Waclaw Iglicki

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Warsaw
Poland
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Mr. Iglicki lives in an apartment building in downtown Warsaw. Mr. Iglicki isn't tall, he has gray hair and brown eyes. He lost his left arm during the war. His story, despite being simple and concise, fascinated me. The reason was Mr. Iglicki's incredible charisma, thanks to which I listened to the story with bated breath. Mr. Iglicki often uses Yiddish words, but the language he speaks is a so-called 'dialect - u,' comprising Polish and Ukrainian Yiddish, but different from Litvak 1. Pronunciation of certain words is characteristic of regions of southeastern Poland. He uses some English words in his speech as well, since he spent some time in the United States.

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My parents

I remember only my grandmother, my father's mother, Miriam [Steinhendler]. Before the war [WWII] she was probably 92 years old. She was extraordinarily elegant, neat, always dressed cleanly, always wore a white blouse, and the collar had to be 'correct.' She was a healthy person. Her mind, for that age, incredible! And her eyesight! I think I'll remember it until I die: my Grandma went to bed, as always. She used to go to bed early, but also got up early. I got up in the morning to go to school, I walked up to the bedroom - why is Grandma still asleep? What happened? Well, it turned out we couldn't wake her up. We called for a doctor, we had a family doctor before the war, Doctor Kasprowicz, he lived not far from us. He came, pronounced the death. He said only, 'A beautiful death.' My grandfather, I don't remember, I never even saw him.

My family came from Zelechow [a town 90 km southeast of Warsaw]. My parents lived there, and they got married there, probably after World War I ended. My dad's name was Chaim Steinhendler. My father was born in Zelechow. But when, I don't know, I have no date. I know it was around the beginning of the 20th century, about the year 1900. And my mom similarly. My mom's name was

Fajga. Felicja in Polish. Her maiden name was Iglicka. I have my mom's last name. She came from a tailor's family. My mom didn't work. She took care of the house. She was a very good person. She cared very much about the house, about the family. I was always, as you say, the apple of her eye. From the distance, so many years have passed since I last was in touch with the family, I think, that my sister and I were most attached to mom. Maybe because she was so caring? She always took care of everything, made sure everything was always clean, well dressed, tended to! And my father was rather busy with his job, work. She was a true 'yiddishe mame.' That's how you could describe her.

When... when I saw my mom for the last time, before I left for Wilga [town by the river Vistula, about 20 km west of Zelechow], it was 1942. She gave me her ring, and said, 'You may need it.' It was in May. And I never saw my mom again. I have her picture. She was a true 'yiddishe mame.' I don't even know where she's buried. I went to Treblinka 2 after the war. Every town has its own stone there. And Zelechow also has its stone. And I went to see that stone. That's all. Emptiness.

One uncle of mine, on my father's side, was called Leib Steinhendler. He lived in Lodz [a city about 130 km southwest of Warsaw]. And the family on my mother's side was in Luboml [a town about 280 km east of Warsaw, today in Ukraine]. In the eastern territories, near Kowel [a town about 300 km east of Warsaw, today in Ukraine], that's where they lived: my mom's brother, Rafal Iglicki, or Raful, with his wife. They had no kids. It was a childless marriage. That's why they wanted very much for my sister to go there. My mom's second brother, Luis Iglicki, Jewish Lejzer, left before the war; he later lived in Rio de Janeiro.

Growing up

I was born on 3rd December 1923. I don't remember much of the times before I went to school. It's not really that interesting. It became more interesting at school, but I'll talk about it later. I had a sister three years older than me. She was born in 1920. Her name was Rachela. My sister, she was a very nice girl. An intelligent girl. She was a good student. She was very active in youth organizations. Unfortunately, I saw my sister in 1938 for the last time. That's it. I know nothing more about her. She went to Uncle's, to Luboml. And there, I don't know: did she go to the Soviet Union, as Russian soldiers were trying to talk her into when they were retreating from Luboml, or did she stay? I don't know that. But I searched after the war. Even when I was in the United States, I got in touch with the president of a society of Luboml inhabitants [see Landsmanshaftn] 3. Nothing. I never found out what happened to that girl.

Father worked, he was a craftsman. He made boot uppers. And that's what we lived off, that was our income. There were better times, there were worse times, but overall the financial situation was normal. There were three pieces of machinery in the workshop. One to sew thick leather, another one for thin leather... Those uppers that Father used to make came in different styles, pretty cuts, especially those for women: the prettier the style, for women, the better the sales. There were some men who were responsible for finishing those boots and sales. It varied when it came to that. Usually it happened that somebody described what they wished for, what style, what color, and then picked up the ready product. There was brown leather, black, even snake skin, crocodile. A crocodile! If someone was rich, some lady, she would buy boots made of such leather. But those were expensive boots.

There was a man who worked for us, a helper, how should I call him... an apprentice. He earned 30 zloty a week. Was it a lot back then? Teachers before the war didn't make good money, but a Yiddish or Hebrew teacher in our school used to make a 100 zloty a month. And other teachers 130, 150 zloty. That wasn't considered to be a large income. But, from what I remember, my Polish, or geography, or history teachers, were well off. They owned houses, yards all around them. That means they had enough.

Jewish life in Zelechow

In Zelechow there was a bus that was regularly going to Warsaw. That's 90 kilometers. Every week, or every two weeks, Dad used to go to Warsaw; there were some stores on Zamenhoffa Street, in the area of the old ghetto [a pre- war district of Warsaw inhabited mostly by Jews] mainly. And he would buy whatever he needed there, and would come back home at night. I went with him once: only once, before the war, to see Warsaw. I had a feeling as if I left a small house and entered a palace. I felt that everything was so big. So huge! I didn't get another chance, the trip was expensive.

Zelechow was a small town, with a population of about 3,000. Half of them were people of Jewish origin [an expression commonly used in post-war Poland to describe Jews]. Downtown was mostly inhabited by Jews. And around, closer to the countryside, closer to the fields, were Poles. We lived literally downtown, on a street named after Marshal Jozef Pilsudski 4. That was the main street. It was first called Palacowa [Palace]. Why Palacowa? Because our street led to a palace. The owner of the estate, we used to call him a squire, was Szuster. A very rich man! [Editor's note: In pre-war Poland aristocrats, estate owners lived in manors in the countryside - or palaces in cities and towns.] And when Marshal Pilsudski died in 1935, then they changed the name of the street. There was a magistrate, police station, postal office, all major institutions and offices were there.

Pilsudskiego Street, house number 19 - that's where we lived. Our house had a ground floor and a first floor. There was no yard. We lived at the front, and at the back of the house an older married couple lived, him and her, without kids. Poor people. He used to sell water. He had a horse, a horse carriage, and on this horse carriage there was a round barrel, and he would go out of town, get very good water from a spring, and later sell that water. He lived off that. Upstairs we had a room and a kitchen for the family, and downstairs there was one big room and my father had his shop there.

There was one special alley in Zelechow. Young people used to go there for 'rendezvous.' To that alley. There were benches on both sides - very pretty. Grass, flowers - elegant. After dinner, young people used to spend time there. You had to agree it was very nice there: trees on one side, trees on the other side, and paved sidewalks. You didn't just walk on sand. It was very elegantly done. My sister, before she went to Luboml in 1937, was a frequent guest there. When my sister wasn't at home, you could find her there. On Saturdays. And on Sundays the Polish youth used to go there, since it was their holiday. And they used to spend time there.

We had a beautiful prayer house, just like the Nozyk Synagogue 5, but even prettier. We used to call it 'shil' [shul]. It was probably built at the beginning of the 1920s, from the member fees of the Jewish community, made of brick, beautiful. Inside there were benches, a carpet, in the middle a platform where the rabbi said prayers on Saturdays. On 9th or 10th September 1939, when the Germans entered Zelechow, the first thing they did, literally, was burning down that prayer house.

There was nothing left from the prayer house, only a square. Not a trace. It was a very sad feeling. Such a beautiful place... That prayer house was encircled with a kind of a yard. When it was 'Roshashuna' [Rosh Hashanah] or 'Yom Kipor' [Yom Kippur], then everyone would usually go to that prayer house. My father as well, even though he wasn't particularly religious. On those days not everyone could fit inside. There was a beautiful lawn in that yard, and they prayed there, because they couldn't get inside. Even though it was a very big prayer house, but in the town there were almost 3,500 residents, half of which were Jews.

That was the only prayer house in the town. And before they built that brick one, almost in the same place there was a wooden one, called bes medresh. In the last period before the war they made a diner for poor people out of it. They cooked dinner every day and poor people could have it. The Jewish community organized it, out of member fees. And the Germans left that building alone. Interesting. They didn't burn it. During the occupation, the Germans organized the Judenrat [6] there. And they organized the Jewish police. They had their headquarters there. It was their center. But later, after evicting the Zelechow ghetto in September 1942, I don't know. Even when the Germans left, I think that building remained. But when I went to Zelechow after the war, I didn't see it. They [Polish residents of Zelechow] must have taken it apart and looted it.

There was a Jewish cemetery in Zelechow: a big cemetery, where they only buried people of Jewish faith. And it was already out of town. You had to walk about two kilometers. I went there once, I think. There were a lot of those 'mecayves' [mazevot]. Lots and lots. Old and new. After the war, when I went to Zelechow, I went to the cemetery, and there were almost no mazevot any more. I heard people just used them for something. [During WWII Jewish cemeteries were often destroyed, by taking tombstones and using them to build roads or for other purposes]. That's the way it looked like.

There were baths in the town. When they built the prayer house, they also built the baths. It was made of brick, and even had white tile all around. There was hot and cold water. People used it, usually at the end of a week, on Fridays. I think it was free. And there was a man there: near the baths, he had his own place there. People would come with a hen or a rooster, and that man, how do you call it... shochet, would kill that hen. And only he did that. If somebody did it differently [killed the hen by himself], it wasn't 'kusher' [kosher]. But if he did that, it meant it was 'kusher.' And there was a rabbi, and he had his students, and he also had his place, and there was a big garden next to it, and benches in the garden. Inside there was a Talmud school. Or so I assume. I didn't use to go there, but young people with skullcaps and payes used to go there. Everything was located at more or less the same spot: shul, bes medresh, baths and shochet. All that was in the market area. Aside from the rebbe there was also a 'ruv' [rabbi]. That's a different position. There was a ruv and a rebbe. That ruv lived on the other side of the street [Pilsudskiego Street], near our house. He took care of marriages, births, deaths; he was responsible for those matters.

That was all downtown, and streets further away from the center weren't as elegant. Plain pavement. No sidewalks. And not far away, just when you turned left from Pilsudskiego Street, there was a church. A very pretty church, a beautiful church. And near the church it was also nice. A lot of trees, lawns. And further away from the town, it was less neat, less organized, poorer. That means that a cluster of richer people was in the center. Because they had their stores, of various professions, there was a market there every week. There was a special large square, farmers from the surrounding villages used to come and sell their goods. What? Milk, eggs, chickens, everything.

We used to buy there, because it was cheaper. And fresh. The town was full of life on those days. Big business. That's what it looked like out in this rural area. Other stores in Zelechow mainly dealt in clothes, fabrics, farming and home equipment. The biggest profits were usually on the market day, on Tuesdays. When people came [from villages], they sold their things, and bought: flour, salt, sugar... Then people were happy on that day. It meant the trade was good. A farmer used to come in a horse carriage; if he didn't own one, he would borrow one from his neighbor. They used to come in twos, in threes, entire families, and spend all day in Zelechow. During summer they would sit at the market and eat. They would come in the morning, stay till the evening. They brought their own bread. I saw that: their bread and other things to eat, so that they would spend the least amount of money. Those villages were poor. Whoever made a good profit, sold a cow or a horse, in order to seal the sale they would go to a restaurant, have dinner, of course with vodka. And the police had something to do then. Because they would get drunk quickly. And then they would fight and they had to be taken to the police station.

And I used to see it all, through my window looking out onto Pilsudskiego Street, how they were taken. With yelling and noise. It was a sensation for every young boy: a couple of policemen leading two or three drunken men. And they put up a fight, because they didn't want to go. And those policemen beat them with clubs. And the young people, of course, followed them to the police station. I didn't use to see such scenes often, that was a rare picture in the life of a small town. But it sticks in your memory. But if I were to compare that period to the current situation, I can say that back then there wasn't that much cheating, I think there were more friendships. I think so. There wasn't that much theft, for sure. When it comes to murders, I didn't hear of anything. I think that somewhere in some village they said that two neighbors, farmers, started a fight about the borderline between the fields. One of those farmers said his field ends here, and the other one said - not here, but here. It was a difference of more or less a quarter of a meter. And the fight began, and then beating. And then there was an intervention of police, then court. That's what people used to fight about most often.

When it comes to us, we rarely bought anything from those stores in Zelechow. When my dad would go to Warsaw to buy leather for his shop, my mom would ask him to buy this and that. Maybe it wasn't cheaper, but it was prettier, more modern. And my sister was already a grown woman. I was 15 just before the war, my sister was three years older, so she was 18. She had to dress well. And indeed, she used to dress nicely. But Father used to buy not only clothes in Warsaw. For example, for Pesach the tradition was to buy red wine, right? So Father always brought red wine from Warsaw. It used to be in a basket, two liters, elegant, beautiful and very good. Very good. And here, in our town, wine was usually home-made. Not interesting and not tasty.

Bakeries were private. There was one Jewish bakery on our street. Fresh bread every day. Not only white and rye bread, that was normal. But there was also special bread. Buns, and during summer, July, August - buns with blueberries, mmm, wonderful. Delicious! They were very tasty, and those bakers were really very good. They knew how to do it. Bakeries were usually Jewish, because villagers didn't use to buy bread in a bakery. They used to bake their own. Locals used to buy in a bakery. Except when it was Tuesday, market day, visiting farmers used to buy there too.

Our religious life

We certainly never had pork at home, neither pork fat nor lard, and the other things that were either forbidden or unhealthy. We had a Jewish kitchen: my mom and grandma, when she was still alive, made sure the cuisine was Jewish. We had fish on 'Shabes' [Sabbath], when we had chicken, we didn't kill it ourselves, but that shochet had to kill it. I had to go there so that he could kill it. It was my responsibility, nothing more, since Mom or Dad didn't have time, I had to go.

When we had Sabbath supper, we didn't have it downstairs but upstairs. The table was covered with a white tablecloth; necessarily there was challah, and fish: a carp in jelly. My mom used to make it in jelly. Boiled carp - we didn't like that. And where did we get fish from? The squire, Mr. Szuster, he had ponds, bred fish there, and that's where we used to buy it. At Sabbath we didn't use to make chulent. I know it, but we didn't like that dish. My mom used to make lokshen, noodles; she didn't buy them. It was flour, eggs, she made it herself. And chicken soup, chicken, that was the main course. On Saturday [Editor's note: Friday night] my mom would cover, I remember, her head, there were candles, she prayed briefly and we ate supper. That's the way it was. Saturday was a holiday. Nobody worked. And on Sunday neither, because they [the government] forbade working on Sundays. [Sunday was at that time the official day free of work]. But on Sundays we used to work quietly. The doors were sort of locked at the front... but the police paid attention to it, because it was the main street, and they walked there all the time and kept nagging that it was a holiday.

Other holidays? The biggest are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur I think my parents didn't eat. My father would go to the prayer house; he had a little bag, and inside it a tallit. It was black and white. And he would put it on in the prayer house. When he left, he would take it off and put it into that bag and it would stay there for very long. I think he used it on those days only, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I don't remember it being used on other holidays.

There was a holiday called Chanukkah. We used to light candles. We used to get presents, that is money. I, because I loved chocolate and halva, of course immediately exchanged everything for halva and chocolate. Halva was as it is nowadays, usually Turkish. Imported. There was a store like that not too far from us: 'Colonial Articles,' where you could get this type of things. We used to wait for that holiday because it was favorable getting presents. I don't remember any special dish for Chanukkah; I only remember that we used to light small candles in the windows. Various colors: red, yellow. It looked nice from the outside. I don't remember any special celebrations, only presents and candles.

Sykes [Sukkot]. That was a holiday where people built little tents. But we didn't. I saw others do it. That was some time at the beginning of fall. We used to peak, because our neighbor, who lived next door, used to make a sort of a shack in his yard. It was covered with branches, and inside there was a table, a wide one, and chairs on one side. They would bring food in there and eat it there. Whoever wanted to see that shack was welcome to do so. But we had no room at our house because our house stood right next to a sidewalk, next to a street. We had no yard. I remember, some people when they went to the prayer house, they had some branches, and somewhere underneath a lemon, and they carried that. Not all of them, but you could spot some people on the street, who, as they went to the prayer house, had those.

There were rattlers on the holiday Purim. Young people used to make a... 'gregier' [a Purim rattler, Yiddish: 'grager'], that's what it was called. You walked and it made noise. Kids used to make noise

with it out on the streets. I don't know why, it must have been a tradition, right? I suppose so. Anyway, something like that used to happen. The holiday was called Purim. 'Gregier' I used to make myself, out of thread bobbins. They also used to bake hamantashen. It was a triangle, stuffed with sugar, poppy seeds and cottage cheese. Very tasty!

And there was also a holiday called Pesach. That's a beautiful holiday, a very nice holiday. Mom had completely different pots in the attic, used only during the Easter [Passover] holidays. Then we had to take everything down from the attic, and those old things used every day, we had to get rid of. There could be no chametz [at home]. There was a baker that had a special stove. And he baked matzah for Pesach. Whoever wanted some, ordered it. Matzot were rectangular, apparently made only of flour and water, and as big as A4 [an A4-size paper]. They used to sell matzah by baskets: one basket of matzah, two baskets, depending on the family. We always took one basket. And we ate only matzah for a few days. There was fish too, that's normal, but also completely different food. And there was wine, that red wine, brought from Warsaw. And that first seder was really solemn. The table was set nicely: elegant, clean, ready. The matzah was covered with a special cloth. It was a very pleasant holiday. Costly, but pleasant. Costly because we had to renovate the apartment. Refurbish, paint, freshen it up, because everything had to be kosher. Even water we didn't take from the nearest pump on that holiday. There was a spring outside the town. I used to bring water from that spring, because it was clear, ideal water. This holiday was usually in April, the beginning of spring, so it was a stroll: every morning I would bring that water.

My school years

I used to go to a public school. It was an elementary school. Seven grades. I don't think I was even seven when I started attending school in 1930. My sister went there, too. It was the only school in town. The high school was in Garwolin, that's 20 kilometers from us. The school was for the Poles and for our youth. When there was Polish religion [a lesson of Roman-Catholic religion], religion for the Polish youth, we would go to a different classroom, a teacher would come to us and teach us Yiddish religion [Jewish religion]. Other than that there were no segregations, and there were also no problems. And we were about 30 in the class for sure. A row of desks on one side, and one on the other side. I remember only my favorite teachers: the gym teacher, Mr. Boleslaw Osla, the music teacher, Professor Gardecka, the biology teacher, Professor Blachnio. I don't remember any more. You always remember the favorite ones. I remember the math teacher less, because I didn't like the class. Overall I was a good student. I usually didn't have any problems with school. I was rather in the top, didn't lag behind.

My sister belonged to some youth organization: Hahalutz 7 or Hashomer Hatzair 8. Something like that. And they had their place, a club, where they used to get together on Saturdays. They organized events there: some discussions, dances, singing. I didn't go there. My sister did. I was more active on the soccer field, because I belonged to a youth team. Juniors. It was a local representation. We used to play matches when [soccer players] came from Ryki [town located on the Warsaw-Lublin route, about 30 km south of Zelechow], or some other town; we had events like that. Where the public school was located, where I went to school, there was a real sports field. We used to play soccer, there were goal posts; we could also play volleyball, basketball.

I had a friend, we went to school together: his last name was Marmelsztad, and his first name Salek. After school we used to play sports, that is soccer, together. We often did our homework

together, helped each other if needed. Because they lived near by. His father was a photographer. He used to take wedding pictures, had a very modern shop. I don't remember the name of the street, but it was near the church. And there was a pharmacy right next to it. I remember that. The owner of the pharmacy was Mr... Mr. Zwolinski; he had a college degree. Salek's brother worked on the street, took pictures, usually on Saturdays, when young people went to the alley; he took photographs of couples in love. And his father had a darkroom at home.

We had various friends. Usually on Saturday, when people didn't work, they would come over for a chit-chat, as it is out in the countryside. We lived at the very front of the main street, so they sat on the porch, talked, about everything and nothing. On the other side of the street there was a candy store, where in the summer you could buy soda, ice cream, candies, chocolate, and in the other room there was a pool table. My father and his friends sometimes went there to play pool. You had to pay 10 groszy and you could play a game. That's what social life looked like. It was near Warsaw, 90 kilometers, so a lot of things were brought from the capital. Somewhere further east, towards the border, they were more backward.

There was a movie theater in Zelechow. It was called 'Swit.' There were usually movies rated for adults. I couldn't see those. Once I just wanted to stay and see it till the end. I hid under the seats. The owner found me and threw me out. They usually brought movies from Warsaw and on Saturdays the theater was open from 5pm till 8pm and 8pm till 10pm. Two shows. And on Sundays. And on holidays. The owner of the theater was Mr. Socko. He wasn't a Jew. He was very rich, our friend. And sometimes when I went there, he let me in for free. Examples of movies? A movie with Robert Taylor... I don't remember the title. 'Romeo and Juliet,' there was a movie like that. There was also a movie with Chaplin. Criticism on Hitler. The title? ... 'The Great Dictator.'

There was no theater. There were people from the Polish Legions 9. They were of merit, they took part in the war in 1920 [see Polish-Soviet War] 10. And they were privileged. They had a license for restaurants, tobacco monopoly, alcohol monopoly; they had privileges. And when there was a holiday, let's say 3rd May [see May 3rd Constitution] 11, the big holiday, or 11th November [see Poland's independence, 1918] 12, then they organized celebrations like marches through the main street, that is our street, with an orchestra, and them in uniforms. But that was only on national holidays.

When it was summer, my mother often took us to a 'summer resort.' There were forests near Zelechow. It was two kilometers from our house. I used to walk from our place to the woods, just outside the town. Some farmers lived in that forest. And they often rented out rooms; that was called a 'summer resort.' People used to rent a room for the entire summer and live there, of course they paid for it. They got eggs, milk, bread there. It was rather for rich people. The poor couldn't afford it. We lived there for a month, in the forest. That was at the beginning of the 1930s, not so much just before the war, because then the situation was rather complicated. And financially it wasn't as good as before. Life became uncertain. I don't know how to say it: people were scared.

At home we used to speak Polish, too, but mostly Yiddish. It was, so that my sister and I didn't seem different at school [that's why we spoke Polish]: with our accent or pronunciation and so on. Every once in a while, especially when we knew that there was going to be a Polish lesson, a spelling test or something, we often spoke Polish at home. But it wasn't a problem: because all neighbors weren't Jewish, and with friends we obviously had to communicate in Polish somehow.

There was a time when we had a teacher, who taught us how to write in Jewish. A young man. We took lessons. My sister and I. He gave us private lessons. I still remember that, I could still write something today. Right after the war, when I had to write to America, I often wrote in Jewish [Yiddish] to my uncle [Leib Steinhendler]. Because he didn't remember Polish that well any more then. Yiddish was closer to him.

We read newspapers: the Yiddish Folksztyme 13 and a Polish newspaper. They used to bring them from Warsaw every week. There was one weekly newspaper, and one daily, too. We had no editor in town. There was no newspaper kiosk. There was just individual subscription, that's how I would call it. Somebody went to Warsaw once a week, and brought newspapers for those who wanted them. We didn't use to order newspapers. I wasn't really interested in it. From what I know, my father, whenever he went to the barber, he read a newspaper there. For example he read about the situation of Jews in Germany [see Anti-Jewish legislation in Nazi Germany] 14, and there was a lot of information about that, that people were being evicted, that people had to run away, that Jews were being persecuted. We could feel a conflict coming.

During the war

On 1st September 1939 the war broke out [see German occupation of Poland] 15. The Germans marched into Zelechow at the end of September. The first act of violence was the complete burning down of the synagogue, and, of course, immediate repression of the Jewish people. It was obvious these people were discriminated against in every way. In 1941 the Germans organized a ghetto [see Zelechow ghetto] 16. What was it like? It wasn't like the ghetto in Warsaw where Jews were clustered in the center, and walls were put around them, right? In Zelechow they couldn't do it, because the population was mixed [Polish and Jewish], lived in the center of the town, and around it, and so on. So they banned Jews from leaving the town. There was a death penalty for leaving the town. There were incidents that somebody went to a village, or to work, or to get some food at night, and he was killed. This lasted until August 1942.

In August 1942 all Jews were deported from Zelechow to Sobolewo, because that was the closest train station, and from there they were moved to Treblinka. But before that, in May, the Germans caught young people and sent them to Wilga [where the Germans set up a work labor during WWII]. And I ended up there as well. Salek Marmelsztadt also didn't go with his family to Treblinka, when they took the Jews from Zelechow. He got to the camp in Wilga with me. It's a town near Garwolin [town about 50 km south of Warsaw]. The Vistula flooded there every year, so the Germans were building dams. And they had young Jews working on it. In, of course, camp conditions. Very difficult. It was hard work, and the food - horrible, almost none. And I worked in that Wilga until fall 1942. Later I stopped working there [the camp was liquidated, and prisoners were moved], because in winter and fall they didn't do land improvement, only in spring and summer. They took us to Sobolewo.

Jews from Sobolewo had already been taken to Treblinka [in August 1942]. So there were houses we could live in. Houses in quotation marks, of course, in reality ruins, looted out, only four walls. We lived there in very tough conditions. We knew, really, we were just waiting there to be taken to Treblinka. We were only waiting for the train cars to be put on the train station. But until that time we couldn't leave the town, we weren't allowed to, there was a ban. There was nothing, no kitchen, we couldn't buy anything anywhere and people were sick with typhus. And from that hunger

masses were dying. It was in Sobolewo that my friend Salek Marmelsztad died. And there was also my other friend, Mendel Gerecht: he went to Israel after the war and lived in Ramla.

Probably in November, or at the end of October [1942], the Germans came to Sobolewo, surrounded the town and chased us into the train cars. Those weren't, of course, normal passenger cars, but animal ones. So for example, if one car could fit only 50 people, they put 150 into it. Practically, before we got to Lukow [town about 100 km southeast of Warsaw] or maybe to Siedlce [town about 120 km east of Warsaw], because that's more or less where I jumped out of the train, there were many dead people underneath me already. Or barely alive. That's how roomy it was in that car. We, my friend Mendel and I, were close to a window so we could catch a breath of air. My friend jumped out first, then I after him. But I didn't find him, because the train was moving, so I might have been a few kilometers away from him already. The direction I wanted to take was this: go towards my place of birth. So I walked towards Zelechow.

People used to really help out. I have to say that objectively: when it came to bread or something else, they shared. But finding a place to sleep was a problem. People were afraid [because there was a penalty for helping Jews] 17. They wouldn't really agree to have us over for a night, or for a longer stay. That was understandable, because if you consider that in every village, in every community, there was a sign saying that for hiding, for any help given to a Jew, there was the death penalty, it's hard to be surprised that people didn't want to have Jews over and so on. They could tell by my clothes that I was a Jew. Because I looked poor, obviously. Ragged, dirty. Wandered around, as they say, aimlessly, didn't know where to go. Today we would say: homeless. That was obvious - who was homeless then - only those who had to hide. Because of that, many knew immediately they were dealing with a person of Jewish origin. They couldn't really tell by the language, there weren't any big discussions. What to talk about? But if someone asked where you were from, who your father was, then it came out you were a Jew. So that's what I did: at night, when everyone was asleep, I sneaked into some place, a barn, a cowshed, and stayed in there somehow. So that the owner wouldn't find out. Or maybe they knew, but pretended not to, possible. And that process lasted for about a month, maybe three weeks. I was usually in the Lukow and Garwolin forests, in those areas. I was alone then.

One night I went to a forest and couldn't find a path; it was dark everywhere. I wandered around the forest all night, until by the morning I found some path and I got to a settlement where there was one farmer's house. I went to that farmer to ask for help. He gave me food, but said this: 'Listen, I can't keep you here, but go back into the forest' - and he told me exactly where - 'in that forest there is a bunker, a huge dugout 18, and your countrymen [Jews] are there. And they'll surely take you in.' I listened. I went there. That farmer knew about that hiding place, he even used to help them. And they were in there. There were four or five of them, extremely packed, conditions horrible, they didn't accept me happily. Rather Reluctantly. Why? Because they were afraid: maybe I'd betray them. Or, maybe because it had already been packed, and now one more came, it'd be even worse. I couldn't lie down there, there was no room.

So I was sitting on a ladder that led down to that hole, and all of a sudden I could hear something coming. Well, it was a terror down there. They already thought I had brought at least the Germans. Despair. It turned out that it was two partisans, I think one Russian and one Polish. They came and they wanted to recruit two young men, bring them to the division. 'And who wants to go?' I said, 'Me, please, I'll go.' I didn't care either way any more. Nobody else but me went. The others didn't

move. I went with them, to the same house where I had been before, that farmer's house! It turned out the partisans were staying at that farmer's. They didn't live in the house, but in the cow shed. When I arrived there, first thing was to feed me, clothe me, and then basic information, how to deal with the guns. Long and short. And basic information about the underground.

During the occupation I used my mother's last name, Iglicki. I decided on that when I ended up in the partisan unit. And my first name? It's not Wacek [from Waclaw]. Wacek is my nickname. My name is Szul [from Szolem]. The real name is Szul. But that's the way it stayed after the war: Waclaw Iglicki. I only did that formality, I asked the authorities to let me use my mother's last name, not my father's. Why didn't I want to go back to the old last name? What difference did it make, to have my mother's or father's last name? I'm asking, 'what difference does it make?' No difference. If my last name was who knows where from - then yes. But it's the last name of my mother... I didn't care. That's all. I had no documents during the war, nobody had. But, simply, they knew I was Iglicki. I had no contacts with any authorities. We were the people who didn't exist. But if they do exist, they have to be destroyed. That's how they treated people who were still alive.

It was a division of the People's Army 19. It was a clear coincidence, since a young man could have ended up in the Peasants Battalions 20 or the Home Army 21. It was a coincidence. It wasn't because my political views were such and not different. I knew nothing about that. What did I know about the People's Army or Home Army! I wasn't interested in it. It wasn't until after the war that I found out that there were some political concepts, but during the occupation nobody cared about that. Both boys who fought for the People's Army and boys who fought for the Home Army, they weren't really interested in it. Those were matters for commanding officers.

The fact that I met that partisan division... If it hadn't been for that I probably would have had a hard time surviving: defenseless, like a hare in a field, and many hunters around. A hopeless situation. No support, economical or from a family. The family wasn't there, I had nothing, so they could really kill me, arrest me, rob me, they could do anything to me. Because during the occupation a Jew was a man who meant nothing. For Germans - nothing. They did whatever they wanted with such a person.

I spent a year and a half in that unit [beginning of 1943 - June 1944]. All that time in the area of the Lublin Voivodship [province]. There were Russians who escaped from German war camps in Poland. There were Poles who escaped, because they didn't want to go to Germany for forced labor 22. They were usually locals who avoided being taken away. And there were a few Jews. There were even two from Warsaw. But I only remember these names: Mendel Gerecht and Abram Hurman. And there was also Srul Augman. That Gerecht was from the same town as me, and the other two lived five kilometers from our town. They came from villages. They escaped when they were being taken away from the ghetto, just like me, from the train. In the meantime my hand was injured, it had to be amputated. And, there was an action, there was an ambush. We ran into an ambush. That was at the turn of 1943 and 1944. I got shot; Mendel Gerecht was there with me then. He took me to a doctor, in a village. And then I received first aid. I stayed in the division until June 1944. That's almost until the liberation of the Lublin area by the Russian and Polish Army. [Eastern parts of Poland were liberated of German occupation in mid-1944]. But when it comes to those occupation matters: that was a whole new problem. That's a completely different story.

I knew there were no people of mine in Zelechow. Because somebody had already been there and said there's nothing to go to, there's no one there, everything's ruined. So I stayed in Lublin. Warsaw was liberated on 17th January 1945. We went to Warsaw in May or June. I went to Zelechow shortly after the war to get my elementary school diploma. I didn't stay there long, because... I didn't know anyone there anymore. When I left that town I was a young man. But there were still people [in Zelechow, after the war] who had known my family. So I obtained the birth certificate and the elementary school diploma. I met one teacher who had taught in my school before the war. But he didn't remember me. My house was ruined. Nobody lived there, I think whoever wanted or needed something had already taken it. That's it. Those were wooden houses, not brick. Very primitive.

Post-war

The first thing I did after the war was to go to school: to a high school, basic stuff. And then the vocational school, for bookkeeping and finances, in Warsaw. And I started working for various government institutions: in finances, in bookkeeping. I got married in the meantime, in 1950. My wife's name was Krystyna. We met at work. Our daughter Barbara was born in 1951.

My wife didn't have any brothers or sisters, she was an only child. My wife came from Grodno [town about 300 km south-east of Warsaw, today Belarus]. She was born in 1927. Her maiden name was Lenartowicz. She wasn't Jewish. I never met my wife's father, because in 1939 he was drafted into the army and never came back. And her mother lived with us. My mother-in-law took care of the house and the granddaughter. But she also worked at school. My wife died in 1973, my mother-in-law stayed with me for a bit more, and later moved to her family in Bydgoszcz [town about 250 km southwest of Warsaw].

After the war I didn't have much contact with Jewish organizations. Since I live near those organizations [on Twarda Street, near Mr. Iglicki's house in Warsaw, there is the Jewish Theater, head office of the Jewish community and other Jewish organizations], every once in a while I would go to the [Ester Rachel Kaminska Public] Jewish Theater 23 to some concerts. But organizations - no, I didn't go there. I don't know why, it somehow turned out this way. I didn't feel the need, maybe because I didn't really keep in touch [with Jews] here. Nobody from my town lives here. I rather hang out in other circles, have other interests. Co-workers... I don't remember anyone of Jewish origin. But it doesn't mean I was completely separated from it [the Jewish life], no: I saw every play that was staged in the Jewish theater. Various anniversaries and such - I was present. But I wasn't an active member.

Jewish traditions at home after the war? No, not really. No. It rather remained as a memory. My daughter married her friend, a Pole, that's a different world. She has one daughter, Katarzyna. We don't go back to the past times. Maybe, if I was in different circles... When friends from Israel were coming over, then all that would begin again. Or from Paris, because there were a lot [of people] who I was with in the underground, and from my town those who managed to escape before the war, or just after the war. But now, they are all dead. The end. As the English say - 'finished,' when it comes to that.

My uncle Luis Iglicki's family is alive; they still live in Rio de Janeiro. He is dead. Some members of that family live in Portugal. But they're not his grandchildren. They don't know me. And they live in Lisbon, in Porto. I don't know why they moved there. One grandchild is a doctor, another an

engineer; they are people from a completely different epoch, a different life.

In March 1968 [see Gomulka Campaign] 24 I was laid off from work. There was no way we could leave the country, my wife was sick, my daughter was still studying [Barbara graduated from Slavic philology at Warsaw University]. Besides, a man with only one hand: where could I go, what for? It was out of the question. And, well, I just lived off the pension, it was a small pension, but my uncle was living in America, and used to help out from time to time. Financially it was ordinary, I can say.

My uncle Leib Steinhendler, my father's brother, lived in Lodz in 1939, but when the order to go East [Umiastowski Order] 25 came out, my uncle went, too, and stayed in the Soviet Union. And later he moved to America. After the war he found out I was still alive. In America, right after the war, certain organizations were created for Jews who used to live before the war in the same place. Jews from Warsaw had their own organization. Jews from Lodz had theirs, with a president. And there was also a society for Jews from Zelechow. They used to search for whoever was alive after the war. My uncle found me then. He was living in New York City, in Brooklyn.

My uncle wanted very much for me to come to America with him. I regret not having done that. Really. I think it would have been better. But, I didn't go. However, I kept in touch with him; he died only in the 1990s. He was there all the time. He helped me a lot. And I visited him twice, I lived there in Brooklyn. Why didn't I decide to go there for good? First of all, I only have one hand. And I knew: America, 'it's a fine country,' but you have to be healthy and whole. And then you can be sure you won't die. But if you have only one hand, it may turn out badly. That's why I didn't risk it. I didn't want to be a burden for my uncle. Even though he was prepared for it, because he told me, 'You will be treated as a son, since, as you know, I don't have children of my own.. But I didn't want to. Because, if I were to go to America, I would have had to have three basic things. First: the language. But that wasn't a problem. Second: a place to stay, a house. And third: be ready to work, if not in an office, then physically, and I wasn't prepared for that. If those three conditions had been met, I would have gone for sure, but since they weren't... I had only one of those, and with the language it wasn't too bad either. But it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough for America.

How about going to Israel after the war? Same problems. What, to go there, and live on the small, poor pension I'd get there? They'd give me a war veteran's pension, but that's very small, very small. So again, life wouldn't be that simple, it'd be difficult and complicated. Especially as there's a constant upset in that country! 1948, war, 1956, war, 1967, war, 1976, war... [see Six-Day-War 26 and Yom Kippur War 27] All the time, whenever I would think about it - crash! War. Right? I thought about it a few times, well, I can take everything and go there. Stop, another war. Here, in Poland, at least I have social security, a place to live. I had contact with my family: my daughter was here, my granddaughter was here, and the house was here. I was afraid everything might get destroyed. Yes, I did consider it seriously. But those were the circumstances. Unfortunately. But I don't think I regret it. My heart is in Poland, my soul in Israel. This I can't deny, no matter where I am, my soul is there. I always wish the best for that country: for the people to prosper, and finally to live in peace. They certainly deserve it. It's a country that has been developing really well economically. Technology on a very high level. I'm not even mentioning military. The military infrastructure is beautiful: the army is really good, perfectly equipped. I wish for that country to finally start living in peace. Maybe one day. Will I see it? I don't know.

Well, right now my only wish is for my health not to get any worse, for financial conditions not to get any worse. To live like that till the end. Because, at this age, what can you dream about? You can dream about remaining independent for as long as possible, so that you don't depend on anyone, God forbid. I hope everything is going to be all right. And that's how this story ends.

Glossary

1 Litvak

Name for Jews from Lithuania. When used by Polish Jews the word takes a pejorative tone. The stereotypical Litvak was arrogant, unapproachable, a wiseacre who spoke an unintelligible form of Yiddish. In Polish the term 'Litvak' was used to describe Jewish refugees who arrived on Polish territory (in the area known as the Lands along the Vistula) in the 1880s. Their arrival, provoked by a series of pogroms and the passing of the May Laws, which discriminated Jews (1882; these laws did not extend to the lands along the Vistula), was received with hostility by Polish Jews and Christians alike. The Christians accused them of conscious collaboration in the Russification of the Polish state, while the Jews feared that the Litvaks, who were familiar with the Russian market, would constitute competition for local merchants. The Litvaks had separate synagogues, schools and press. The negative stereotypes perpetuated the mutual isolation, and the sustained sense of uprootedness fuelled a rise in nationalist tendencies and pro-Zionist currents among the Litvaks, one manifestation of which was the Hibbat Zion ('Love of Zion' movement).

2 Treblinka

village in Poland's Mazovia region, site of two camps. The first was a penal labor camp, established in 1941 and operating until 1944. The second, known as Treblinka II, functioned in the period 1942-43 and was a death camp. Prisoners in the former worked in Treblinka II. In the second camp a ramp and a mock-up of a railway station were built, which prevented the victims from realizing what awaited them until just in front of the entrance to the gas chamber. The camp covered an area of 13.5 hectares. It was bounded by a 3-m high barbed wire fence interwoven densely with pine branches to screen what was going on inside. The whole process of exterminating a transport from arrival in the camp to removal of the corpses from the gas chamber took around 2 hours. Several transports arrived daily. In the 13 months of the extermination camp's existence the Germans gassed some 750,000-800,000 Jews. Those taken to Treblinka included Warsaw Jews during the Grossaktion [great liquidation campaign] in the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942. As well as Polish Jews, Jews from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Yugoslavia and the USSR were also killed in Treblinka. In the spring of 1943 the Germans gradually began to liquidate the camp. On 2 August 1943 an uprising broke out there with the aim of enabling some 200 people to escape. The majority died.

3 Landsmanshaftn

emigrant associations for people coming from the same city or region. They are of a self-help and social character, and also sometimes aid those who are still in the country in emigrating. First Jewish landsmanshaftn were created in the 19th century in the emigrant circles in the USA, centered around synagogues. With time they became secular. During the 20 years between the wars, landsmanshaftn appeared in Latin American countries and in Palestine. In the 1930s they

intensely supported the emigration of fellow countrymen through, among other things, use of so-called collective visas to the USA and Palestine. Documenting the history of Jewish towns and villages, which produced so-called remembrance books (yizkor bukh, sefer yizkor) became an important activity of landsmanshaftn after a wave of emigrants was accepted after WWII - Jews saved from death camps. Other types of landsmanshaftn were started in ghettos in Poland during the occupation: they were organizations helping those who were moved there from other towns. After the war there were landsmanshaftn whose purpose was to search for families in the country and abroad, and to rebuild the remains of Jewish communities in a given town.

4 Pilsudski, Jozef (1867-1935)

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

5 Nozyk Synagogue

The only synagogue in Warsaw not destroyed during World War II or shortly afterwards. Built at the beginning of the 20th century from a foundation set up by a couple called Nozyk, it serves the Warsaw Jewish Community as a house of prayer today. The Nozyk Synagogue is near Grzybowskiego Square, where the majority of Warsaw's Jewish organizations and institutions are situated.

6 Judenrat

German for 'Jewish council'. Administrative bodies the Germans ordered Jews to form in each ghetto in General Government (Nazi- occupied colony in the central part of Poland). These bodies where responsible for local government in the ghetto, and stood between the Nazis and the ghetto population. They were generally composed of leaders of the Jewish community. They were forced by the Nazis to provide Jews for use as slave laborers, and to assist in the deportation of Jews to extermination camps during the Holocaust.

7 Hahalutz

Hebrew for pioneer, it stands for a Zionist organization that prepared young people for emigration to Palestine. It was founded at the beginning of the 20th century in Russia and began operating in

Poland in 1905, later also spread to the USA and other countries. Between the two wars its aim was to unite all the Zionist youth organizations. Members of Hahalutz were sent on hakhshara, where they received vocational training. Emphasis was placed chiefly on volunteer work, the ability to live and work in harsh conditions, and military training. The organization had its own agricultural farms in Poland. On completing hakhshara young people received British certificates entitling them to emigrate to Palestine. Around 26,000 young people left Poland under this scheme in 1925-26. In 1939 Hahalutz had some 100,000 members throughout Europe. In World War II it operated as a conspiratorial organization. It was very active in culture and education after the war. The Polish arm was disbanded in 1949.

8 Hashomer Hatzair in Poland

From 1918 Hashomer Hatzair operated throughout Poland, with its headquarters in Warsaw. It emphasized the ideological and vocational training of future settlers in Palestine and personal development in groups. Its main aim was the creation of a socialist Jewish state in Palestine. Initially it was under the influence of the Zionist Organization in Poland, of which it was an autonomous part. In the mid-1920s it broke away and joined the newly established World Scouting Union, Hashomer Hatzair. In 1931 it had 22,000 members in Poland organized in 262 'nests' (Heb. 'ken'). During the occupation it conducted clandestine operations in most ghettos. One of its members was Mordechaj Anielewicz, who led the rising in the Warsaw ghetto. After the war it operated legally in Poland as a party, part of the He Halutz. It was disbanded by the communist authorities in 1949.

9 Polish Legions

a military formation operating in the period 1914-17, formally subordinate to the Austro-Hungarian army but fighting for Polish independence. Commanded by Jozef Pilsudski. From 1915 the Legions came under German command, but some of the Legionnaires refused, which led to the collapse of the organization.

10 Polish-Soviet War (1919-21)

between Poland and Soviet Russia. It began with the Red Army marching on Belarus and Lithuania; in December 1918 it took Minsk, and on 5th January 1919 it drove divisions of the Lithuanian and Belarusian defense armies out of Vilnius. The Soviets' aim was to install revolutionary governments in these lands, while the Polish side had two territorial programs for them: incorporative (the annexation of Belarus and part of Ukraine to Poland) and federating (the creation of a system of nation states sympathetic to Poland). The war was waged on the territory of what is today Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland (west to the Vistula). Armed combat ceased on 18th October 1920 and the peace treaty was signed on 18th March 1921 in Riga. The outcome of the 1919-1920 war was the incorporation into Poland of Lithuania's Vilnius region, Belarus' Grodno region, and Western Ukraine.

11 May 3rd Constitution

Constitutional treaty from 1791, adopted during the four-year Sejm by the patriotic party as a result of a compromise with the royalist party. The constitution was an attempt to redress the

internal relations in Poland after the first partition (1772). It created the basis of the structure of modern Poland as a constitutional monarchy. In the first article the constitution guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion, although Catholicism remained the ruling religion. Members of other religions were assured 'governmental care.' The constitution instituted the division of powers, restricted the privileges of the nobility, granted far-ranging rights to townspeople and assured governmental protection to peasants. Four years later, in 1795, Poland finally lost its independence and was fully divided up between its three powerful neighbors: Russia, Prussia and Austria.

12 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.

13 Folksztyme /Dos Yidishe Wort

Bilingual Jewish magazine published every other week since 1992 in Warsaw in place of 'Folksshtimme', which was closed down then. Articles are devoted to the activities of the JSCS in Poland and current affairs, and there are reprints of articles from the Jewish press abroad. The magazine 'Folksshtimme' was published three times a week. In 1945 it was published in Lodz, and from 1946-1992 in Warsaw. It was the paper of the Jewish Communists. After Jewish organizations

and their press organs were closed down in 1950, it became the only Jewish paper in Poland. 'Folksshtimme' was the paper of the JSCS. It published Yiddish translations of articles from the party press. In 1956, a Polish- language supplement for young people, 'Nasz Glos' [Our Voice] was launched. It was apolitical, a literary and current affairs paper. In 1968 the paper was suspended for several months, and was subsequently reinstated as a Polish-Jewish weekly, subject to rigorous censorship. The supplement 'Nasz Glos' was discontinued. Most of the contributors and editorial staff were forced to emigrate.

14 Anti-Jewish legislation in Nazi Germany

in Germany in April 1933 a bill on state officials was passed and ordered the discharge of Jews working for government offices (civil servants, army, and free professions: lawyers, doctors and students). According to the new legislation a person was considered a Jew, if he was a member of a Jewish religious community or a child of a member of a Jewish community. On 15th September 1935, during a session in Nuremberg, the Reichstag passed a legislation concerning Reich Citizenship and on Protection and Honor of German Blood. The first one deprived German Jews of German citizenship, giving them the status of 'possessions of the state.' According to the new law anyone who had at least three grandparents belonging to the Jewish religious community was considered a Jew. The second bill annulled all mixed marriages, banned sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jews, and the employment of Germans in Jewish homes. After the great pogrom known as 'Crystal Night' in November 1938, an entire series of anti-Jewish bills was passed. They were, among others, so-called Aryanizing bills, which gave all Jewish property to the disposal of the ministry of treasure, to be used for the realization of the 4-year economic plan, excluded Jews from material goods production, craftsmanship and small trading, banned Jews from purchasing real estate, trading jewelry, ordered them to deposit securities. Moreover, Jews were banned from entering theatres, cinemas, concert halls, obtaining education, owning vehicles, practicing medicine and pharmacology, owning radios. Special stores were set up, and after the war broke out, separate air-raid shelters. At the beginning of 1939 a curfew at 8pm was started for Jews, Jews were banned from traveling by sleeper trains, staying at certain hotels, being at certain public places.

15 German occupation of Poland (1939-45)

World War II began with the German attack on Poland on 1st September 1939. On 17th September 1939 Russia occupied the eastern part of Poland (on the basis of the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact). The east of Poland up to the Bug river was incorporated into the USSR, while the north and west were annexed to the Third Reich. The remaining lands comprised what was called the General Governorship - a separate state administered by the German authorities. After the outbreak of war with the USSRin June 1941 Germany occupied the whole of Poland's pre- war territory. The German occupation was a system of administration by the police and military of the Third Reich on Polish soil. Poland's own administration was dismantled, along with its political parties and the majority of its social organizations and cultural and educational institutions. In the lands incorporated into the Third Reich the authorities pursued a policy of total Germanization. As regards the General Governorship the intention of the Germans was to transform it into a colony supplying Polish unskilled slave labor. The occupying powers implemented a policy of terror on the basis of collective liability. The Germans assumed ownership of Polish state property and public institutions, confiscated or brought in administrators for large private estates, and looted the economy in

industry and agriculture. The inhabitants of the Polish territories were forced into slave labor for the German war economy. Altogether, over the period 1939-45 almost three million people were taken to the Third Reich from the whole of Poland.

16 Ghetto in Zelechow

created in October 1941. It was located in the area of the following streets: 11 Listopada, Kosciuszki, Kilinskiego, Traugutta, Chlopickiego. Jews from Zelechow, Garwolin, Laskarzew, Lodz and Warsaw were isolated inside the ghetto. About 13 thousand people went through the Zelechow ghetto. About 500 people were sent to camps in the region of Vilnus and Minsk. The ghetto was liquidated on 30th September 1942, and its inhabitants moved to the death camp in Treblinka. Until February 1943 a small group of craftsmen were kept alive. In the Zelechow area there were a few active partisan groups, the largest of them, under the command of Szmul Olszak, was broken apart by Germans in October 1943.

17 Penalty for helping Jews

on 15th October 1941 the governor general Hans Frank issued a decree on the death penalty for Jews leaving the designated living areas, and for people who knowingly aided them. The decree was reissued and amended by governors of each district of the General Government, who specified what aid for Jews meant: it included not only feeding and providing accommodation, but also transporting, trading with them, etc. The death penalty was widely executed only a year after the decree was issued. The responsibility for hiding Jews was placed not only on the owners of a property, but also on all persons present during the search, which was usually the family of the person who was hiding Jews. Especially in villages, the Germans used the rule of an even broader collective responsibility, punishing also neighbors of people hiding Jews. After the war 900 people were recognized to have died for having helped Jews.

18 Dugout

a room built completely or partially underground. In villages dugouts were used to store food, but it also happened that poor people lived in them. During the war dugouts were often hiding places for people hiding in forests, mainly partisans and Jews. A primitive dugout was fairly easy to build: a pit had to be dug out, the walls supported with wooden planks, the top covered with branches, soil and undergrowth. A dugout offered protection from the cold and was an excellent hiding place, unnoticeable from a distance. Living conditions inside it were very tough, people staying in dugouts had to, especially in the winter, stay inside all the time in a sitting or lying position, suffer dampness, lack of space and poor ventilation. It was, however, the only way to survive winter in a forest.

19 People's Army

Polish military organization with a left-wing political bent, founded on 1 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.

20 Peasants' Battalions

an underground military organization created in the fall of 1940 by the Peasants' Party, subordinate to the government of the Polish Underground State. The political leader of Peasants' Battalions was Jozef Niecko, and the military commander Franciszek Kaminski. Peasants' Battalions opposed the German terror in rural areas and supported political goals of the peasants' movement. The organizational structure was similar to that of the pre-war administrative partitions. There were two types of units in the Peasants' Battalions: military, preparing for the future general uprising, and self-defense, carrying out divertive actions. Starting at the end of 1942 partisan units were created. During the deportations of Poles from the Zamosc area in the winter of 1942/1943 Peasants' Battalions fought a few important battles with Germans, protecting the displaced. There were about 170 thousand people in the Peasants' Battalions. In May 1943 a part of the Peasants' Battalions deferred to the Home Army. Peasants' Battalions were dissolved in September 1945.

21 Home Army (Armia Krajowa - AK)

conspiratorial military organization, part of the Polish armed forces operating within Polish territory (within pre-1 September 1939 borders) during World War II. Created on 14 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, Borovichi 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.

22 Forced labor in Germany

from the beginning of the occupation German authorities in Poland kept recruiting Poles to work in Germany. At first only volunteers were sent to Germany, but because of insufficient interest, starting in the spring of 1940, people were forcefully sent: young people were getting orders to work in Germany, people were also caught on the streets. The status of forced workers was also given to POWs - privates and non-commissioned officers. This lasted until 1944. It is estimated that during the occupation about 2.8 million citizens of pre-war Poland were taken away to Germany. The work conditions varied greatly - the worst were in heavy industry plants, the best - on farms. Most depended on the personal attitude of the owner of a plant or a farm towards foreign workers. Being sent away to Germany for forced labor was dramatic, it meant isolation and separation from one's family, therefore Poles in Poland who were not employed in German facilities, often arranged false documents about such jobs, or went into hiding. Jews were not being sent to Germany to work, but some attempted to get there under a false name, since work in the Reich gave a chance of survival.

23 Ester Rachel Kaminska Public Jewish Theater

created in 1950 through the merging of the Jewish Theater from Lodz and the Lower Silesian Jewish Theater from Wroclaw. The seat of the management of the theater was first located in Wroclaw and then moved to Lodz. Ida Kaminska, Ester Rachel Kaminska's daughter, exceptional actress and the only female director in Jewish interwar theater, was the artistic director from 1955. The literary director of the theater was Dawid Sfard. In 1955 the seat of the theater was moved to Warsaw. Ida Kaminski was the director of the theater until 1968 when, due to increasing anti-semitic policies of the government, she left for Vienna (from Vienna she went to Tel Aviv and later to New York). Most of the best actors left with her. After Kaminska's departure, the theater was directed by Juliusz Berger and, since 1969, by Szymon Szurmiej. The theater performed its plays all over the country and, since 1956, also abroad. The theater still stages plays by Jewish writers (for example Sz. Alejchem, An-ski). It is the only public theater, which puts on performances in Yiddish.

24 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.

25 Umiastowski Order

Col. Roman Umiastowski was head of propaganda in the Corps of the Supreme Commander of the Polish Republic. Following the German aggression on Poland, and faced with the siege of Warsaw, on 6 September 1939 he appealed to all men able to wield a weapon to leave the capital and head east.

26 Six-Day-War

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on 5th June 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War

increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

27 Yom Kippur War

The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. It was the fourth major military confrontation between Israel and the Arab states. The war lasted for three weeks: it started on 6th October 1973 and ended on 22nd October on the Syrian front and on 26th October on the Egyptian front.