batiar' I wasn't for sure [batiar: Lwow slang for rascal].

Celebrating shabbat

On Saturdays we didn't use to rest like nowadays, because we had to go to the synagogue to pray. We, the kids, used to get cocoa or milk for breakfast. Then it was lunch, Kiddush again, and again blessing of challot. Cooking on Saturdays wasn't allowed. There were some devices made of nickel sheet metal, and we would put it up on the stove and cover it with a blanket, we had a stove with a hearth. On Friday we would put a lot of coal in, so that the heat would stay until the next day and keep the food warm.

Mom used to begin to prepare Sabbath on Thursday. On Friday she would cook from the very morning. Depending on which week it was, she prepared various meals, either fish or beef, but we always had to have chicken soup. We weren't allowed to buy dead fish. Fish had to be alive. We usually took carp. Because there are acceptable and unacceptable fish. The acceptable ones had to have scales and fins. Mom would buy such a fish on Thursday. She would put it in the water so that it could live till Friday. On Friday she'd hit it in the head with a hammer and she'd start the cooking.

First you would scrape off the scales with a special knife – it went very quickly. Then you would gut it. Some people used to throw out all the guts, others used to separately clean intestines and add them to a broth. For taste and its gelatin content. Of course you had to be careful so that the bile wouldn't break. After scraping off the scales, you would cut the head off. And some again gouged the eyes out, others left them in, and then added the head to the broth. Then you would roll the rest of the fish in flour, add some salt and wait for the broth.

There was fish, onions and some carrots in the broth. Some used to add a bit of root parsley. The vegetables would cook for about 15, 20 minutes, and then the pieces of fish were added. Then again 15, 20 minutes under a lid – of course you'd add some salt, appropriately, sometimes you'd have it sweet, some people would add more salt and pepper, and others no pepper but sugar. I know that some people used to even add raisins. And, after 15 minutes you had to taste it. How does it taste? And add salt, pepper, sugar to taste – depending on how you liked it. Then you'd remove the pot from the fire so that the fish absorbed the taste of the broth. Then you'd put the pieces of fish on a special plate, pour the broth on them, so that it would set into a jelly.

That was regular fish. But there was also gefilte fish – that was the whole ceremony. You had to, after the washing and cleaning, separate the skin from the meat. The meat was ground or chopped. Then you'd add some fine bread crumbs to that mass, and sometimes also some white flour. Season it. Then the stuffing was wrapped in the fish skin and boiled. Of course you'd add a bit of pepper, some salt, as you normally would to stuffing. And that was gefilte fish. That is, a stuffed fish.

Aside from that we had chicken soup for Sabbath. I have to admit, in passing, that I was always upset – because on Friday due to all that preparation there was no time to cook dinner, and Mom always made barley soup with rice. Now I like barley soup, the war taught me everything, but back then I hated it.

Then dusk came, the house had to be spotless clean, where we had hardwood floors, not finished but raw wood, they had to be dutifully washed. We were a semi well-off family, at times Mom had some hired help. Especially later, when she was sick, because she had problems with her lungs – at the time I didn't understand it, but now I know she was hemorrhaging. In lungs or bronchi.

In any way, before dusk the table was covered with a white tablecloth, candleholders on top, wine, bread, challot – Father used to sit in front of the challot. There were as many candles as the kids in the house, plus two large ones. When the entire family got together, Mother would light the candles and say the prayer. At times she would cry. Then Father would bless everybody and we would go to the synagogue. The prayers there used to last for an hour at most. And when we came back home we had a prayer where Father would greet the family. For Saturday already.

Father would sit at the table, we would sit around and he would pour the wine. We usually had home-made wine. We didn't buy it. Father used to make it himself. At home there was a huge bottle, where he would put raisins, sugar, water, and then he'd leave it so that it got strong. For a couple months. Then he would pour it into bottles through a gauze. And it was delicious. Strong. Your head would spin if you drank too much. Father would pour everyone a glass and would say the Kiddush. Everyone stood up and went to wash their hands. Then we'd all sit down and have our wine.

Father would take the cloth off the challot, hand it out, and say the prayer again. Mom used to bake challot at home herself. I liked watching her do it. And then we would start with the fish – everybody would get their part. We had vodka with the fish. The vodka was called Bongut. It was a 190 proof Bongut. Plain white vodka. Father used to buy it in regular stores. I don't know if it was kosher, but nobody looked for kosher in vodka. At first Father drank it alone. When supper began, Father would first say the prayer with the grape wine, and all the kids had glasses and got some wine. And they also said the prayer after Father. We all stood up, said 'Amen' and then we all took a small sip. And when I was, I remember, 13 years old, I got half a glass of vodka. Those were small glasses.

After the fish there was chicken soup with noodles, after the soup we had meat. Later there was stewed fruit compote and various cookies. Sometimes we had guests late at night, and when we got a bit older, we used to go downtown. After the supper the kids would go downtown, and Mom and Dad stayed at home. Sometimes they would go together for a walk, too, especially initially, but later they wouldn't, they were too tired. In fact, they mostly rested. Some people used to go to a 'korso,' a promenade. I used to go to Akiba [7](#), my scout organization.

Member of Akiba

My entire youth was concentrated around Akiba. Everything I did, one way or another conformed to the scout organization. Bene Akiba [Bnei Akiba] was a Jewish scout organization, organized by the same religious party as the school [Mizrachi]. In the school building there was even a special room for the scouts. Religious-nationalist youth belonged to it. And normally like in all scout organizations: scout uniforms, trips, badges, we learned orienteering, using maps.

When I finished that four-year school and I was already in another school, I used to go to Bene Akiba every day. Especially when I stopped going to cheder, I was twelve, thirteen, I used to go there every day, in the evening. I spent there an hour or two, because I had to be back home by 10pm. At 10pm there was a szpera, the gates were being closed ['szpera' – from German: 'sperren' – to lock]. So I absolutely had to be back at 10. That was Friday.

At some point I even was one of the organization's leaders. Our unit was co-educational. After I graduated from public school, I decided to go to a vocational school, because that was the trend in the unit. We propagated the slogan 'let's be like all other nations.' That is, let's be a nation like all the other ones, let's not be a nation of only merchants.

There was among us, friends, one girl, her name was Helena – we used to call her the beautiful Helena. We all had a crush on that beautiful Helena. I was almost 13. I was supposed to prepare for my bar mitzvah. That's a big celebration, you have to know how to say various prayers, and you have to know a lot about the synagogue. Father paid one teacher who was supposed to prepare me, but I would, instead of going to the teacher, go out with friends to Chytra Gora [Crafty Hill]. It was really called Gora Stracenia [Execution Hill] – its name came from the fact that they killed four soldiers of the January Uprising [8](#), there was even a monument, but we called it differently.

We would meet in the place where once there used to be a sand mine, and only slag heaps were left there now. We used to jump up from those slag heaps, whoever jumped further. Helena would kiss the one who jumped furthest. A few times I jumped furthest, but then my other friend, Zafyk Goldfinger was better. In fact, they went out together, he and Helena, he was hers and she was his. He was a handsome, tall boy. Later he went to London to study. During the war he was in the English air force. He died.

As for my bar mitzvah, that's the way it was like: It happened on Saturday, when I turned 13, it was probably on 15th August 1931. Because I was born, I think, on 15th August, but in Russia they made it 15th June. But among Jews, when it comes to bar mitzvah, we use the Hebrew calendar. It was kuf zayin Tammuz, the 27th day of the month Tammuz. So then, on the Saturday morning, I went to the synagogue. The entire family was there, friends as well. There is a bimah in the synagogue; during the prayer, the person reading the Torah called me out at some point. I got the tallit, said the prayer and read that verse by myself. After it finished they tossed almonds and various candy at me. Everyone congratulated me. Afterwards there was a special dinner at home.

Religious life and zionism

My religion was really just about following tradition. We used to have discussions among us friends. Also about whether God exists or not. Opinions varied. We all had doubts. At that age you had doubts in general. I conformed to the religion, but not in a barbarian way, in a more humane way. As long as I was little I used to go to the synagogue with Father to pray, on holidays and always on Saturdays. Later, when I was 15, 16, I did it less and less. In the end I decided there is some higher power that controls the world without our knowledge. It definitely has no beard and no human shapes. It's just a spirit. Because the Jewish religion sees God not in a human form, but in the form of a spirit. But later I had a depression, to be honest, when the war broke out, I decided that in reality everything is inconceivable.

For summer holidays we used to go to relatives, to a small town near Lwow, which was called Prusy [ca. 8 km from Lwow]. I could have been 14, 15 at the time. The last name of those relatives was Diamant and they were farmers, they had land in Prusy. We used to spend there a month or two – depending on the conditions. They had a huge farm. They also bred beautiful horses. I was fascinated by those horses. Other than that I also went to a scout camp once, we had a camp near Czortkow [ca. 120 km south-east of Lwow, today in Ukraine].

After I graduated from elementary school I went to a public vocational school. It was an Industrial Technical College. It was located at Snopkowa Street. It was a public school. There were really very few Jews there. Teachers were also mostly Polish. I went there for four years. We learned technical subjects: learned about materials, and also bookkeeping for the needs of a small company. There was also mathematics, physics. I wanted to become a mechanic, but I graduated as a metal technician. After finishing the school [1936] I received a special diploma. I was still young, to tell you the truth, I didn't like work much. It was summertime, I wanted to go to Wysoki Zamek [Higher Castle, one of sites on the Lwow Hill], to go to a pool. I was also a sportsman.

I trained in track and field in Dror. Dror was a sports club. In Hebrew it's the name of a bird, a swallow. It may also mean freedom, but in this case it was a club, 'Jaskolka' [Polish for swallow]. It was located where Execution Hill was. Before the hills there was a field, a stadium, we used to go there to train. Later I practiced boxing. It was a sports club, Hasmonea [9](#). It was known in Poland, especially when it came to soccer, they had been Polish champions for I don't know how many years. In boxing too. So I trained in boxing, but not for long. I got hit in the nose once, and later, while I was protecting my nose, I got hit in the stomach. At the end I also practiced jujitsu, but I wasn't a professional. And we played soccer. We had our own scouts' team. I remember I played in midfield or in defense, because in soccer there is a close co-operation between midfield and defense.

I started working for real later, at Gasper's. It was a bicycle and scale factory. At the beginning I worked at Neuman's, a factory of precious metal products. We made tableware, silver – everything was handmade. We mostly worked with galvanization, with which we could cover silver with color. The production mostly went for export, to England. Aside from that we made some things by die cutting, for example spoons. It was called 'sznyty' in Lwow. First we'd cut it, then work on processing it. The salary at Neuman's was very poor, the only thing that kept me there was hope that when I learn it, I'd have a profession.

My parents didn't plan on going to Palestine, because of their health and finances. For such a large family to leave to Israel [Editor's note: until 1948 – Palestine], we'd had to have strong financial

backup. Father would have no existence there – he was an invalid, his leg was injured. But I was preparing to go to Palestine from the earliest years. We were to build kibbutzim there – back then Palestine was desert and swamps.

We had various brochures in Akiba, and we had discussions. We used to read, we read a lot. Newspapers, books, whatever we liked. Activists carried out propaganda. ‘Be like any other nation.’ Our slogan was ‘Let’s be kehol hagoim!’, ‘like other nations!’ Let’s have our own doctors, locksmiths, farmers. Because Jews in Poland dealt mostly with trade, handicrafts, craftsmanship. And there was intelligence. And we were saying ‘No.’ We should be locksmiths. We are supposed to build a country in Israel [Editor’s note: Palestine]. That’s why I quit high school and went to the industrial college. Even though my parents were very much against it. Mom dreamed about me becoming a doctor, Father wanted me to become a rabbi. But I thought differently.

One of us, Akiba activists, was Rabbi Fiszman – an activist of the international level. In the 1930s, I was 15 or 16 at the time, Fiszman came to Lwow for a Zionist organizations convention. I didn’t take part in that convention, because I was a bodyguard for Fiszman – me, Aldek and Lutwak. We were kind of stewards. We accompanied him everywhere, we even went to the hotel he slept in.

When it comes to the structure of the country, my group had religious and nationalist ideas. We were basing it on cannons you can find in the Bible, which has a lot of social rules, for example there is a law not to pick up from the borders of a field, because that’s for the poor. On the 7th day you cannot hire anyone – a Jew or a non-Jew – everyone’s supposed to rest. If someone had debts, after seven years the debt was annulled. There was a whole set of social rules in the Bible. We were basing our ideas on those rules, but taking progress and current conditions into account.

Our goal was to create an independent country. The main means were going there, buying out land and building kibbutzim. In Palestine there were about 450 thousand Arabs, no more, some of them were hired farmers, and some were nomads. A few wealthy sheiks – rich Arabs – owned land. There was a special Jewish organization there. Keren Kayemet Leisrael [10](#), they were collecting money from Jews all over the world to fund buying out the land. There was also Keren Hayesod [11](#), a fund for settling there, for building house complexes and so on. We never talked about military action. Other organizations might have been leaning more towards it, especially a revisionist organization, under the command of Jabotynski [12](#), they had a youth scout organization, called Brith Trumpledor [13](#). Betar wanted to have a country on both sides of the Jordan. They were buying land there. They used this slogan: ‘A man has two hands, and this one is mine, and that one is mine. And the Jordan has two banks – both this one and the other are ours.’

Various Zionist organizations didn’t keep in touch with one another. If we ever discussed political issues with each other, we did it only if we knew each other – if you knew someone, you’d discuss it with him. We knew each other from schools, we knew about each other. Each organization had its own idea about the country, we never talked about how it would function once the country existed. We all wanted to create the country, but how it was to be organized, everyone had a different idea. It was our dream to have a country, free as any other country, as all other nations. And we even used to sing songs.

I didn’t manage to go to Palestine – there were restrictions when it came to leaving. England imposed some limitations, we had to wait in line [14](#). Here, in the country, there were special places which prepared you for going to Israel, they were called hakhsharah [15](#). They were prepared you

for the living conditions in Israel in kibbutzim. Hakhsharah were organized on farms, not only Jewish, sometimes those were Polish farms, which employed members of our organizations, usually students. The organization decided who would go to a hakhsharah. Akiba had arrangements with some farms, and used to send people there. Going through a hakhsharah gave you the possibility of obtaining a certificate for going to Palestine. I was at the end of the line, because there were older people than me, I was younger than them.

I spent three months on a hakhsharah, it wasn't long, usually the stay lasted half a year, but I had a specific profession already then – I was a mechanic, I counted on specializing before going to Palestine. Our hakhsharah was co-educational. There were some contacts with farm owners and they hired our members. The work was normal, like on a farm. We got up like farmers – early in the morning, worked like farm-hands, like farm workers. We slept in the worst conditions – overall very primitive. We learned agriculture, worked on the farm. It was meant to prepare boys and girls for living in difficult conditions. Swamps and desert. Hunger and poverty. People right after graduating from high-school, before starting university and even during their studies used to go there.

In the evening we used to get together and sing by the fire, mainly songs made up by organizations. The lyrics were ideological, mainly that we're going to Israel singing and joyful. Lots of songs like that, mainly in Hebrew. The most popular dance was hora [16](#). It had two variations, there was a wild hora and an ordinary hora. When dancing hora we all got together, held each others' arms and danced in circles. In the wild hora, four people grabbed each others' arms and danced faster and faster.

So there were some very patriotic songs and some more playful ones. We always had time for singing and dancing there. A patriotic one was for example this one: 'Let the hands of our brothers preparing the land in Israel get stronger. Let them not lose their spirit but let them serve the nation with joy and happiness.' That's one of those patriotic songs. Then there was another one, actually it was more of a dance, because we used to dance the horas as well. 'We will emigrate to Israel with joy and singing.'

Then there were these more playful ones, for example: 'A straw hat, a torn up 'rubashka' shirt,' because it was popular to wear these Ukrainian 'rubashka' shirts then, no collar, plain Ukrainian clothing, 'This merchant – seller, is a bandit. He doesn't want to give you credit. But don't mind it, laugh out loud. Ha, ha! That's the right advice. Leave everything and laugh in a wild voice. Ha, ha!' That wasn't one of our songs, but one sung by pioneers in Israel.

There was also this patriotic song: 'I turn to Jerusalem, because hundreds of generations I've dreamed about you, about looking in the light of your face. Jerusalem. I've dreamed for hundreds of years to look in the light of your eyes. Jerusalem, light your light!' And later: 'I will rebuild you from the ruins.' Those were patriotic songs. There were lots of them. If I started remembering...

During the war

In 1939 the war broke out [17](#). The Germans reached Lwow and stopped on the perimeter of the city, captured Execution Hill, they were pushed out of the station and the fighting lasted ten days. I have no proof, but I did take part in the defense of Lwow [18](#). In the Jewish unit of the scouts. There were several regiments. I remember 19, 26, 40... so these regiments went to the front and there

were many Jewish men there, because that was a normal recruitment. Only so-called administrative, quartermaster units stayed. And they fought against the Germans in the city. Firemen, police, school scout regiments, and just young people: there were also very many Jews there. I remember that the recruitment headquarters was on Batorego Street. A lot of people went there, but they didn't accept everyone, because they didn't have enough weapons for everybody.

We volunteered to defend Lwow and we had an opposition point in the 'Dublany' Agricultural College. The center was in Polish, our hands, and the Germans were up on the hills from which they were shooting at us. After ten days of sitting in the shelters we heard, all of a sudden, that Russians are coming to aid us. They were saying the Soviet Army was entering in order to liberate those areas. We didn't understand their real goals [19](#). The Germans issued a notice urging all civilians to leave the city in the southern direction, through Lyczakowska Street, because they were going to attack the city as a military target [Lyczakowska: the main street of the district in the eastern part of the city, leading to the city limits]. They decided to bomb the entire city, so they ordered the civilians to leave the city.

It was a tragedy. Some decided to leave the city; others decided that whatever happens, happens. I began going around, saying goodbye to relatives, to friends, because my family decided to stay – Father was handicapped, there were small children. We stayed in a shelter. At night – silence. Usually there was shooting at night – then silence, and in the morning a Polish soldier comes in and yells: 'The war is over!' Literally: 'The war is over!'

It turned out that those who had access to a radio in their basements, heard that Russians announced on the radio that they are entering Poland to help their brothers. They, Russians, meant, of course, help for Ukrainians, liberation of Ukraine. But people didn't understand. If they were entering the city, against Germans – they were allies. So when there was this silence and it was known that the Russians were coming, to those who had been expecting death, it was joy! And the Germans withdrew. You could still hear some far away machine gun shots.

After a few hours the Russian army marched in. They looked very disappointingly, they behaved very disappointingly. First of all, Polish uniforms, compared to theirs, looked very elegant, we looked like aristocracy. They, the Russians, were wearing some poor belts, not leather, but some canvas, and those big hats. And there were some Mongol units with them. And those guns on strings. Yes, I'm not kidding, many had them. They walked silently. People came out to greet them, and they started shooting. Over there, in Lyczakow, there were still opposition points, but usually everyone, both Poles and Jews, were treating them like saviors, because they imagined that the Germans entering the city would have been the worst possibility.

After some time the only ones happy about the Russians were small groups of communists. There weren't too many communists in Lwow, most Jews belonged to either Zionist or Assimilators Organizations [20](#). Bund [21](#) was rather weak. That small group of communists – they were the only ones greeting the Russians happily. Most Jews knew it was a misfortune.

My father was 54 then, he was a fairly energetic man, but broke down completely. Totally. He even stopped going out on the streets. The barracks were near our house, and when they were walking around, singing their songs, he would shut the windows. He changed completely. He started suffering from depression. He didn't believe in the end of the war, as people believed the war would end and Russians have come to help. Father thought the war would last, and the Russians

wouldn't be able to resist and wouldn't want to leave. He knew the history of Russian revolutions [in 1905 and 1917], the history of communism, processes that took place there, and considered them barbarians. One of my uncles was imprisoned there, in the USSR and when he came back he also told us a lot about them. Mother was also very shaken. But at that time Mother was already very sick.

When the Russians entered Lwow, I was employed at Neuman's. The factory was then state-owned and functioned as a workers' cooperative. I worked there until October 1940, until I was drafted into the Soviet Army. They drafted men born in 1917, 1918, 1919 – there was nothing I could do about it, I had to go. It was 18th October 1940. That's an important date, that was the Sukkot holiday. Just like now it is the Holiday of Booths. And I remember on the last day of Sukkot I was supposed to go to the drafting point. I was waiting for Father. Father was in the prayer house, and I was ready to say goodbye. I remember as if it was today, Father, Mother, they hugged me somehow, and Father gave me a prayer: ahl tirah mi-pahad pitom... Do not be overwhelmed by sudden terror. Because there used to be kosher food at our house. As a goodbye Father said: 'You'll be forced to eat everything there. Remember, life requires compromise, but when you eat pork, remember not to lick the bones!' It was supposed to be humor. He went with me with Mother and my girlfriend at the time, Ania, whom I probably would have married if it hadn't been for the war.

The drafting point was in the 5th High School in Lwow. They, the Soviets, made us volunteers. There was a big class in the school, a large table and Russian officers sat there, and some civilians, and on the left there was a female doctor with a scale. She measured the height and we had to stand in front of her naked, like the day we were born. She checked whether you had venereal disease. Can you imagine, a young boy, I was completely innocent, really. I was shocked, stressed.

I considered using one of the underground organizations, which dealt with moving people from Vilnius to Israel. Those scout, Jewish youth organizations took care of it. I didn't go for 2 reasons. There were small kids at home, Father was depressed, he wasn't able to do anything. Mother was sick – I couldn't leave them alone. Father was 56 then, Mother was a year younger. Besides, I belonged to the group that organized those transports. We were afraid, that if I didn't come forward, if I ran away, then they'd send them [the family] to Siberia [22](#) as uncertain elements. Lwow had the status of a border city and everyone considered an uncertain element, was deported to Siberia.

Ania and I met in that school scouting organization, Bene Akiba. She was also getting ready to go to Israel. Her parents even sent her to a dressmaking course. Special, esthetic dressmaking. So, how should I say, she wasn't my fiancée, because we were too young, but we went out for walks, and we even kissed. It's difficult for me to say today what I liked about her. She was a blonde, nicely built, active, fit. She was intelligent, bright, had a sense of beauty.

When the war broke out, I used to help her family. There was hunger. People were afraid to leave their houses. Everything was closed. But I had a way to get to some grocery articles. So I used to pick some up for them, too. And later she got depressed. Her parents knew that we liked each other, so they wanted her to stay in the shelter with us, with me. We went separate ways when I was drafted into the army, and she stayed at home. But we kept in touch. She even sent pictures when I was in the army. Ania died during the war. She was probably taken with my family. She is a

nice memory to me today. And when we pray for the deceased, I always say a prayer for her, too.

Since I was a mechanic, I was sent to serve in the air force. They sent me to an air force base near Kursk [400 km east from Kiev, today in Russia]. Oh, what vicissitudes... how they transported us there, how we got there... that'd be a long story! And the conditions that were there... in the Russian army. Well, but we were young. At home, Mom used to cry when I had a sore throat, but there I simply never got sick.

When the war broke out in 1941 [23](#) – we were in Kursk – our unit was supposed to move east. We were standing at the main train station, there was a huge disarray, chaos, lots of trains. Some of my friends from Lwow decided to wait for the Germans to come. None of us believed the Germans murdered so badly. It was June, there were grain fields around the station, they decided to go in the field and wait there for the transport to leave. They tried to talk me into it, but I said I was a soldier and I wouldn't go. In the end three guys ran away: two Jews and one Ukrainian. When they were sitting in the grain, a horrible air raid began, fire broke out. They were certain our train had burned down, and when they got back to Lwow, they told my family that I had died. I am almost certain Father didn't believe it.

There were 57 airplanes in our unit at that time. Fifty new ones and seven of an old type. In a few weeks all 50 were shot down. What turned out? That they were designed in such a way that the board shooter was in the field of fire of the airships. When they figured out what was wrong, they put the shooter in the tail of the plane. I was such a tail shooter.

In 1941 I was wounded during a German air raid on the airport. I had general injury, I was wounded with shrapnel – I had a damaged eye and I lost my hearing. I got to a field hospital in Chelyabinsk [city 1500 km from Moscow, to the east of the Ural Mountains], where they removed the splinter from my eye. Conditions in that hospital were such that I don't even want to talk about them. I remember once we got as a treat some curds – not even half a glass. I stayed in that hospital for a few months. Maybe two, I don't remember exactly. Then I returned to the unit. The Germans were shooting at our planes from nearby forests. Those were far-reaching bullets, but it was still far to the front, they were called DB3. They used to shoot at the most dangerous moment – during the take off of a plane – you can't jump out or maneuver then, because the plane is falling down. Those are the worst moments.

They announced in the army the attack was an effect of sabotage, and they started picking out 'uncertain elements' from the units. Every day during the assemblies reports would come in, and you could hear: 'Step out, step out, step out.' I, like other Poles, was called out as well. Those who stayed were probably serving in the NKVD [24](#). They tried to recruit me as well, but my father had told me: 'Remember, don't get into any, absolutely any, espionage.' And I listened to Father and wanted to avoid it at all cost. It was in the fall of 1941. There was tall grain standing in the fields. There was no one to harvest it, so it stayed. They sent us in the direction of the forests near Kursk.

There was a big army camp in the forests near Kursk, a large one, there were about 500,000 people there. They took us there. It was a training camp. Recruiters walked around with no shoes on, with nothing, and as soon as they got weapons, they went to the front. But that was the healthy element. We were kept there idle, nothing – we just sat there and ate. Other battalions trained, and we did nothing: there was only breakfast, lunch, supper – mediocre... We lived in dugouts and tents. It lasted for eight, ten days. In the morning, on our way to the canteen, we would hear Polish

songs somewhere in the camp. We heard they were going to create a Polish army, that there are some Polish units in the camp. Others said we were going to be taken to Siberia.

In the end they removed us from the camp. We went to Kursk, to the train station, one company after another. We were many – about 1 000 people for sure. People who came from Lwow and surrounding areas. Mostly those uncertain elements. Everybody sang legion, shooter songs, they also sang the funeral march [Polish patriotic songs]. I think we stood on the train station in Kursk for a full day, there was no available railroad track. It was the time of general withdrawal from the west, railroads were busy, trains bombed. In the end they gave us a piece of lard and bread, and later put us into cattle cars. We went east, we ended up on the border of Siberia and Ural, on the Kyshtym station [100 km from Chelyabinsk].

From Kyshtym we went on foot about 15 kilometers into the woods. There was a lake there. In the deep forest it turned out that we were a special battalion, a so-called spec-battalion, with military discipline, any disobedience was punished with a shot to the head. We were commanded by Russians. They considered us spies and traitors. Our military ranks were disregarded. I was of a senior rank then, that was more or less a sergeant, but it meant nothing there. Those Russians – they abused us. They were criminals. There was a rule in Russia that a criminal doesn't go to the front – they stay at the back. Only those with no criminal record went to the front.

What was it like in that camp? We got off in the forest, they made us walk on foot tens of kilometers, in the end we ended up in some grass, who knows where. It was tough. It was late fall. There was already snow, freezing temperatures, at the beginning we slept on the bare ground. Later we dug dugouts ourselves, everything from scratch. Our task was to build a railroad to Kyshtym. They found graphite deposits in those forests. And they started to mine it. A factory was supposed to be built there.

When we got there, there was nothing around. We started some fire and built dugouts. Some of us were digging holes, others were cutting trees. A dugout's walls and the top were covered with wooden beams, branches and undergrowth placed on top, and then all that was covered with soil. It was fairly warm inside. But moist. It was terribly wet out there. We had small metal stoves, we called them 'fishes.' They were in the shape of a prism lying on a side, the chimney went through the roof. There was a lot of fire wood, since we lived in the forest. During a day those who were sick and couldn't go to work took care of the fire.

The food was very meager. Once, when some inspection from Moscow was supposed to come, they started feeding us all of a sudden. They gave us 'galushki' then – that's Russian, those were noodles made of black flour. We all got sick then, because they gave us a lot of it, full bowls, and our stomachs weren't used to eating then. We usually got up at 5am and marched to the canteen a couple kilometers away from the camp. They would give us cabbage broth... well, there were a few cabbage leaves floating in it. The cook also had a pot from which he would give us a spoonful of oil. That's what the food was like.

In the morning we also used to get a daily portion of bread. The bread was moist, made of that dark flour – they said there was more bran, potatoes, than flour. And now you had a problem: should you eat it all at once, or break it into three parts; some people ate it all at once, others hid it somewhere in the dugout to have something after work. Some others took a pot and cooked the bread in salty water. The bread would swell up, and you could fill yourself up with it, but it ended

up with swelling. And they were tall sprightly people. They used to bring us lunch to work, to the forest. It was usually the same cabbage broth, sometimes we had dried fish. The fish was very hard, it was quite difficult to eat it. I always said we'd get used to it.

We were furious. When we fought in the war, we had distinctions, here we were degraded, dishonored, brought down to the rank of a regular soldier. Our commanders were bandits. The temperature went below -45 degrees C, and they brought us there in summer clothes. After some time donkey jackets, hats and boots arrived, but those thugs sold them. Criminals. We didn't believe a word they said. We thought they would lose the war. We wondered where we'd withdraw: to Manchuria, to China? But we didn't believe they would win the war – no way. No one believed it.

There were a few Jews among us. They had a Jewish calendar. One day we heard that Yom Kippur falls on a certain day. I decided not to eat. Because to us it's a day of a very strict fast. I wanted to do it to honor my parents. I said I was sick. I didn't get up from bed in the morning, they brought me bread from the kitchen, but I didn't eat. In the camp, when someone didn't eat, that meant he was very sick. The commander came to me: 'What's up?' I said, 'I don't know.' They made me walk to the hospital point – about 10 kilometers from our camp. A shack made of bare stones. It was terribly cold in there. There was one doctor, a medic really, and one orderly – Franciszek, a Pole, who liked me. And that medic wasn't a bad man either, an older man. The only medicine he had – no matter what you were sick with – he dyed your back with some brown liquid and gave you an aspirin.

I stayed in the hospital for about five or six weeks. After two weeks my temperature dropped down to 35 degrees C, I was very weak. Then they signed me out because there was a rule – 'no fever – go back to the camp.' I remember there was a snow storm on that day. I started walking towards the camp, but then that Franciszek called, 'Hey, stop!' It turned out he convinced the medic I should stay. And so I stayed in the hospital again.

After some time I returned to the camp. It was terribly freezing again. I took a shortcut through a lake. Night. Taiga, wolves howled. It was extremely windy on that lake. Once I got to the camp, I was sick again. I was shivering in the dugout. They didn't take me to the forest the next morning. Some people they used to take by force, but they didn't take me. I lied in bed at the camp then. I dried my bread on the stove and sliced it. Then I would put the slices around me, no one had any doubts I was very sick, I had so much bread around me.

Once the battalion commander came up to me and started asking whether I had any family in Russia, they wanted to get rid of me. But I had no one, so I stayed. There were a few of us sick, there were also a few marauders. Just like at Svejk's [Josef Svejk, a Czech literature hero: a dim-witted and good natured dealer of dogs from Prague, who, due to ill fate, is sent to war]. There was one guy at the camp – Fryderyk and another one from Lwow, I don't remember his name. At night we would sit around the stove, they would lean against the wall, one would play a mandolin, the other sang. This is when I heard the song 'This is why I miss summer' for the first time, it was a very popular song, but I didn't know it then. There were some other songs, too, but this one was the favorite one. My memories are often tied to songs. Or to sunshine.

Once in a while a sanitary vehicle used to come with clean underwear. What did it mean – clean?! They would put all dirty clothes into one steam boiler. The steam was never hot enough, so after

washing – it was even worse. Not everyone got dirty to the same extent... some would get more dirty, I can't say, but once they put everything into the same boiler. Then everyone had it even. But we got used to even that.

And one more thing: despite the conditions in the camp, people were somehow surviving in our group. We weren't dying there. There was one suicide, a young man hanged himself in the forest. Another one died – fell through a hole into the frozen lake – because we used to fish and catch crawfish in holes in the lake to have some more food. But until the time I left nobody from the group died of emaciation.

Not far from us there was a camp of the Estonian battalion. Estonians, large men, because Estonia was wealthy before the war. They used to call us the army of Saint Kinga because we were very small, I was 1,71 meter tall and was one of the tallest [St. Kinga: a patron of the poor and unfortunate]. And those were huge men, and they were dying in masses. They must have had other needs that their organisms couldn't take it.

When the Germans were near Stalingrad [25](#) in the summer of 1942, all forces had to be mobilized to the front, a telegram came to our camp that all military specialists should be sent back to Chelyabinsk. There were many specialists, but the commanders wanted to get rid of those weakest, those worst ones. Because there was no use for them. And I was a specialist, so they picked me. I could have gotten out of it. Guys were trying to talk me into it, but... it's the war and there was no place for me there. So I went to Chelyabinsk and to an air force unit from there. I wasn't able to serve in the air force, but as an air force specialist I was assigned to PARM. PARM stands for a Mobile Air Mechanic. We had a tent and a bus, and in that bus there was a turning lathe and other tools needed to fix planes. I think we were 15 people there.

In PARM I found out that the Wasilewska Army [26](#) was being created. Well, first there was Anders' Army [27](#), but we didn't know anything about it. Just some gossip, reached us. And we had no way of getting out of the camp. Only when we were back in the normal army, we had access to information. A Polish army was supposed to be created in Riazan [ca. 200 km south-east of Moscow]. We started writing rapports asking for relocation. There were huge difficulties.

In the end they moved us to a rallying point in Chelyabinsk. After a few days it turned out that we were about to be sent not to a Polish, but to a Russian unit. Then we started to rebel. Heniek Poringier was the leader of the protest. They arrested that Poringier and two others, and they thought they'd break us this way, but they didn't. The news about us got to Wanda Wasilewska. We put our foot down. In the end an order came in and they finally sent us to the Polish unit. First we went to Moscow, and from there were supposed to be sent to the Polish unit.

In Moscow I met a Polish soldier for the first time. It was a huge joy for us, to see a man in a Polish uniform. It was Franek. There were so many Franeks before the war! He was surprised we were wearing Russian uniforms, and we started telling him why and what, and he bought us beer. We were surprised there was beer. We thought things like that didn't exist in the world. And in Moscow there was beer and... later we found out that for commanders there was even some cognac.

The second night we spent at the Kursk train station, on stone floors, wrapped in greatcoats – one end under the head, the other under the legs, so that it was warmer. In the morning – suddenly a loud noise and from the speakers we heard a Polish fight song. Such a beautiful melody. The ceiling

was very high at the station, and it really made an impression, it could really get you up. We checked in at the command, they gave us documents and a military permit to the unit in Chelm [150 km north of Lwow]. It was fall 1944.

We were supposed to go from Moscow to Minsk and then to Chelm. But we decided to go to Kiev and Lwow. It was desertion, but it was all chaos then, a mess. We spent three days in Lwow because everyone wanted to visit various places. There was martial law in Lwow then. It meant that Lwow was seized by Russia [then USSR], but Ukrainians were terrorizing everyone wherever they went. I went to my house, but didn't find anyone. The house was there, but some Russian lived there. The door was locked. And later I was afraid to go there. I met one Jewish family that survived. Apart from them, everyone died [28](#). Only that one family from the neighborhood was saved, and it happened in an interesting way.

It was a deeply orthodox family. Father with a beard and so on. Before the war they had a textile store. The son had passed the high-school exams – his name was Richter, he was such a mama's boy. Most of us were sportsmen, rascals, and he was a mama's boy. He was never active, only thought about the high-school exams. When the war broke out he escaped from the camp on Janowska Street. The same one my brother was in. He ran away to the partisans. And later he showed up one day in an SS uniform and took his entire family out of the camp. I would have never believed if somebody had told me that before the war, that he would be capable of something like that. He took his family to the forests in the Volyn area, to partisans. I don't exactly know what groups those were, Russian, Ukrainian, or some mixed ones, but his entire family survived. I learned about my family's fate from them.

There was widespread distrust. I went to their place, they were afraid of me, they thought I may be in the NKVD. They didn't even offer tea. But they told me everything they knew about my family. When the Germans were catching people in a raid, my family used to hide in canals, but one day a janitor gave them away, and the Germans took them. They took them on a tram-car platform, most likely to the camp on Janowska Street [29](#). I don't know what happened to them. They used to send some people immediately for annihilation, others were selected for labor. So I don't know, maybe they went straight to Belzec [30](#). But I do know what happened to Wilhelm and Michas.

Wilek, as I already said earlier, was a bad rascal as a young boy, and used to hang around with coachmen, which turned out useful when he got to the camp. He worked as a coachman. He also got help from friends from the sports club Hasmonia that we both had belonged to. People were trying to talk him into escaping from the camp. In the end he decided to do that, and began preparing documents and looking for a place for himself and for the youngest one – Michas. When everything was almost ready, one day he came home from work and the youngest brother was gone. And then he decided to stay in the camp.

I learned about all that from that Richter. Because throughout the entire war I had no news, Soviets told us that the Germans were murdering, burning, setting up camps. We couldn't imagine that a civilized nation could murder an entire society in cold blood. My father spent a lot of time in Vienna, he had surgery there, and he was full of admiration for the German culture. We had German books at home, and so on. I understood that it could have been some onslaught, dissolute mob murdering people, pogroms, but to murder people in such a planned way? We thought it was Russian propaganda. Because they told us things like that on talks.

I also went to the house where Ania, my girlfriend, used to live. They told me they had taken her and her entire family away, only one sister, some younger one, escaped. Her house was near the hill called Execution Hill. That sister hid in the bushes there, lived there. Sometimes she would come to houses, and they gave her a piece of bread or something... and then she disappeared. She either died somewhere there, or they took her. So, everyone died.

Before leaving Lwow and going to Lublin I went to the Jewish Committee [31](#), located in Lwow in the same synagogue my Father used to go to. They took over some place that Jews coming back from forests, from camps, could go to in order to let them know they were alive. Because there were such after-the-war searches for people. And they also helped by giving food. Those were offices of registration and aid. I thought that maybe I'll find out something about my family. They had no information about them, they only gave me a list of people from partisanship asking me to give it to a colonel in Lublin [city ca. 200 km north-west from Lwow] [32](#). Colonel Kahane was the main rabbi in the Polish Army before the war, he even taught me religion at school once. So I delivered him that list. Because, instead of going to Chelm, I went to Lublin.

We were several people, maybe 11 or 12, that left Moscow then. Our commander had an envelope where he kept all our documents. When we were in Lwow and found out what was happening in Poland, our commander gave us the documents back and told us we were free to do whatever we thought appropriate. Most of us were not in favor of communism. Some decided to go into forests, others somewhere else. I decided to go to the unit in Lublin, even though they were trying to talk me out of it, especially since anti-Semitic accidents were happening often in the army then. There were deaths. There was, for example, a man, a sergeant, from Bialystok I remember, he got time off to see his family and apparently they shot him there.

It was the worst when you met people from the NSZ [33](#), but in other places it was tough as well. I never experienced it myself, but I heard about many incidents, and I also saw a lot. I remember for example when in Lublin, in a night rest point for demobilized soldiers, on 13 Browarna Street, they threw Jewish disabled war veterans off the top bunk beds. Because in barracks there were bunk beds, and a stone floor between them. So there were a couple of war veterans there, with no legs, high on those beds, they were asleep, and people from the NSZ threw them down onto the floor. I was there, I heard it, but couldn't do anything. It was dark, night, everyone's asleep, and all of a sudden you heard screams...

In Lublin I arrived at a rallying point located at a former death camp on Majdanek [34](#). I got to a training battalion. I could have gone much higher since I had pilot's papers, but I wanted to go to the front then. I wasn't able to fly, so I hid the pilot certificate, and I still have it until this day. I showed them documents saying I am an aviation specialist and went to the training unit.

I was very upset during the stay at Majdanek. Bones scrunched under your feet. I remember a Polish sign chiseled on the wall in the kitchen: here this and that, I don't remember the name right now, killed 30 something people hitting them in the head with a hammer. There were stoves, bones, stacks of clothing... huge mountains of children's clothing – all that was there. I will never forget the New Year's Eve, or maybe it was Christmas Eve, I can't remember right now. The weather was awful, windy, and the soldiers sang Christmas carols, drank, enjoyed themselves. They sang and that was a horrible experience to me. Graves all around them, and they were having a good time. I will never forget it.

I was moved from Lublin to Przemysl [town ca. 180 km south of Lublin], and then to Cracow to an Officer School. One night a group of Germans came to our area from Slovakia. I was hit with tiny shrapnel, I fell on the ground and was run over by a military vehicle, a heavy Studebaker – an American vehicle, weighing ten tons. That's no joke. The Germans were gone, they escaped. Our cars were nearby, they took me there wrapped in a blanket. When they touched me – horrible pain, terrible. The doctors said my pelvis and lower vertebrae were broken in eight places. The spinal cord was damaged. My abdomen was open. After the surgery they couldn't put me in a cast. Peritonitis developed. I was on morphine all the time. After some time I got pneumonia in both lungs. Every single one of these illnesses was enough to kill. I have documents for all that.

It was February or March 1945. I still had fever, I was really just waiting for death in the hospital. There was a young man from Lwow among us, a petty thief or something like that. They said he shot his finger only to get to the hospital. He was our good spirit. He would steal food from the nuns who took care of us. One night I felt really bad. That guy brought me a white tablet then. I passed out and was unconscious after it, but woke up in the morning and then there was a breakthrough. Everything went away. The fever went down, I started to improve. The doctor told me not to thank him: 'God, providence, your organism –maybe that helped, but not medicine. Medicine was helpless here' – he said.

For a long time afterwards I couldn't remain standing up. I got around in a so-called tram-way. I folded a blanket several times and slid on it on the floor – the floors were polished. Once a new doctor came by, an officer released from a camp. He saw me how I was riding on the blanket and asked, 'What's that circus?!' I said, 'No, professor, it's a tram-way, not a circus.' And he said, 'Circus! Go back to your room!' He came by after a day or two and said, 'Sit up. Stand up.' I said I couldn't, because I couldn't. I tried, but I couldn't. Then he gave me his hand and I got up. Straight. I was shocked. He told me to stand up several times a day and look out the window. I started doing that.

I began walking with crutches, then with a cane. When I was able to walk, I went to the Jewish community in Cracow. It turned out there was a certain kibbutz operating there. Young people who returned from Soviet camps studied there. There was Hebrew language, they were preparing to go to Israel. I started visiting them, they got to like me. They were young kids, and I was a military man, and I also knew Hebrew, so I was a huge attraction to them.

Half a year passed. From Cracow they sent me to a military health resort in Kudowa [Kudowa Zdroj, 290 km south-west of Cracow]. I started climbing mountains. I never told anyone about it. I had Lwowian blood. After these walks I couldn't move for two days, but after those two days, on the third one, I would walk again. I was a free man, I wore a uniform, I could go wherever I wanted to. It was close to the border with the Czech Republic.

I discovered an illegal transport point to Israel in an empty plane factory [35](#). Entire families, candidates waiting for an opportunity of going to Israel lived in barracks there. They had a place to sleep, food, and they waited there. They had no rooms or apartments, just common areas. The authorities knew about it, but turned a blind eye to it. It was in their interest that those people leave. Israel was getting ready to go to war then. An illegal Jewish army fought with the English. And Russia was interested in meddling in. Russians sent their agents there. They thought they'd have their country there, at least some influence. I went to those barracks often. There were young

people there, but they didn't have ideological consciousness. They had to be made aware of things. So I would tell them about our ideas from the scout organization. It wasn't official. We met in small groups, quiet meetings, I talked to them, informed them how it was.

Marriage and children

From Kudowa they moved me to a hospital in Busko [Busko Zdroj – health resort, ca. 80 km north of Cracow]. In Busko, thanks to baths and treatments, I started walking without a cane. I couldn't believe it myself. I returned to Cracow and I had no cane on me anymore. Then my acquaintance with my future wife began. I met her in the hospital. She took part in the Warsaw Uprising [36](#), she was from Warsaw. Her name was Stanislaw Auerbach, but in the documents her last name was Kulda. Kulda was her last name from the occupation. She had several [names], Kulda, Ostojka, various ones. Stanislaw was her real name.

She was two years younger than me. She came from Warsaw. She was the daughter of a Jewish doctor. She was born in 1924, in a particularly assimilated family. She couldn't even speak Yiddish. She took her high school exams before the war. They wanted to send her to a diplomatic school – she was very bright – but, of course, that was out of the question since the war broke out. Right after creating the Warsaw ghetto [37](#) she crossed over to the Aryan side. When the Germans moved them to the ghetto, her parents moved her to their relatives. I met those people as well. They lived in Zoliborz, a Polish family of teachers. The husband, as an officer, was murdered in Katyn [38](#). And the wife and the son lived there in teachers' housing. And my wife stayed there. Her family remained in the ghetto. None of them survived.

She lived in various places on the Aryan side. She worked as a help, as a nanny. She was in the AK [39](#). First in the Combat Association. That teacher had a three-bedroom apartment. They were poor. She rented one bedroom to some Ania. And it turned out that she belonged to the staff of the People's Guard [40](#). Things were getting complicated, because Stacha [short for Stanislaw] carried messages for the AK and also cooperated with people in the AL. She wasn't a member, but was just helping them. She hid weapons in the basement, brought them some newspapers.

In this apartment there was also Spychalski [Marian Spychalski (1906-1980), a communist activist in the Polish People's Republic] and Celina, his assistant. And Stacha used to help them. She hid guns and passed information the AK obtained from abroad through their channels. Her code name was Slawka. She received the Cross of the Valorous from Spychalski for that period and later another Cross of the Valorous distinction for the period of the uprising [Cross of the Valorous – Polish military decoration, also given to civilians cooperating with an active army]. She took part in the uprising normally, in the AK. She was severely wounded and ended up in field hospitals. These are such stories, good for a movie, and nobody would believe it happened in real life.

She was most afraid the AK would consider her a spy. But she did it all in a good faith. After the war she got distinctions from both sides. But she was afraid to live in Warsaw. She was afraid they would accuse her. Those from the AL, when they found out she was active in the AK, were shocked. She didn't want to risk it and didn't want to go back to Warsaw. During the uprising she was wounded – her entire leg was shattered, gangrene started. Friends from the AK moved her to a hospital in Cracow; the Germans allowed for moving badly wounded to Cracow.

In the Cracow hospital there were several patients, Jewish soldiers. It was a very interesting group, second in command was Captain Barabasz. They were somewhat cured then. When in Israel there was the liberation war [1948] they decided to leave the hospital and go to Israel. I wanted to go with them. During that time Stacha was in the resort in Kudowa. We weren't married then, she was just my girlfriend. I went to say goodbye to her. We went to a park in the morning. I told her that right now it would be difficult for me to leave. It was a beautiful summer day. We sat on the bench, there was nobody around. We said goodbye and I left.

When I walked a few meters away, I wanted to look at her one more time. I turned around and went back to a spot from which I could see her. Stacha was sitting and crying. It was for me... I was really touched by that. I was probably worried she might commit suicide. Alone, on crutches – she walked on crutches then. I knew she had been counting on me, hoping for a steady relationship. I looked for a bit more and went away. I didn't go back to her. I went to Cracow and said, 'Unfortunately I can't go with you. Maybe some other time, but now I can't.' They left without me. I even know that they sent a letter to the commander: 'We're sorry, we fought for Poland, but now Israel needs us.' I went back to my girlfriend. We got married, in a military marriage office, still in the hospital, but I could already walk then. We slept in a hotel that night. Friends, witnesses, hired a horse carriage for us.

Later we had to become independent. I was afraid to go back to being a civilian. I had no house. I wrote to Warsaw then, to the army commanders that I am right now a war veteran, unable to carry out active duty, I am an aviation specialist, and would like to remain in the military as a non-combat professional. It was a treat to them, because the Russians were taking their officers back then, their specialists, and there was no one to take their places. They wrote back for me to come to Warsaw. They offered me a job either at the Okęcie airport or in Pruszków in the army headquarters, but my wife was afraid of going back to Warsaw [Okęcie airport – Warsaw airport; Pruszków – a town 15 km southwest of Warsaw]. She had trauma. Trauma about those ruins, because she lost all her friends there, but also she was afraid she could get the death penalty [accusation of being a spy because she was a member of the AK and active in the People's Guard]. So I turned both offers down.

There was one Russian major – Martynow, when he heard about my dilemma – I told him that my wife was sick and needed special conditions, calm – he told me to come to him, because there was a resort there. It turned out there was an air base near Łódź. A colony, village, Bolesławów, near Wisniowa Góra. And there were villas there, so good living conditions. So I agreed to that.

So my rehabilitation looked like this: I had to get up every day at 6am, run to the train, there was a special train for workers, then march 2 kilometers to the unit. Winter, snow. Maybe it was good, because I started believing in my strength again and became a normal person. That lasted until spring of 1947, until the referendum 3xYES [41](#).

They announced a state of emergency in the Polish Army. Everyone was sent to the barracks. I went to the commander then, his name was Turczko, and I said that my wife was expecting, she was sick, and we lived in a house with no sewage system and heating. I asked him to release me from the service, so that I could provide my wife conditions for existence. He refused and I deserted. Without a permit, without any agreement, I went home. And I waited. I knew they would come for me.

At least a week passed, they took me from my house with guns. I ended up in a garrison arrest on 21 Pomorska Street. I got sick there from sitting on a stone floor for several days, and I got to a hospital again. I didn't go back to the army. I spent about a month at the hospital, my wife was in her last months of pregnancy. At night I would leave the hospital illegally, I would help her and go back at dawn. When they released me, we were homeless, without a job, my wife sick with an open wound, in her last months of pregnancy, that was my doom.

I went to the Jewish Committee, because I still hoped someone from my family had survived. They asked me what I did, and so on, and offered me a job. Near the Committee there was a cooperative bank for helping immigrants returning from Russia, from partisanship. They would get a loan with a bill of exchange guarantee. I was placed in a cell filling those bills of exchange out. But I was so weak after being in the hospital and all that, that I was simply falling asleep. I really was disabled. I was falling asleep at work. I had to go to the toilet to wash my face, so that I could see those damn bills of exchange that I was filling out. I became a burden to them. And apparently they couldn't get rid of me differently, because they couldn't lay me off as a disabled war veteran, or maybe they didn't want to lay me off – they suggested I go to a university. They were just admitting to universities, to the first year to even out the level, I got a scholarship of 3000 zloty.

I didn't believe I was suited for studies – no contact with books, nothing for years, and here there were young boys right after high-school exams, but my wife kept convincing me: 'Listen, Sailor manages, and you wouldn't'? Sailor was my friend from the army, we called him that because he used to serve in the navy. And yes, he was a bit dumb. So, I got convinced and took a course. I finished the introductory studies with a very good grade. I could go to university. I wanted to become a doctor most, but I realized that with my handicap I wouldn't be able to. The Law Department in Lodz had this advantage that you didn't need to go to classes and seminars, you only had to take exams. So I chose law, which I liked the least. But it turned out... I don't know, maybe it was life experience, or maybe... I was very well read before the war, in any way, I passed all my exams with B's and A's.

While I was still a student, they announced at the department recruitment to the public prosecutor's office. I got in. I was the favorite student of the famous professor of criminal law – Schaff. I kept on studying and I was at an applicant's level. I was particularly good. Problems started when I refused working for the government. Because when I finished university, ministries started recruiting. They were getting their representatives ready in the ministries, to prepare graduates for them. They wanted to have new staff, not still the pre-war ones. At the last department they were looking for employees for the Ministry of Justice, courts, prosecutor's offices and safety [42](#).

They called us for interviews. My turn came – they were happy, they offered me a job – I said I couldn't do it. 'But why – you have experience. We need people like you. You'll have a beautiful future.' I told them I was sick and I couldn't even wear a belt, not to mention a gun. 'But you won't need to wear a belt... you'll be a civilian.' They made it clear that I would be getting one paycheck from them, and another from some other department. I was fighting like a lion and they kept attacking that yes, that they need people like me... and when nothing was helping one of them said – 'I wouldn't want to use the work obligation order [a document issued in the People's Republic of Poland, based on which an employer had the responsibility to hire an employee for a given position, in order for the employee to be able to pay off the debt to the state taken for education]

we'd rather you decided yourself.'

It was 1952 or 1953. When I heard about the obligation to work, I was stunned. I said I was a disabled war veteran and I don't fall under work obligation orders. When he heard it he knew he couldn't do anything to me, but I began having serious problems finding a job. The black list began following me. [Mr. Nadel suggests the safety office blocked his access to jobs, because he had refused co-operation.]

My wife worked in companies as a cashier. She was also a disabled war veteran. We had a child then already – our son was born in 1947, in May. His name is Aleksander. After my father. I kept looking for a job, collecting ads from newspapers, writing I was a war veteran and as such, according to the law, I had priority among others with the same qualifications. I would receive answers that they already hired someone, or they wouldn't answer at all. I looked for a good few months. And only later I discovered that for all those positions you had to be accepted by the UB. And, apparently, they didn't approve of me. I waited for a year, I had a really horrible financial situation.

Finally, thanks to the help of Dean Fortecki, I was accepted for a position, an internship as an attorney. Later they assigned me to court number 11. Nothing special, a regular court downtown. I worked there for almost three years. I was a permanent apprentice – I used to get the worst cases. They always give the worst jobs to interns: 'Let him loose, he'll be a good attorney.' I had a very small salary. I stayed in there until the exam, I passed it well, and had problems finding a job again. There weren't any private chambers then, only attorney associations and I had to wait to be assigned to an association. Probably all associations were afraid of me. Maybe they thought I'm from the safety office. Fortunately, they learned to trust me in the association I worked in. I stayed with them until 1964.

But I still had to look for another job. I needed a larger income for my family, because my earnings, as for an attorney, were small. I found a job as a legal adviser first in PSS [National Grocers' Cooperative], then in 1959 in ORC [Installment Sales Center]. ORS gave credits for various purchases: clothing, furniture... it was very hard work. Very unpleasant conditions, because I dealt with huge loans, but it was a very good practice for me. Very difficult matters, business, recoveries.

In 1968 [43](#) our son, Aleksander, was a tall handsome boy. They used to call him a sheriff. 1.86 meter tall, he danced beautifully, sang beautifully. He didn't belong to the party, no. He studied at the 2nd year of medicine in Lodz at the Medical Academy. When student strikes [44](#) began, he was made a delegate of the Department of Medicine. Because he was so outgoing, made contacts easily. Fortunately some professors at the department were decent and one of them warned him he was going to be arrested.

Olek [short for Aleksander] had a passport, he was going to leave for the holidays. I can't remember where to now. He got on a train and went to Copenhagen. He stayed there. We were supposed to join him, the whole family. We had been planning to go to Israel, but I was so upset about him leaving that I got a heart attack. And there was no way I could go anywhere in these conditions. Olek also wrote that was out of the question, they would upset me on the border... so I stayed here.

Aleksander had a girlfriend at the university in Poland. After two years, when Olek was already in the 5th year of Medicine in Copenhagen, she went to him, pretending that it was just on a trip, and stayed there. They got married. But she didn't want to seek political refugee status, because she had parents in Poland and didn't want to break contacts with the country. She was a Christian. If she had applied for refugee status, she would have had a chance to go study, receive a scholarship, and help in Denmark. But she didn't want that, so she had nothing to live off. Olek decided to go to work, so that she could finish studying, and then he'd go back to university and finish his degree. But he never went back to his studies. She graduated. He started working as a taxi driver to earn a living. For himself and for her. And then he saved some money or took a loan, bought his own taxi and started his own transport company. He has some income.

Slawek [short for Slawomir] was born in 1954, on 22nd July, a nationalist. [Mr. Nadel nicknames his son this way sarcastically, because of the date his son was born. 22nd July – the National Holiday of Revival of Poland. It was the most important Polish holiday in the period of the People's Republic of Poland]. He finished his studies in Lodz, in the Department of Medicine. Now he is a doctor in Lagiewniki [district in Lodz]. He works at the internal diseases ward. He was supposed to be a cardiologist, but didn't like feudal relationship in the hospitals. He's very well liked.

He wasn't raised in the tradition, he doesn't know Yiddish, but he knows who he is. He is aware he's Jewish. Nowadays, out of curiosity, he reads some books. He's interested in Jewish history, culture. He knows some rituals, but... I admit there's a lot of my fault there. After the Holocaust, after so many Jews were murdered in Poland, I was afraid such periods may come back and I wanted him to be as far away from it as possible.

We got a permit to visit our son for the first time in 1973. It was a short visit. In the meantime my wife stayed in Copenhagen and I went to Israel. My son got me the visa. [During that time the diplomatic liaisons between Poland and Israel were broken. Poles could obtain visas to Israel in Israeli embassies in other countries]. In Israel I saw many friends. One of them, Icchak Rafael, was even the minister of religion. He had a PhD in Judaism. Once we used to go to the same school and belonged to the same organization, Akiba. He changed his last name, before the war his name was Icchak Werfel. We met in Tel Aviv in a super elegant hotel, where he was meeting people from the Diaspora.

He offered to find me an apartment in Jerusalem. A three-bedroom apartment, a job on the Mizrachi bank. He said, 'I can give you that much. You know Hebrew, it'll be easy for you. We'll place you in an Ulpan [45](#) with your family, you'll have a salary, everything. It'll be easy for you, you know the language, it's just a matter of learning new words, terminology.' So, the plan was to stay and bring my family. Two or three days before leaving we went on a trip to Rishon Lezyon. It was extremely hot and I fainted. I passed out, the doctor said, 'You must not live in Israel.' I had to go back. That's how my adventure ended, unfortunately. Or fortunately.

Recent years

I have three grandchildren. One from Slawek and two from Olek. Maciek, Slawek's son, is 14 right now and attends high-school in Lodz. Kuba comes from Copenhagen, but studies in Warsaw. He is finishing medicine. And there's also Misiek. He's also from Copenhagen. He is, I think, on the 1st or 2nd year of Computer Science.

My sons weren't raised in the Jewish tradition, but they were interested, and still are interested in Jewish history. I know and I noticed that they know the history really well. It's a different matter with the grandchildren. The older son, when he settled in Copenhagen, influenced by friends, got closer to the Jewish tradition. He doesn't know Jewish or Hebrew, but had a bar mitzvah and circumcisions for his sons. So Kuba and Misiek are circumcised, but at the moment everything is foreign to them anyway. But formally they are Jewish. We have a very good contact with each other.

I was professionally active until 1993. From the moment I started getting the pension, I still worked half time, and I was slowly closing the other jobs, first in Technical Gases in 1983. In PKO and PSS I remained until 1993. I would have continued working, but I had to be at home more because of my wife's illness.

My wife died on 18th April 2002. She had surgery. That leg, all the time. Wounds kept opening... Then she was sick, we don't really know with what, she probably had a stomach tumor. She was suffering for two years. She's buried at the Jewish cemetery. I suspected there would be no life for me. 56 or 57 years we were together, married. I can't find myself until this day. I was sick, I went to hospital twice, but the younger son visits me, and so it slowly goes... I also started going to the community, I'm socially active. Once I was active on the board for disabled war veterans, but now I can't due to my health. And I started going out on Saturdays, Fridays. So that I am among people, make contacts. For many years I was the president of the community, now I am vice-president. I resigned, I didn't feel strong enough to keep doing it.

I'm not sure why I agreed to give you this interview. I agreed reluctantly, I have to admit. The only thing that convinced me was that it's for the future generations. And maybe I'm counting that if I get a copy, my children will finally have a keepsake. They know very little about me. I remember many things, but I never sat down to segregate, write down what's important and what isn't. There's so much of it it's difficult to sort out? Besides, I can't express myself at all. Just here, for the first time...

Glossary:

1 Partitions of Poland (1772-1795)

Three divisions of the Polish lands, in 1772, 1793 and 1795 by the neighboring powers: Russia, Austria and Prussia. Under the first partition Russia occupied the lands east of the Dzwina, Drua and Dnieper, a total of 92,000 km² and a population of 1.3 million. Austria took the southern part of the Cracow and Sandomierz provinces, the Oswiecim and Zator principalities, the Ruthenian province (except for the Chelm lands) and part of the Belz province, a total of 83,000 km² and a population of 2.6 million. Prussia annexed Warmia, the Pomerania, Malbork and Chelmno provinces (except for Gdansk and Torun) and the lands along the Notec river and Goplo lake, altogether 36,000 km² and 580,000 souls. The second partition was carried out by Prussia and Russia. Prussia occupied the Poznan, Kalisz, Gniezno, Sieradz, Leczyca, Inowroclaw, Brzesc Kujawski and Plock provinces, the Dobrzyn lands, parts of the Rawa and Masovia provinces, and Torun and Gdansk, a total of 58,000 km² and over a million inhabitants. Russia took the Ukrainian and Belarus lands east of the Druja-Pinsk-Zbrucz line, altogether 280,000 km² and 3 million inhabitants. Under the

third partition Russia obtained the rest of the Lithuanian, Belarus and Ukrainian lands east of the Bug and the Nemirov-Grodno line, a total area of 120,000 km² and 1.2 million inhabitants. The Prussians took the remainder of Podlasie and Mazovia, Warsaw, and parts of Samogitia and Malopolska, 55,000 km² and a population of 1 million. Austria annexed Cracow and the part of Malopolska between the Pilica, Vistula and Bug, and part of Podlasie and Masovia, a total surface area of 47,000 km² and a population of 1.2 million.

2 Poland's independence, 1918

In 1918 Poland regained its independence after over 100 years under the partitions, when it was divided up between Russia, Austria and Prussia. World War I ended with the defeat of all three partitioning powers, which made the liberation of Poland possible. On 8 January 1918 the president of the USA, Woodrow Wilson, declaimed his 14 points, the 13th of which dealt with Poland's independence. In the spring of the same year, the Triple Entente was in secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary, offering them integrity and some of Poland in exchange for parting company with their German ally, but the talks were a fiasco and in June the Entente reverted to its original demands of full independence for Poland. In the face of the defeat of the Central Powers, on 7 October 1918 the Regency Council issued a statement to the Polish nation proclaiming its independence and the reunion of Poland. Institutions representing the Polish nation on the international arena began to spring up, as did units disarming the partitioning powers' armed forces and others organizing a system of authority for the needs of the future state. In the night of 6-7 November 1918, in Lublin, a Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland was formed under Ignacy Daszynski. Its core comprised supporters of Pilsudski. On 11 November 1918 the armistice was signed on the western front, and the Regency Council entrusted Pilsudski with the supreme command of the nascent army. On 14 November the Regency Council dissolved, handing all civilian power to Pilsudski; the Lublin government also submitted to his rule. On 17 November Pilsudski appointed a government, which on 21 November issued a manifesto promising agricultural reforms and the nationalization of certain branches of industry. It also introduced labor legislation that strongly favored the workers, and announced parliamentary elections. On 22 November Pilsudski announced himself Head of State and signed a decree on the provisional authorities in the Republic of Poland. The revolutionary left, from December 1918 united in the Communist Workers' Party of Poland, came out against the government and independence, but the program of Pilsudski's government satisfied the expectations of the majority of society and emboldened it to fight for its goals within the parliamentary democracy of the independent Polish state. In January and June 1919 the first elections to the Legislative Sejm were held. On 20 February 1919 the Legislative Sejm passed the 'small constitution'; Pilsudski remained Head of State. The first stage of establishing statehood was completed, despite the fact that the issue of Poland's borders had not yet been resolved.

3 Battle for Lwow, 1918

On the night of 31st October 1918 a Ukrainian unit (until that time functioning as a part of the Austro-Hungarian Army) under the command of Dmytro Vitovskij intercepted all main buildings in Lwow, seizing control over the city. In the morning of 1st November fights with Poles began. After several days of fierce battles in which civilians, among them students and Polish scouts, participated, the line of the front was formed: the western part of the city was in Polish hands, the eastern in Ukrainian. On 20th November a unit of the Polish Army under the command of Colonel

Michal Karaszewicz-Tokarzewski came to the rescue from Cracow to Lwow, and after a day of fighting the Ukrainians were forced to leave the city. The Lwow defense, and especially its young participants, called 'Lwow Eagles,' were worshiped in interwar Poland.

4 KuK (Kaiserlich und Königlich) army

The name 'Imperial and Royal' was used for the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as well as for other state institutions of the Monarchy originated from the dual political system. Following the Compromise of 1867, which established the Dual Monarchy, Austrian emperor and Hungarian King Franz Joseph was the head of the state and also commander-in-chief of the army. Hence the name 'Imperial and Royal'.

5 Hasid

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

6 Mizrachi (full name

The 'Mizrachi' Zionist-Orthodox Organization): A political party of religious Zionists, which was created in order to build a Jewish nation in Palestine, based on the rules of the Torah. The name comes from the words 'Ha-merkaz ha-ruchani', that is 'spiritual center.' It was created in Vilnius in 1902 as a branch of the World Zionist Organization. In 1917 Mizrach broke off from the Organization as a separate party. Headed by Jozsua Heszal Farbstein, other activists included Izaak Nissenbaum and Icchak Rubinstein. The Mizrachi party cooperated with the Zionist Organization in Poland, supported the program of national-cultural autonomy, took part in parliamentary and local self-government elections. Mizrachi also created its own school organization Jawne and youth organization Ceirej Mizrachi (Mizrachi Youth) and He-Chaluc ha-Mizrachi (Mizrachi Pioneers), later Ha-Poel ha-Mizrachi (Mizrachi Worker). Mizrachi's influence was strongest in southwestern Poland. After WWII it was the only religious party which was allowed to operate. Dissolved in 1949.

7 Akiba - Hanoar Haivri

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

8 The Kingdom of Poland

(Other names: the Congress Kingdom, Congress Kingdom of Poland): founded in 1815 by a decision of the Congress of Vienna. It extended throughout the lands of the Kingdom of Warsaw with the exception of the Poznan and Bydgoszcz provinces and the city of Cracow. It had an area (until 1912) of 128,500 km² and a population of 3.3m in 1816 and 10m in 1910. The Kingdom of Poland was a monarchy linked by a personal union with Russia, with the tsar as king. It had a Polish Sejm (diet), government and army, but was not permitted to conduct its own foreign policy. The constitution, though formally liberal, was systematically violated. The Kingdom of Poland was a center of the Polish liberation movement. In 1830 the November Uprising broke out; following its failure the Kingdom of Poland ceased to be a separate state and was henceforth to be an integral part of the Russian Empire. After the January Uprising in 1863 the Kingdom was stripped of its separate identity altogether. In official documents the name 'the Kingdom of Poland' was replaced with the expression 'the Country along the Vistula.' In the second half of the 19th century the country was subjected to intensive Russification. In 1915 it was occupied by German and Austrian forces; the occupation lasted until November 1918. After 1918 the lands of the Kingdom of Poland became part of the independent Poland.

9 Hasmonea Lwow

Jewish sports club founded in 1908 by Adolf Kohn. One of four Lwow league clubs in the interwar period. For two seasons its soccer section played in the league, coming 11th in 1927 and 13th in 1928. The club also boasted a strong boxing section (H. Grosz and F. Strauss were vice-champions) and table tennis section (A. Erlich). The athlete Irena Bella Hornstein of Hasmonea competed for Poland in 1937-1939.

10 Keren Kayemet Leisrael (K

K.L.): Jewish National Fund (JNF) founded in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel. From its inception, the JNF was charged with the task of fundraising in Jewish communities for the purpose of purchasing land in the Land of Israel to create a homeland for the Jewish people. After 1948 the fund was used to improve and afforest the territories gained. Every Jewish family that wished to help the cause had a JNF money box, called the 'blue box.' Now these boxes are known worldwide as a symbol of Zionism. In Poland the JNF was active in two periods, 1919-1939 and 1945-1950. In preparing its colonization campaign, Keren Kayemet Leisrael collaborated with the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod.

11 Keren Hayesod

A Jewish financial fund (Palestinian Construction Fund) set up in London in 1920 by the World Zionist Organization to collect financial aid for the emigration of Jews to Palestine. The money came from contributions by Jewish communities from all over the world. The funds collected were transferred to support immigrants and the Jewish colonization of Palestine. It contributed towards establishing big national companies: EL-AL airlines, ZIM shipping line and Bank Leumi.

12 Jabotinsky, Vladimir (1880-1940)

Founder and leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement; soldier, orator and a prolific author writing in Hebrew, Russian, and English. During World War I he established and served as an officer in the Jewish Legion, which fought in the British army for the liberation of the Land of Israel from Turkish rule. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Keren Hayesod, the financial arm of the World Zionist Organization, founded in London in 1920, and was later elected to the Zionist Executive. He resigned in 1923 in protest over Chaim Weizmann's pro-British policy and founded the Revisionist Zionist movement and the Betar youth movement two years later. Jabotinsky also founded the ETZEL (National Military Organization) during the 1936-39 Arab rebellion in Palestine.

13 Betar

Brith Trumpedor (Hebrew) meaning Trumpedor Society; right-wing Revisionist Jewish youth movement. It was founded in 1923 in Riga by Vladimir Jabotinsky, in memory of J. Trumpedor, one of the first fighters to be killed in Palestine, and the fortress Betar, which was heroically defended for many months during the Bar Kohba uprising. Its aim was to propagate the program of the revisionists and prepare young people to fight and live in Palestine. It organized emigration through both legal and illegal channels. It was a paramilitary organization; its members wore uniforms. They supported the idea to create a Jewish legion in order to liberate Palestine. From 1936-39 the popularity of Betar diminished. During WWII many of its members formed guerrilla groups.

14 HIAS (Hebrew Immigration Aid Society): Founded in New York City by a group of Jewish immigrants in 1881, HIAS has offered food, shelter and other aid to emigrants. HIAS has assisted more than 4.5 million people in their quest for freedom. This includes the million Jewish refugees it helped to immigrate to Israel (in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Israel), and the thousands it helped resettle in Canada, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere. As the oldest international migration and refugee resettlement agency in the US, HIAS also played a major role in the rescue and relocation of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and of Jews from Morocco, Ethiopia, Egypt and the communist countries of Eastern Europe. More recently, since the mid-1970s, HIAS has helped Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union. In Poland the society has been active since before 1939. After the war HIAS received permission to recommence its activities in March 1946, and opened offices in Warsaw, Bialystok, Katowice, Cracow, Lublin and Lodz. It provided information on emigration procedures and the policies of foreign countries regarding émigrés, helped deal with formalities involved in emigration, and provided material assistance and care for émigrés.

15 Hakhsharah: Training camps organized by the Zionists, in which Jewish youth in the Diaspora received intellectual and physical training, especially in agricultural work, in preparation for settling in Palestine.

16 Hora: The best-known folk dance of pioneers in Eretz Israel. The dance is chiefly derived from the Romanian hora. Hora is a closed circle dance. Israeli dance is an amalgam of the many cultures and peoples which settled in Palestine, and then Israel. The original sources were Eastern European styles, Arabic and Yemenite.

17 German Invasion of Poland

The German attack of Poland on 1st September 1939 is widely considered the date in the West for

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

18 Soviet capture of Lwow: From 12th September 1939, Lwow was surrounded by the German army. General Wladyslaw Langner was in command of the defense. On 19th September the Soviet troops attacked from the east. The Germans began evacuation, as in line with the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact Lwow was to belong to the Soviet occupational zone. The representatives of the Red Army began talks with the city authorities. On 21st September a tentative capitulation agreement was reached. On 22nd September around 1pm the Soviet army entered Lwow. The taking of the city was relatively nonviolent. Polish soldiers lay down their arms. Several lynchings happened, the victims were particularly Polish policemen. In the poverty-stricken districts and among the Jews and Ukrainians demonstrations were organized in support of the new authorities.

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

20 Assimilators in Poland

supporters of assimilation, among Jews – a movement for adopting the Polish culture. They rejected Zionism and Yiddish culture, they treated religion as the basis for their Jewish identity: they considered themselves to be ‘Polish of the Moses religion.’ Activists of the assimilation movement concentrated around newspapers, created organizations, and in the end political parties. The movement was especially strong in the 2nd half of the XIX century. The first organization of the supporters of assimilation of Polish culture in Galicia (Agudas Achim) was founded in 1882. In Warsaw the assimilation followers were centered around the magazine Izraelita published in 1866-1912. For a very long time, since 1871 until 1926, assimilators dominated in the Warsaw Jewish religious commune. Their head representative was Ludwik Natanson. It was similar in the Cracow commune, where the president was Szymon Samelsohn. In Galicia, academic and youth assimilators’ organizations were being created starting in 1907. In 1919 assimilators’ organizations from Warsaw, Lwow and Cracow were combined to form a Union of Jewish Poles from All the Polish Lands. Their work, however, didn’t have a significant influence on the development of the Jewish national movement and was a subject of severe criticism. In the period between the wars traditions of the assimilators’ movement were maintained mainly by youth organizations: the ‘Zjednoczenie’ [Union] Academic Society, Association of Polish Youth of Jewish Origin ‘Zagiew,’ Berek Joselewicz scout units. Assimilators were present in community authorities in only a few cities, for example in Lwow.

21 Bund

The short name of the General Jewish Union of Working People in Lithuania, Poland and Russia, Bund means Union in Yiddish. The Bund was a social democratic organization representing Jewish craftsmen from the Western areas of the Russian Empire. It was founded in Vilnius in 1897. In 1906 it joined the autonomous fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Working Party and took up a Menshevist position. After the Revolution of 1917 the organization split: one part was anti-Soviet power, while the other remained in the Bolsheviks' Russian Communist Party. In 1921 the Bund dissolved itself in the USSR, but continued to exist in other countries.

22 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 were deporting 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 12th and 15th April as many as 25,000 were deported from Lwow only.

23 Great Patriotic War

On 22nd June 1941 at 5 o'clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

24 NKVD

(Russ.: Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del), People's Committee of Internal Affairs, the supreme security authority in the USSR - the secret police. Founded by Lenin in 1917, it nevertheless played an insignificant role until 1934, when it took over the GPU (the State Political Administration), the political police. The NKVD had its own police and military formations, and also possessed the powers to pass sentence on political matters, and as such in practice had total control over society. Under Stalin's rule the NKVD was the key instrument used to terrorize the civilian population. The NKVD ran a network of labor camps for millions of prisoners, the Gulag. The heads of the NKVD were as follows: Genrikh Yagoda (to 1936), Nikolai Yezhov (to 1938) and Lavrenti Beria. During the war against Germany the political police, the KGB, was spun off from the NKVD. After the war it also operated on USSR-occupied territories, including in Poland, where it assisted the nascent communist authorities in suppressing opposition. In 1946 the NKVD was renamed the Ministry of the Interior.

25 Stalingrad Battle

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

26 Wasilewska, Wanda (1905-64)

From 1934-37 she was a member of the Supreme Council of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). In 1940 she became a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. From 1941-43 she was a political commissary in the Red Army and editor of 'Nowe Widnokregi.' In 1943 she helped to organize the Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish armed forces in the USSR. In 1944 she became a member of the Central Bureau of Polish Communists in the USSR and vice-chairperson of the Polish Committee for National Liberation. After the war she remained in the USSR. Author of the social propaganda novels 'Oblicze Dnia' (The Face of the Day, 1934), 'Ojczyzna' (Fatherland, 1935) and 'Ziemia w Jarzmie' (Earth under the Yoke, 1938), and the war novel 'Teczka' (Rainbow, 1944).

27 Anders' Army

The Polish Armed Forces in the USSR, subsequently the Polish Army in the East, known as Anders' Army: an operations unit of the Polish Armed Forces formed pursuant to the Polish-Soviet Pact of 30th July 1941 and the military agreement of 14th July 1941. It comprised Polish citizens who had been deported into the heart of the USSR: soldiers imprisoned in 1939-41 and civilians amnestied in 1941 (some 1.25-1.6m people, including a recruitment base of 100,000-150,000). The commander-in-chief of the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR was General Wladyslaw Anders. The army never reached its full quota (in February 1942 it numbered 48,000, and in March 1942 around 66,000). In terms of operations it was answerable to the Supreme Command of the Red Army, and in terms of organization and personnel to the Supreme Commander, General Wladyslaw Sikorski and the Polish government in exile. In March-April 1942 part of the Army (with Stalin's consent) was sent to Iran (33,000 soldiers and approx. 10,000 civilians). The final evacuation took place in August-September 1942 pursuant to Soviet-British agreements concluded in July 1942 (it was the aim of General Anders and the British powers to withdraw Polish forces from the USSR); some 114,000 people, including 25,000 civilians (over 13,000 children) left the Soviet Union. The units that had been evacuated were merged with the Polish Army in the Middle East to form the Polish Army in the East, commanded by Anders.

28 Lwow Ghetto

Created following an order of the German administrative authorities issued on 8th November 1941. All Jews living in Lwow, that is approx. 120,000 people, were resettled to the ghetto. During a selection which was conducted by the German authorities most elderly and sick persons were shot to death before the ghetto was formally created. Many Jews were employed in workshops producing equipment for the Wehrmacht or the Luftwaffe. Some of them were also employed in the German administration outside of the ghetto. Since March 1941 the Germans imprisoned Jews in the Janowska forced labor camp and also deported them to the extermination camp in Belzec. Some residents died during mass street executions in the area of the ghetto called Piaski. The

Great Liquidation Action in the Lwow ghetto lasted from 10th to 23rd August 1942. It is estimated that some 40,000 Jews were deported to the Belzec extermination camp. Some young men were sent to the Janowska forced labor camp. Approx. 800 people were taken to the Auschwitz extermination camp.

29 Janowska Road Camp

It was set up in Lwow in October 1941. One part was the SS accommodation and the prisoners' barracks (people later sent to the extermination camp in Belzec were held here), and the other part housed production workshops. Created as a labor camp for Lwow Jews, it became an extermination camp. Jews from Eastern Galicia were brought here. Owing to a real threat of an armed uprising, the Germans liquidated the camp in a lightning campaign on 20th November 1943. Only a few people managed to escape.

30 Belzec

Village in Lublin region of Poland (Tomaszow district). In 1940 the Germans created a forced labor camp there for 2,500 Jews and Roma. In November 1941 it was transformed into an extermination camp (SS Sonderkommando Belzec or Dienststelle Belzec der Waffen SS) under the 'Reinhard-Aktion,' in which the Germans murdered around 600,000 people (chiefly in gas chambers), including approximately 550,000 Polish Jews (approx. 300,000 from the province of Galicia) and Jews from the USSR, Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Norway and Hungary; many Poles from surrounding towns and villages and from Lwow also died here, mostly for helping Jews. In November 1942 the Nazis began liquidating the camp. In the spring of 1943 the camp was demolished and the corpses of the gassed victims exhumed from their mass graves and burned. The last 600 Jews employed in this work were then sent to the Sobibor camp, where they died in the gas chambers.

31 Central Committee of Polish Jews

Founded in 1944, with the aim of representing Jews in dealings with the state authorities and organizing and co-coordinating aid and community care for Holocaust survivors. Initially it operated from Lublin as part of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. The CCPJ's activities were subsidized by the Joint, and in time began to cover all areas of the reviving Jewish life. In 1950 the CCPJ merged with the Jewish Cultural Society to form the Social and Cultural Society of Polish Jews.

32 Polish authorities in Lublin in 1944

On 22nd July 1944, in Lublin Chelm the Polish Committee for National Liberation (PKWN) announced the assuming of power in Poland. The Committee was founded two days earlier in Moscow, was an organ completely dependent on Stalin and dominated by communists. A manifest published by PKWN described a temporary system of power in Poland. The function of a Parliament was assumed by the National Council - also dominated by the communists' joint representation of left-wing organizations. PKWN was the only executive authority and could issue decrees with a power of laws. It began creating local administration, at first in the form of national councils, later bringing back the institutions of voivodes and prefects. PKWN also began organizing Milicja and local Offices of Public Safety (political police). It also commanded the People's Army, created by

combining the Polish division of the Red Army and the underground army (communist People's Army and Polish units of Soviet partisanship). On 31st December 1944, the PKWN was converted into the Temporal Government and considered by the Soviet Union to be the only authority in Poland.

33 National Armed Forces (NSZ)

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

34 Majdanek concentration camp

Situated five kilometers from the city center of Lublin, Poland, originally established as a labor camp in October 1941. It was officially called Prisoner of War Camp of the Waffen-SS Lublin until 16th February 1943, when the name was changed to Concentration Camp of the Waffen-SS Lublin. Unlike most other Nazi death camps, Majdanek, located in a completely open field, was not hidden from view. About 130,000 Jews were deported there during 1942-43 as part of the 'Final Solution.'. Initially there were two gas chambers housed in a wooden building, which were later replaced by gas chambers in a brick building. The estimated number of deaths is 360,000, including Jews, Soviets POWs and Poles. The camp was liquidated in July 1944, but by the time the Red Army arrived the camp was only partially destroyed. Although approximately 1,000 inmates were executed on a death march, the Red Army found thousand of prisoners still in the camp, an evidence of the mass murder that had occurred in Majdanek.

35 Bricha (Hebrew

escape): Used to define illegal emigration of Jews from European countries to Palestine after WWII and organizational structures which made it possible. In Poland Bricha had its beginnings within Zionist organizations, in two cities independently: in Rowne (led by Eliezer Lidowski) and in Vilnius (Aba Kowner). Toward the end of 1944, both organizations moved to Lublin and merged into one coordination. In October 1945, Isser Ben Cwi came to Poland; he was an emissary from Palestine, representative of the institution dealing with illegal immigration, Mosad le-Alija Bet, with the help of which vast numbers of volunteers were transported to Palestine. Emigration reached its apogee after the Kielce pogrom in July 1946. That was possible due to the cooperation of Bricha with Polish authorities who opened Polish borders to Jewish émigrés. It is estimated that in the years 1945-1947, 150 thousand Jews illegally left Poland.

36 Warsaw Uprising 1944

The term refers to the Polish uprising between 1st August and 2nd October 1944, an armed uprising orchestrated by the underground Home Army and supported by the civilian population of Warsaw. It was justified by political motives: the calculation that if the domestic arm of the Polish government in exile took possession of the city, the USSR would be forced to recognize Polish sovereignty. The Allies rebuffed requests for support for the campaign. The Polish underground state failed to achieve its aim. Losses were vast: around 20,000 insurrectionists and 200,000 civilians were killed and 70% of the city destroyed.

37 Warsaw Ghetto

separate residential district for Jews in Warsaw created over several months in 1940. On 16th November 1940 138,000 people were enclosed behind its walls. Over the following months the population of the ghetto increased as more people were relocated from the small towns surrounding the city. By March 1941 445,000 people were living in the ghetto. Subsequently, the number of the ghetto's inhabitants began to fall sharply as a result of disease, hunger, deportation, persecution and liquidation. The ghetto was also systematically reduced in size. The internal administrative body was the Jewish Council (Judenrat). The Warsaw ghetto ceased to exist on 15th May 1943, when the Germans pronounced the failure of the uprising, staged by the Jewish soldiers, and razed the area to the ground.

38 Katyn

Site in Western Russia where in April and May 1940, on the orders of Stalin and the Politburo the NKVD murdered some 4,400 Polish officers, prisoners of war from the camps in nearby Kozielsk. Similar crimes were committed in the neighboring Starobielsk and Ostashkovo. In all, the Russians murdered well over 10,000 officers of the Polish Army and the Polish State Police, and civil servants. When in 1943 the German army discovered the mass graves, they released news of them to public opinion. The Soviet propaganda machine, however, continued to claim for almost the next 60 years, that the murders had been committed by the Nazis, not by Russians. The Katyn crimes came to represent the falsity in Polish-USSR relations, and the word 'Katyn' was censored until 1989.

39 Home Army (Armia Krajowa - AK)

Conspiratorial military organization, part of the Polish armed forces operating within Polish territory (within pre-1st September 1939 borders) during World War II. Created on 14th February 1942, subordinate to the Supreme Commander and the Polish Government in Exile. Its mission was to regain Poland's sovereignty through armed combat and inciting to a national uprising. In 1943 the AK had over 300,000 members. AK units organized diversion, sabotage, revenge and partisan campaigns. Its military intelligence was highly successful. On 19th January 1945 the AK was disbanded on the order of its commander, but some of its members continued their independence activities throughout 1945-47. In 1944-45 tens of thousands of AK soldiers were exiled and interned in the USSR, in places such as Ryazan, Borovich and Ostashkov. Soldiers of the AK continued to suffer repression in Poland until 1956; many were sentenced to death or long-term

imprisonment on trumped-up charges. Right after the war, official propaganda accused the Home Army of murdering Jews who were hiding in the forests. There is no doubt that certain AK units as well as some individuals tied to AK were in fact guilty of such acts. The scale of this phenomenon is very difficult to determine, and has been the object of debates among historians.

40 People's Army (Armia Ludowa, AL)

Polish military organization with a left-wing political bent, founded on 1st January 1944 by renaming the People's Guard (set up in 1942). It was the armed wing of the PPR (Polish Workers' Party), and acted against the German forces and was pro-Soviet. At the beginning of 1944 it numbered 6,000-8,000 people and by July 1944 some 30,000. By comparison the partisan forces numbered 6,000 in July 1944. The People's Army directed the brunt of its efforts towards destroying German lines of communication, in particular behind the German-Soviet front. Divisions of the People's Army also participated in the Warsaw Uprising. In July 1944 the Polish Armed Forces (WP, Wojsko Polskie) were created from the People's Army and the Polish Army in the USSR.

41 Referendum in 1946

A referendum conducted in Poland on 30th June 1946. Voters had to answer three questions: whether they wanted to abolish the Senate (higher Parliament chamber), whether they wanted an agricultural reform and nationalizing of industry, as well as whether the western Poland border should be on the Odra and Nysa Luzycka Rivers. Conducting the referendum was a proposal of the communist party. Its purpose was to test social moods, but mainly to postpone the Parliament elections and test methods of results' falsification. The communist authorities conducted huge propaganda calling to vote 3 times 'yes.' The legal anti-communist opposition, the Polish Peasants' Party (PSL) called to vote 'no' to the first question. The referendum results were falsified. Officially 68% answered 'yes' to the first question, 77% to the second, 91% to the third. According to the later diagnosis of historians the published results were at least twice as high as the actual ones.

42 Office for Public Security, UBP

Popularly known as the UB, officially established to protect the interests of national security, but in fact served as a body whose function was to stamp out all forms of resistance during the establishment and entrenchment of communist power in Poland. The UB was founded in 1944. Branches of the UBP were set up immediately after the occupation by the Red Army of the Polish lands west of the Bug. The first UBP functionaries were communist activists trained by the NKVD, and former soldiers of the People's Army and members of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR). In many cases they were also collaborationists from the period of German occupation and criminals. The senior officials were NKVD officers. The primary tasks of the UBP were to crush all underground organizations with a western orientation. In 1956 the Security Service was formed and many former officers of the UBP were transferred.

43 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.

44 Students' protest in March 1968

on 4th March 1968 the Minister of Education decided to expel from Warsaw University two students: Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer. A few weeks earlier these students gave a French press correspondent an account of the militia breaking up a demonstration on 1st February. The demonstrators were youth protesting against a ban of the staging of the play *Dziady* (a strongly anti-Russian drama from the 19th century) in Teatr Narodowy (National Theater). On 8th March 1968 students organized a rally in the courtyard of Warsaw University. They passed a resolution demanding restoration of student rights to Michnik and Szlajfer, as well as annulling legal action against the arrested demonstrators from 1st February. During the rally units of militia and so-called workmen activists came into the courtyard and started beating the students with truncheons, breaking up the rally. The next day a demonstrating solidarity rally was conducted at the Warsaw University of Technology, and was also attacked by the militia. In the following days such rallies were organized in several large academic centers. About 1600 among the detained students were expelled from the universities, 350 arrested, many young men drafted into the army. Those professors from Warsaw University and other higher education facilities in Poland, who showed solidarity towards the students, were laid off work.

45 Ulpan

Word in Hebrew that designates teaching, instruction and studio. It is a Hebrew-language course compulsory in Israel for newcomers, which rapidly teaches adults basic Hebrew skills, including speaking, reading, writing and comprehension, along with the fundamentals of Israeli culture, history, geography, and civics. In addition to teaching Hebrew, the ulpan aims to help newcomers integrate as easily as possible into Israel's social, cultural and economic life.