Daniel Bertram

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Daniel Bertram is a retired civil servant, a bookkeeper educated at the pre-war Jewish School of Commerce in Cracow. He is active in the life of the Jewish community in Cracow and regularly attends meetings organized by the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation and other institutions dedicated to Jewish culture and tradition. He is one of the few Cracow Jews (presently there are about 180 Jews registered at the Jewish community in Cracow) who regularly attend the synagogue and can pray in Hebrew. He was born in 1920 in the Cracow Jewish district of Kazimierz, where he spent many years of his childhood and youth. During the war he was exiled deep into the Soviet Union. In the 1980s he moved in with his partner, Renata Zisman, and they were one of the few Jewish couples in post-war Cracow. Since Ms. Zisman's death he has lived alone outside the former Jewish quarter. Neither Daniel Bertram nor Renata Zisman had children.

Family background

I only remember one great-grandmother, who lived on Szeroka Street opposite Remuh [one of the synagogues in Cracow]. She was called Fajga Sobelman, Butner, Bertram, and then Rapaport. I don't know in which order. Her maiden name was Koszes. She was so healthy that she outlived four husbands and changed her name four times. She lived 90 years. When she was 14 she already had either a husband or a fiance. Guests asked her parents where the fiancee, the 'kale', was. 'Kale' [Yiddish] in Hebrew is 'Kala' - a fiancee or young lady. And her parents said that she was in the courtyard with the other children playing shtrulki [dice or pebbles that children used to throw; a game].

I saw my great-grandmother once in my life. I was two or three years old and I was at Granddaddy's house. She only walked across the room towards the window, looked at me, didn't say a word. She had red rings under her eyes, I don't know if it was from an inflammation or what. And after that I only saw her portrait, it was probably hanging at Granddaddy's house. She was

dressed in black, wearing the black hat, already quite an age, nearly 90. One time I asked my daddy: 'Where's Grandma Fajga?' And he told me that she had died. I didn't go to the funeral, but Dad took me to her apartment. And there they were saying the prayers for the dead. I didn't see anything being eaten. Daddy told me that she was a moneychanger, meaning she was involved in the money market on the Main Square. She had this bag and exchanged currencies.

Abraham Bertram, my grandfather on my father's side, had a watchmaker's shop opposite his house. Both the one grandfather and the other were watchmakers and jewelers, you see. My other grandfather had a shop together with my uncle on the same street as their house. Granddad Abraham worked until the last moment of his life. He suffered from diabetes, but he worked. He lived 72 years. He walked very little, led a sedentary life. And then in 1938 or 1939 he died at home. And I had to phone his shop. My mother happened to be in the shop at that moment. When I told her that Granddaddy had died she closed the shop. And then it was the funeral already, because Jews have it very quickly, and after the funeral, there were prayers in Granddaddy's house. My grandfather was a very religious man. He never said a word to me. Once, when he tested me on sidra, he said in German, or in Yiddish, 'Owsky zeykhnet', which means 'excellent' [German - ausgezeichnet, Yiddish - oysgetseikhnt]. Both families - on my mother's side and my father's side - were religious. They kept all the traditions and observed all the holidays, and they were kosher, just as it was supposed to be.

I didn't know my grandma, my father's mother, Estera, or Ester Bertram. She died before I was born, or just after I was born. I only knew her from her portrait. Her maiden name was Tilles. When my dad was working in Belgium as a diamond cutter, Grandma had him come back. She said she was ill. He came and stayed. What his mother probably wanted was for him to get married, for him not to be a bachelor. Dad didn't tell me anything else about his mother. She is buried in the Miodowa Street cemetery [the new Jewish cemetery in Cracow], in the second row, or the third. You used to be able to see the inscriptions from a distance; I wasn't allowed to go closer. And they're not there any more, because all those monuments were stolen during the occupation [see German Occupation of Poland] 1.

Abraham and Estera Bertram had four sons. Bernard was the eldest, and then there was Saul, my father. The third one was Salomon. He was the only one of the brothers to survive the war. As to the fourth one, I don't know what he was called; he died before I had a chance to meet him. He might have been called Jankiel. I haven't even seen a photograph of him.

My father was a watchmaker and jeweler. Uncle Bernard was a goldsmith, but when he married Miss Grossfeld, well, then he worked in her business. She had a corset workshop, 'Gracja' [Grace]. And he started working there with her, probably as a cashier. Dad had a sister, too, Otylia, my aunt Tyla. She married a Ryngiel. Otylia Ryngiel, she was called. And they lived in Mannheim [Germany].

My maternal grandfather was called Bernard Stiel, in Polish Bernard, and in Yiddish Bejrisz. And in the synagogue, when they called him up to the Torah, or when the Kaddish was being recited, they hailed him Dojw. Dojw is 'bear' in Hebrew [Dov], you see, and Bejrisz is 'bear' in Yiddish. He had a shop on the street where he lived. He was a watchmaker, but he had shoes in the shop as well. He would often come and visit us, because we didn't live far away at first. He died in 1929, at the age of 65. He was buried in the Miodowa Street cemetery. I was nine then.

Debora Stiel was my grandmother on my mother's side. Debora, and Doba in Hebrew. [Editor's note: Debora, in English Deborah, is one of the seven prophetesses in the Bible; it is a Hebrew name itself. Doba, the diminutive of Debora was probably affectionately used in the family.] She was an older woman; she wore a wig. She had three daughters. My mother was the eldest - Ettel Bertram. The second was Anna, Hania, Chana, I'm not sure of her name. My grandparents' youngest daughter was Bluma. She married Aleksander Eintracht. My grandmother also had two sons. One son was Lazarz, Luzor in Hebrew. The other son was named Jankiel, Jaakow. I didn't know him; he died in Vienna. He was very devout. Hania, the middle daughter, married Izydor Grinbaum. He had a bookkeeping and audit office. They had two children. Halinka was the older and Heniu was the younger.

Lazarz immigrated to Buenos Aires in 1927. In Cracow he met a girl by the name of Karola. Granddaddy didn't want to allow that marriage, because her family was poor. Her mother sold bagels and Granddaddy didn't like that. They wanted to have an intelligent family, or some money, or a dowry. There used to be this tradition among Jews that she had to have a dowry. When he emigrated, she went after him as an unmarried woman. Three weeks she was at sea, sailing on a ship. He set himself up there; he had friends in Argentina that helped him. He did well; he was a goldsmith by trade, and here in Cracow he had been out of work. And he married that Karola in Argentina. They had only one daughter, a pretty girl. I even have a photograph, a tiny one, which they sent me in a small package. My uncle was a very good goldsmith; he did this very precise work on rings, silver and gold trinkets. Then he opened his own watchmaker and jeweler's shop.

Chaja Molkner was my mom's aunt, so great-aunt to me. I remember that she was a widow, and a very devout person. One time, when I was pre-school age, I was visiting my grandmother and she came. She persuaded me to learn broche for every kind of food. And she gave me this notebook, to write down every broche and for every broche I would get 5 groszy [the Polish currency: 1 zloty=100 groszy]. And so I wrote them down, and in the end I saved up 8 or 9 zloty. She lived very frugally; she was very devout. Because she didn't have kosher milk she wouldn't drink milk at all, only black coffee. And probably because of that she became hunched, and she went around with a hump on her back. She sold cloth; she would just go round various acquaintances and sell cloth. When I was nine, I wanted to go with Mom to see the grave of my granddad, her father. Mom had an anniversary and she went with her aunt Chaja Molkner. And Mom wouldn't let me go in there, but that devout aunt let me. She asked how old I was, and said that if I wasn't 13 yet, I could. Chaja Molkner died in 1938; she was maybe 84 years old. She was trampled by a horse and lay injured at home. I didn't go to her funeral.

My Mom was Ettel Bertram. She didn't like her name, so she said that she wanted to be called Eda, and that's what they called her. Mom kept house in the mornings, brought in the shopping and made dinner. She had her culinary repertoire. In the afternoons Mom went to the shop and sat there, and either wrote letters to her brother in Argentina, or watched the customers, because you had to be careful in that line. Dad often said to Mom in Hebrew 'watch', or 'watch out'. I remember one instance, when a handsome young lady was looking at rings and she hid one ring up her sleeve.

Once there was this case, I think it was in winter, when Dad and Mom went to the shop in the early hours of the morning. They had been called out by the guard who watched the shops and every so often dropped a note in with the time on it, saying that he had been there and checked things. He

said there had been a break-in, and a roll-down blind had been damaged. There were things missing: watches from the display. Dad was insured, I don't remember if it was with Fenix [an insurance company], but he didn't get compensation. As it turned out, only the safe was insured, and not the display. Dad always put the most expensive articles into the safe.

Growing up

I was born in 1920 when my parents lived on Krakowska Street with my mother's parents, and then we lived on Mostowa Street, in the same house, in the apartment next-door to Granddaddy [paternal grandfather] and my uncle. I found out that I was born on Krakowska Street from books, because I thought that I was born on Mostowa. I was two, I think, I don't remember exactly, when we were gassed there. I was gassed with my parents. The man who lived beneath our apartment had a shop with cooked meat. And he explained in court that he had been cleaning a gas lamp. On Mostowa Street there was gas lighting, both on the street and in the apartments. So he had been cleaning a lamp and hadn't turned it off, and that was why the gas escaped. An ambulance came; there was a crowd, an awful lot of people gathered then. Uncle Salomon rescued me. They threw me up and down so that the gas would come out. Apparently I was in a terrible way, because I was already yellow or green. And my parents were poisoned just the same, but they saved us all. The people from the ambulance services said that ten more minutes and we'd have had it. My father didn't tell me whether that neighbor was punished, or whether he got any compensation for it. We lived on Mostowa Street for perhaps two years.

After that we moved to a street in a Christian neighborhood. There we had two rooms. And there, once I was seven, I was very close to the elementary school 'Florian' that was a government school named after St. Florian. I was excused from writing on Saturdays. There were a few of us Jews. One was called Reinstein, one was called Romer and one Ginter, I think, the son of a dentist. Four altogether. In the neighborhood I had a few Catholic friends, one a girl. She lived in the same house with her sister, the daughter of a plasterer, a kind of sculptor. Her name was Krystyna Pilchowska. Her sister was called Irena.

Before I went to school I spent a lot of time on my own. Because I didn't go to nursery school I got bored. I really needed nursery school, but my parents didn't want me to go to the nuns' playschool, with Christian children. Sometimes I would play with the sewing machine, I would ride on it as if I was a streetcar driver and I was going along, stopping at all these stops. Sometimes I would sit in the shop too. Then, when the safe was near the display, I would get up on the safe. Customers would come in and I would be sitting on the safe. My brother didn't go to nursery school either, but my sister did.

I remember my bar mitzvah. My father's family came, which meant my father's brother, my father's sister-in-law, and her daughter. There was no one there from Mom's side. The only other person there was Granddaddy. My uncle was there, all from the Bertrams' side. And there was my rebbe, the beak who prepared me for my bar mitzvah, Nuchim Schpitz. He was this thin man who promised me that he would bring me a watch. And apparently he bought me a watch for my bar mitzvah in Vienna, but he said that it had been stolen. When I repeated that to dad, he said to me: 'khusid ganev'. 'Khusid' [Galician Yiddish] means Hasid, and 'ganev' means 'thief'. He could have said 'liar', but he said it so sharply because Dad was a 'misnaged' [an opponent of Hasidism].

That rebbe prepared me a droshe. And I had to talk about tefillin, in Yiddish, which I had never spoken. I learnt it by heart. And I said it. Granddaddy understood, my uncle understood, I don't know if my aunt spoke Yiddish. Then I translated into Polish. Instead of preparing me for something else, to read the Torah on Saturdays, he made me translate a speech like that. But I was allowed up to the Torah, of course. Then Dad said: 'Baruch shebetranu main on shoi sheluze'. That more or less means that I cast all my sins off me. Because that is when you join the community.

I was the oldest of us brothers and sisters. My brother Henryk was four years younger. My sister Ernestyna, or Nusia - that's what we called her - was seven years younger than me. Each of us went to a different school. Nusia went to 'Konopnicka'. That was a girls' school. And on the next street was the boys' school. Henryk went to that boys' school first, and then he moved. After that he went to evening school, to an evening grammar school on the Main Square, and worked at the same time. My brother and sister and I never spent time together. All we did together was eat breakfast, or dinner or supper. And other than that each of us went his own way. For all meals the whole family always sat at the table together. But other than that everyone went their own ways and I didn't know anything, what kind of life my sister led, what my brother did, where he went to school, if he had a tutor. I didn't know anything.

When I finished elementary school, so seven classes, Dad asked me whether I wanted to study or work. So I said: 'I want to study'. So they enrolled me in a school of commerce. But my brother didn't want to study, he preferred to work, preferred to be earning money. And he learned his trade from my father. So in his workshop Dad had both an apprentice and my brother.

I spoke to my brother and sister in Polish, and my parents spoke to each other in Yiddish. Dad talked to us very little, perhaps because he couldn't speak Polish. We talked very little then, unfortunately. Dad usually spoke Yiddish. You see, when he asked me: 'Profitierst?', I had to work out what he meant: 'Is it worth it?' He was talking about a placement in my uncle's office that I was doing at the time. And every Saturday he either read the Hummash or he read 'Kol ish, yesh cheylek, leolam haba'. I'm saying that in the Sephardi 2 fashion now, but then people spoke in the Ashkenazi manner. So Dad would say 'Kol ish, yiesh chailek leoylem habu' - Every man has a place in the world to come. [Editor's note: This sentence is very close to the Mishnah quotation said before studying 'Pirke Avot': 'Kol Yisrael yesh lahem cheylek laolam haba', or in the Ashkenazi fashion: 'Kol Yisroel yesh lohem cheylek loaylom habo', meaning 'Every Jew has a part in the world to come'. It worth noticing that Mr. Bertram -probably unnoticed- replaced 'every Jew' with 'every human being' when citing the quote.] And Dad believed that and every week he would read it, so that I would hear it too. I stayed longest at the table. You see we all ate together at one table in the kitchen, and on Saturdays in the living room. But other than that everybody went different ways.

I was interested in my own subjects; I would sit up until eleven at night. I was the last to bed, sometimes Mom was. I had to get up early in the morning to get to school. Once I was late, and we had the one commerce master in whose class there was a very high standard of discipline. If anyone was late - and I was late - as a punishment I had to arrive the whole week at 7.30 until further notice. Well, and he taught me so well that I'm disciplined now, and wherever I go, I'm always punctual. You could take your breakfast to school and eat at school. I ate in my cap, because that was what I was used to. There were some of my friends, you see, who ate with their caps off. My parents were always telling me about the commandment 'Do not commit adultery.' I didn't even know what that meant. My father wanted me to go to different schools; he was even

prepared to enroll me in university. There was money enough for that. When I went to the elementary school I had private lessons. This so-called tutor would come round. It was Mom who made sure I had help. I had problems concentrating, you see. I didn't have 'very good' in all my subjects. I had 'good', or sometimes 'satisfactory'. I didn't have 'unsatisfactory'. My best marks were for behavior. But at home sometimes I'd run riot, fight with my brother.

I went to four schools. First of all to 'Florian', and after that I went to Mizrachi [the elementary school founded in 1921 in Cracow by the local branch of religious Zionist organization 'Mizrachi'], next to the Izaaka synagogue. And another Mizrachi school was being built at that time next to the Tempel [Synagogue], at number 25 or 26. One day, Dad went with me on a Sunday to Mizrachi, to enroll me in the third class there. And the teacher told me to sign my name in Hebrew. I didn't know how to sign my name. I had gone to cheder, to two cheders, but they didn't teach writing there at all. There we only translated from Hebrew into Yiddish. And you paid for that. The students didn't understand anything. Only the ones that understood Yiddish. And as I didn't know Yiddish, I didn't understand. And the rebbe never translated into Polish. And no one asked what it meant. He thought that we all knew Yiddish. I didn't tell my parents. My parents were never interested. They didn't care about anything; they had just the business on their minds. And when I couldn't sign my name, Dad didn't help me by saying 'beyt, reysh...' [bet, resh in modern Hebrew, the first two letters of the name Bertram]. And because of that I had to repeat the second grade and I lost a year.

At Mizrachi in the mornings we had Hebrew subjects and in the evening we went to the new school that was being built for Polish subjects. One of the teachers was Mom's teacher and mine at the same time. Hoffman, his name was. After that, my third school was Kraszewski School. After the war it was called Dietl School. Now the old entrance has been bricked up. We went there five days a week, because it was a government school. The teachers were mixed, Poles and Jews, and the students were just Jews. Well, and the first time I went there, there were more or less 25-30 pupils. Suddenly I saw 14 pupils dressed identically. I thought that one mother had 14 children. And it turned out that each of the boys had a different surname. And they talked about an institution. It turned out that it was the Orphans' Institution.

Next I went to the School of Commerce. I went to school longer than either my brother or my sister. It all cost money. The fees were 20 [zloty] in the first year, but I got in for 15 zloty. Then more and more every year; you paid more or less every month or so. It was a co-educational school. A Jewish high school of commerce, coeducational, a very hard school, one of those with four grammar school classes with a school-leaving exam. We had a few foreign languages: besides Polish there was German, English and Hebrew.

There were 16 teachers there, men and women, 23 subjects altogether. Among those who were still alive after the war was Mr. Aleksandrowicz. Mr. Szlang also survived the Holocaust. He probably immigrated with his wife to Israel. Of the other teachers, I met Mr. Bart in Lwow. Mr. Natel - bookkeeping - and Mr. Mandelbaum - commerce and commercial correspondence - taught there too, in a partner school. Bart taught commodities and calligraphy. There in Lwow there was Mr. Silberfenig, teaching Palestinography. There was Miss Szylingier, she taught geography and history. And Mr. Guzik taught us religion and Hebrew. Mr. Szlang taught religion and Hebrew too. Mr. Mandelbaum was taken away from the school, because some Ukrainian student turned him in, repeating the teacher's words that this was going to change. He meant that the system was going

to change, but there you weren't allowed to say anything. And that was how he got arrested. That was probably in 1939. In 1945, in front of the former School of Commerce building, I met his wife, Mala Hofszteter. She was a Polish teacher. They got married before the war. And then she immigrated to Israel and met her husband there, who had served in the Polish Army during the war. But then he had a brain hemorrhage. In Israel a Stanislaw Mandelbaum school of commerce was opened.

I got my best school marks in stenography. I remember all my stenography to this day. I took part in three competitions: at school, in Cracow, and in the Polish national championships in Warsaw. And this guy, the best Polish stenographer, came to me and asked whether I would like to go to Warsaw. I turned him down, unfortunately, because I already had a job then. Since I'd got a job - and it hadn't been so easy to come by, and it was on two shifts as well - I had to refuse. That guy was called Maslowski and he took us for stenography.

After school I had work experience at Izydor Grinbaum's, who was the husband of my aunt Hania. He had a bookkeeping and audit office. And I did my office internship there. He promised that after three months I would get 30 zloty. Unfortunately I didn't. He wanted to give me a fountain pen, but I said: 'thanks, but no thanks'. I said I didn't want it. I wanted 30 zloty. So Dad banned me from going there. Greenbaum was a very clever guy; he ran the office and had two people employed there as well. First of all there were two sisters, then this one guy called Blemmer, and then a girl by the name of Pajno. They were working professionally, earning. But I did typing there, was getting good, using the ten-finger system. Was that what I needed to go to school for, to do typing? Sometimes I helped out with inventories too. There was this firm, Kohn, which was in the iron business. And another firm, his brother Kohn, some razor blade outfit. During the war, in Lwow, my uncle told me that that guy was a spy.

All the men in the family wore head coverings. Only my father wore a hat; all the others wore yarmulkas. Today they're round, but then they were different - these forage caps like the army wore. Usually they were black, sometimes dark blue. There weren't any others, round ones. These forage caps were in place of yarmulkas. My dad didn't wear the gabardine [caftan] and he didn't wear the streimel. Only my grandfathers wore the streimel. They had gabardines too, but they didn't have side locks, just beards. Dad didn't have a beard, he didn't have side locks; he shaved. My family was Ashkenazi Jews, because we're all Ashkenazim here in Poland. And the ones who used to wear the streimel, they were Hasidim 3. My one Granddaddy, and the other, wore the streimel, but they weren't Hasidim. They wore it for tradition; only on Saturdays did they wear the black gabardine. But their sons didn't wear it; they dressed in the European fashion. My father dressed in the European fashion too. It was when my father went to Belgium that he stopped wearing the gabardine.

We went to several synagogues. The first synagogue I went to, when I was of pre-school age, was Shomer Umonim, which means 'Watchman of the Believers'. Dad was the gabbai, the administrator there. And Dad was always complaining that if he weren't the gabbai he wouldn't neglect his business. Once, perhaps, we went to 'Amster', there was a synagogue called that. They held Sukkot there. We went to those synagogues when we were living in the Christian neighborhood. After that, in 1933 or 1934 we moved back into the Jewish quarter. And in the center of town we went to a synagogue opposite the bank, that was Ahavat Rayim, or 'Love for Your Neighbor' [Editor's note: 'Ahavat Rayim' means 'Love for One's Neighbor'].

Dad went with me on Fridays. Once there was a friend from Mizrachi there. He was called Dawidson and when he was still a boy he was a chazzan there. That was the synagogue where Schperber's choir was, famous in Cracow. The boys in the choir had the same black gabardines, and he was the conductor. Schperber conducted at Tempel as well. On Saturdays we went to Migale Amikes Shil. The other Jewish name was Barbl Bes Medresh. I don't know whether that means 'on the hill', or something else. Migale Amikes has been in existence for probably 350 years. [A synagogue and institute in which Nathan Spira lectured, called after his work 'Megaleh Amukot', 'he who reveals mysteries'.] Long ago the famous cabbalist Spira was connected with that synagogue [Nathan Spira (1584-1633): the rabbi of Cracow, devoted to the study of the Cabbala]. Before the war only men went there, and there were Hasidim too. I don't know whether they were really Hasidim, or just Orthodox. There were some who had the streimel, the fox-fur. And there were some that didn't. And if there was a separate prayer, at the Halel festival, in the evening some of them prayed separately in another room. They were probably Sephardi Jews.

All the men from our family went to that synagogue on Saturdays. Granddaddy and Dad, my brother and I, my uncle, Granddaddy's son, Granddaddy's other son, and my uncle's son as well. Seven of us from the family there were. Two friends of mine from school went there as well, this one - Grossbart, his name was - went there. The Bossaks went there and the famous Aleksandrowicz [Prof. Julian Aleksandrowicz]. There was this one odd guy there, too, who wore the streimel and shaved. That was the only time I saw a clean-shaven man wearing the streimel. He would wear it on Saturdays. He had this redbrick shop, a newsstand.

Before the war I only went to a few synagogues, not all of them. I also went to Tempel then. When I went to Kraszewski School we used to go there on all the national holidays, because it was very close. [Most Polish national holidays were celebrated in the religious institutions too, as the members of Tempel synagogue were tending to assimilation and they were involved in politics. The synagogue used to be a place for national manifestations of the Jews.] At Tempel Synagogue they celebrated national holidays like 3rd May [the anniversary of the signing of the first Polish constitution, in 1793], and maybe the November Uprising 4 and others. Tempel Synagogue was the only Reform synagogue in Cracow. The president was Dr. Ozjasz Thon 5. He was a deputy to the Sejm [the Polish lower house of Parliament]. Pre-election rallies were always held in his house. Our school always stood in one of the side naves, to the right of the entrance. And in the middle sat army officers - Jews. I don't know if there were any ethnic Poles among them. Dr. Ozjasz Thon always gave a sermon in Polish. He would start his sermon: 'Dear young people, devout listeners...' But before the sermon they would play the Hatikvah 6 there. And there was a mixed choir. And they played and sang 'Boze cos Polsk?...' ['O God, who Poland...' - a patriotic Polish song, at this time almost chosen as the Polish national anthem]. My uncle, Aleksander Eintracht, my friend Henryk Kleinberger, and the wife of the president of the Jewish Community Organization, I don't remember her name, sang in that choir.

After the death of Dr. Thon, Dr. Schmelkes gave the sermon there. I remember I went to Dr. Thon's funeral. The mounted police were there keeping order, because a very large crowd had gathered. And we stood outside the cemetery on the street, because so many people had come. I only went to that synagogue on a Friday once. No one was praying. They either didn't know the prayers or they didn't have prayer books. Only the cantor was praying. He was dressed in this black silk coat and had a hexagonal black hat, if I remember rightly, like students in the US have, not square, but

six-sided, flat. And the porter who stood at the entrance was dressed like that too. I only went in there once. They used to say that it was only progressives that went there, once a year. Always on Yom Kippur there were vast numbers of cars there.

As for other synagogues in Cracow, there was Stara [Old] Synagogue. Except then they didn't call it 'Old' in Polish, but Alte Shil in Yiddish. All the Yiddish names of the synagogues were used. Stara Synagogue, Migale Amikes Shil. Then Poper, then Wysoka [High] - they called it Hoyhe Shil - Izaak [Isaac] Synagogue. And on the left of that one was the temporary Mizrachi school. And opposite that one, Izaak, was another synagogue, but I don't know what the name was. Then there was one on Krakowska Street; I don't know what it was called. I only went there once. That was where my uncle's father went to pray. Then there was Cypres, and after the war there was a printers' school there. There's Kupa Synagogue too, Kupa Shil, that's what it was called. Then there's Mizrachi, but I don't know if they prayed there before the war. That building that's built there now was a school, you see. But after the war they prayed there, there in Mizrachi; I looked in there once. But whether it was a prayer house before the war I don't know. And on Dietla Planty [a strip of grass alongside a road called Dietla Street] was this temporary shack, a prayer house called Astoria. Then there was the synagogue where the rebbe that came to us and taught me at cheder was from. He either came to our house to collect me, or took me home or to cheder. Once, at Yom Kippur, there were prayers in a house on one of the city squares. But I don't know if it was a permanent prayer house. Perhaps there was an inn or maybe a hotel there.

There was another synagogue that I never went to but Mom used to talk about. And where the [Jewish] Cultural Centre is now, was Bnei Emuna - 'Sons of the Faith'. And there was Bnei Sheyrit. And Chevre Tylem [Association of Psalmists], that was where Mom always went, once a month, when they had the 'Blessing for the New Month' prayer. That was where women went before the new month. They were always up in the gallery, up above, because downstairs were the men. Once I went there, on some holiday, probably Yom Kippur.

As I was walking to Szeroka Street one day I saw the first Hasid I'd seen in my life, a young man, who had a black hat, I don't think he had the streimel. He had a black hat, and side locks, and that black silk gabardine, and white socks. That was the first time I'd ever seen white socks. That was an unusual sight for me.

I remember the Jewish theaters too. There was the Ida Kaminska Jewish Theater. And the other theater was the summer one, in the Londres Hotel. I went to both of them. I went to the summer theater with my father and my brother, to see 'Sulamit'. That was the title, 'Sulamit'. I don't remember everything that happened in the play, but there was a priest in it. 'Ikh bin Nussem Hakohen'. 'I am Nathan the Priest'. In Hebrew 'Nussem ha-kohen'. I remember that. That was the first time I'd been to a summer theater like that. Mom had gone away with my sister somewhere then.

I also remember how we used to walk to my grandparents' on Krakowska Street, and later to the streetcar, the number 1. And on the wall of the old town hall there, there was this plaque, a bas-relief showing Jews bringing the Torah to King Casimir the Great [King of Poland, 1333-1370]. I don't know if it was a homage, if they're thanking him for accepting the Jews, who were persecuted in various countries in Europe. That plaque isn't there any more; the Germans took it down. [In fact, the Cracow City Council restored it in 1996.]

In our family no one belonged to any political party. Dad told me never to belong to any political party. I once talked to a man who said: 'A man who doesn't belong to any party is worth nothing.' But I think that it's best not to get mixed up in things like that and to be objective. And observe from a distance, which is the best system. The communist system had its pros and cons, you see, and the present system has its different pros and different cons. There's no such thing as the ideal system.

A few times people tried to get me involved, agitating. I went once on a Saturday to Hashomer Hatzair 7, another time to Shomer Hadati. They had these miserable little places. Once I went to Akiba [Zionist youth movement] with a friend and my aunt's brother-in-law. But it didn't appeal to me, somehow. With hindsight, though, I can see that I should have got involved. I was afraid my studies might suffer, but you had to go to one of those organizations! One of them, because there were various different ones: Akiba, Hashomer Hatzair, Shomer Hadati, Ichud [left-wing Zionist organization], there was the Bund 8, too.

We did support the building of the Jewish state, though. In every Jewish home there were two tins [money-boxes]. We had two: Keren Kayemet 9, and the other one was Keren Hayesod 10. A collector came round, once a month, I think, to collect the money. There was money in those tins and he collected it and passed it on for the restoration of Palestine, to buy land.

All the food in our house was kosher. There was dairy in the morning and dairy suppers. And I asked why we always had dairy suppers except for Fridays and holidays. And Mom said that rich people eat meat suppers. We ate different things, sometimes herrings, usually scrambled eggs, or sardines, or sprats. I don't remember exactly. In the morning it was mostly scrambled eggs and coffee with milk. I remember it was chicory then. I don't know whether it was real coffee or ersatz. On holidays Mom and the maid prepared different dishes. But it was all kosher. The crockery was separate - separate for dairy products, separate for meat. And at Pesach, we would bring out this hamper, which we had special crockery in. The hamper was in the loft all year. And then we changed over all the dishes. The gas cooker was covered with this metal sheet. That was observed very strictly too. And when it was all over, what good did it do... Nothing! More unreligious people survived than religious ones.

At home we lit candles in candlesticks. And at Chanukkah my father always lit candles for 8 days, I mean every day, every evening, one candle more. And he said the brochot, or the Chanukkah blessing. There are three blessings: three on the first evening, but only two on the next evenings.

And after a funeral, if there was a wake we ate either round peas or perhaps egg. You sit on low chairs for seven days. It's only devout people that keep it up for seven days, and then again on the 30th day too. And you recite the Kaddish for the dead person for twelve months.

I remember a few anti-Semitic incidents: seven or eight, a few happened before the war and a few after the war. It started one day when I came home crying, as a preschooler. This one guy attacked me, hit me, near our home in the Christian neighborhood. I didn't know what for, I didn't know what a Jew was, I didn't know what an anti-Semite was. And there were anti-Semites there. There were anti-Semitic youths; they were brought up like that. As I stood there by our gate, as a preschooler, he had a go at me. There were some older kids there, not my friends, walking along the river. They would gather there and sing anti-Semitic songs. I even remember those songs. I didn't say anything to my family. I didn't know that it was important to tell them. It went in one ear and out the other.

To this day I remember this one short song that the older one taught the younger ones: 'Jew, Jew! The Messiah is born' and there was another sentence that I can't remember. I remember another sentence from the song: 'Ai vai kimmeshai, don't touch my beard! My beard is blessed, curled on a stick!' But that was nothing. Once they hauled me down there, down by the river. And I wore new velvet clothes. I even have a photograph of them. They were standing there on the bank of the river. The water was dirty. Well, and someone pushed me. I fell into the water and went home all wet. Granddaddy was very angry, and so were my parents. None of my friends owned up. The girl I suspected, Ola Mleczko, told my Mom: 'I didn't do it.' Granddaddy told Mom to go and report it to the police, but she didn't.

Later on, in 1935-36, I went to military preparation lectures. Military service was two years, you see, but if you went to military preparation they shortened your period of service by six months. So you had a year and a half. I went for two years, a friend, Landau, persuaded me. I was supposed to learn how to shoot. I didn't say anything to my parents, because that was how they had brought me up: not to tell them anything. They weren't interested in us at all; they didn't have time. When Mr. Aleksandrowicz, who took us for gymnastics, asked who wanted to sign up, I signed up. So I went for two years. And I went on a two-week camp to Stary Sacz. And in Nowy Sacz we were supposed to have a march-past. I desperately wanted to take part in the march-past, with that rifle in front of the general at arms, General Kasprzycki. We spent a long time practicing for it. And one of the students from the very beginning called me Morytz [perceived by some Jews as a derogatory name, similarly to Icek, often used to replace 'Zydek'- little Jew]. He was in front of me in the line and he would shout: 'Morytz!' OK, Morytz, fine, I didn't say anything. But on the last day, when they all went for their certificates, I couldn't, because of that boy. He offered me some soup, which he must have tipped some powder in. I had a vomiting attack. They all received their certificates except me.

I remember when I was older, school age, I saw this shop, which said 'money- changer', on the corner of the Main Square. Currency exchange. It was the only shop of its kind I saw in Cracow. Other than that, in the park at the foot of the castle, Wawel, just by the Royal Hotel, was what was known as the 'black money exchange'. They were Hasidim, who exchanged currencies, mostly dollars, illegally, I think. 8.90 the dollar cost, and the official price in the bank was 5 zloty 25 groszy, but you couldn't buy it at that price.

I also remember that before the war, when I was seven, Polish Radio was in the center of Cracow. And I even went there, to the radio, in the first grade of elementary school. We gave a performance; we said something on the radio. And that was the first radio, in 1927, the first time there had ever been radio in Poland. And our class put on a performance of some kind. We didn't have any Jewish neighbors when we lived in the Christian neighborhood. And when we were back in the Jewish district we didn't have any contact with our neighbors, because they were mainly progressive Jews there.

From our time in Kazimierz 11 I remember Purim. As a child I always went to Krakowska Street with my parents. We stood on the pavement and thousands of people in masks walked down the road. It was a masquerade, in Hebrew 'adloyada'. Some just wore masks, some were all dressed up. We even met one dressed up as a cat. Mom recognized him as the furrier. We didn't dress up; we just stood on the street. But Mom bought my brother and me masks. I was staying with Granddaddy and my uncle then, on Mostowa Street, I was in the first grade of elementary school. And my uncle

told me to sing, so I sang what I knew from school - 'A birdie flew along the street', or something.

During the war

In the summer of 1939 I was with my Mom, brother and sister in Zawoja [a mountain resort in Poland]. And Dad called to tell us to come home immediately, a week early. I asked Mom if we couldn't go just yet, because I didn't want to leave. There was a swimming pool there; it was nice weather, fresh air. We didn't know that war was going to break out. We didn't realize, we hadn't read the papers. But Dad realized, because every day before he went to work he read Nowy Dziennik [Zionist newspaper, published in Cracow in Polish from 1918-1939]. So he knew that war was going to break out. So Mom put our departure off, because we didn't want to go. And then Dad sent this car, and seven families left with us. We went back to Cracow and Dad was angry that we were delayed. But we arrived more or less a week before the outbreak of war. Then Dad decided that I would stay with the family and my brother, four years younger, would go out into the world. But my aunt, Granddaddy's sister, advised my father that I should leave home and escape, and my brother stay, because he was younger. The Germans were taking boys of my age and sending them to the German- French front; those were the rumors. If it hadn't been for my aunt I wouldn't be here and perhaps my brother would still be alive; perhaps he would have survived.

And then Dad went with me to buy a rucksack. I have that rucksack to this day. We bought the essential clothes for two weeks, because everyone was lying, saying that the war would last two weeks. The neighbor also said that I should take my matriculation certificate and my birth certificate. Well, I didn't want the matriculation certificate because it wouldn't fold up; it lay so nicely in my desk. So I took my birth certificate; I didn't have my ID card yet, just my school ID.

So the decision was made that I should go. Dad had approached the neighbor and found out that he was going, that he was going to evacuate, or escape. He was supposed to be going with his brother-in-law and his friend. And on Monday 4th September he said that they weren't going. Dad came back from the neighbor's with the news that they weren't going. And it wasn't until Tuesday 5th September that he found out that they were going. But on the Sunday I'd met a friend called Grossbart outside his parents' shop. And he told me that people were escaping, that there was illness in Wieliczka [a small town outside Cracow] and starvation. He wanted to escape with me, and I should let him know. So I sent my brother on 5th September at 6 in the morning to tell him to get ready to leave. My brother went to his place, and he said that he wasn't going, he wouldn't go. So then I went at 8 in the morning to see him. His mother was there, and his sister too. They stood in a line and he said that he wouldn't go. 'What will be will be!' I wanted to go with him; I wanted to save him. His mother was trying to persuade him, and his sister, but he didn't want to go. And he died! In Remuh synagogue there is a memorial plaque, white marble, in English and Hebrew, saying that he - Joel Grossbart - and his whole family died. One of my friends married Grossbart's sister after the war. She was the only one of the whole family to survive. I suspect that she had Aryan papers. It was a Hasidic family.

I was packed up and I said goodbye to my family. They all stood in a line outside the door: Mom, my brother, my sister and Dad. And they all said goodbye. That was the last time I saw them. I didn't know it was the last time. I thought I would be going back, that I would meet up with them. So I set off then. Mom saw us off; she walked down the opposite sidewalk. She wanted to give me a blanket. I didn't want it, because it would have been too heavy for me to carry. I already had to lug

my overcoat during the heat wave, and all that in my rucksack. So my journey was very tragic, because I walked nine days and nine nights. And I slept 15 minutes, in a ditch.

There were four of us: my next-door neighbor, his brother-in-law, a friend and me. We walked in the direction of Plaszow [a station in the east of Cracow] and there we boarded a cattle wagon at noon. There weren't any windows in there, just a bench along, and another bench. It was dark, and all the seats were taken, but they made room for us. We traveled like that until 3am. The others traveled on, but we got off, because the train was going too slowly. It was dangerous, because the Germans were already close to Cracow, and Cracow was taken on 6th September. Then we jumped onto another train. That was the first time I had ever jumped on when the train was moving, and with my rucksack as well! We couldn't get inside because the door was locked. We couldn't open it. And the handle was very cold. And I didn't have any gloves. And we had to hold onto the handle for half an hour and stand on the steps: each of us on a different step, because two of us wouldn't fit on one step.

We were heading east: via Debica, Tarnow, Rozwadow, Przemysl, Lwow, and then on to Zloczow. [see Annexation of Eastern Poland] 4 In Zloczow there was a holiday celebration, the New Year festival, Rosh Hashanah. We slept and in the next room they were praying. Then we went back to Tarnopol [today Ukraine]. I spent a few days in Tarnopol. When we arrived in Tarnopol there was another holiday, this time Sukkot. There this family took us in, or two families actually, because I ate with the older couple, and the others stayed with their daughters, in the same building. They were called Fleischman. They had a daughter, and in the other place there were two older daughters. He was a poor man, a barber; he had one or two rooms and a kitchen. They were supporting me; I wanted to pay them before I left but they wouldn't take anything.

After that we went back to Lwow. In Lwow they left me. For the first time in my life I was away from home alone; it was awful for me. I was without a roof over my head, you see, and I had nowhere to sleep. So I found out that there was a hall where you could sleep. People slept there side by side on the floor: men and women on the same floor. There weren't any straw mattresses there, and there was no room for me, so I slept on the corridor. That was from Friday to Saturday. A guy my age noticed me and took me to the synagogue on the Saturday. I already had a temperature, and neither a place to stay, nor an emergency room, nor a hospital. So there I was with this temperature sleeping in the first room in the synagogue, and there in the next room everyone was praying.

After the prayers that friend spoke to a tailor, a poor guy, who took me back to his place. He had a wife and two daughters. And I didn't say anything, because I never said much. I was shy, didn't have much to say. I just slept for three days, and that friend talked to them. The tailor sewed me a lining in my overcoat. And after three days I thanked them and left, and went back to the [first] house, because I didn't have anywhere to sleep. That time I got into the hall. I hung my cap on a nail and lay on the floor. And in the morning I get up and see lice on my cap - well, there's no way you can live in conditions like that! But it was hard to find anywhere else to stay, so I went back. And then the Germans caught me and moved back to the west, so I worked on the roads in Wieliczka, then in Niepolomice and Biezanow [satellite villages around Cracow]. I worked for a few months and then I escaped from them again, over to the Russian side.

In April 1940 I went back to Lwow, found myself a place to live. First I lived in an apartment with a friend, and then I moved elsewhere, to an apartment with a Russian family [Russian Jews who had escaped from Russia because of the persecution during tsarist times]. It was a housewife with two sons and her mother. Only the younger son lived elsewhere. I lived there with a guy from Sosnowiec, and in the apartment next-door were some people called Meller. One day they started arresting people, first of all capitalists. I heard that they'd arrested Monderer too, as a capitalist. I'd done a commercial internship with Monderer and Erlich [some business owners in Cracow] in the winter holidays before the war. That was a kind of textiles business. Then they arrested Polish officers, and then they arrested 'byezhentsy', or deserters [those who were running away from Poland, to the East].

I was a deserter. So I went with my rucksack to a restaurant run by Redlich, a friend of my uncle's from Cracow. And that uncle of mine, the one I had worked for in Cracow on my office internship, he was there: as a friend and as the bookkeeper. First he had been in Russian captivity; I saw him the first day that I was in Lwow. He wore an army coat and said that he had returned from captivity. He was always trying to persuade me to go back to my parents. I went to my uncle, to that restaurant, with my rucksack because he had offered to let me sleep there. And I slept one night on some chairs. The next day I went to the baths, to the post office, I had a card to send to my parents.

That day, I remembered that I'd left my pajamas at the Russian woman's apartment. I went to get my pajamas at 2 and she offered to let me have a nap. I wasn't at all sleepy, but I lay down for two hours. At 4 I got dressed and suddenly the housewife's son, Marek, comes running in. And he said 'Hide, because they're looking for you.' So I hid in the toilet, but they caught the other guy who was with me. And they wouldn't have caught me if I hadn't given myself up. I came out of the toilet and went with them. I even had to pay 30 rubles' lodging, several days in advance! I thought they'd catch me the next night anyway, so I gave myself up. I did right, because if the Russians hadn't caught me then, the Germans would have caught me later, and shot me like they shot my uncle.

Two of the Russian soldiers from the NKVD 12 led us. They had loaded rifles. They took us to the barracks. We were there for three weeks, without baths. We slept on bunks. We didn't know how long we'd be there. And when I was asleep that guy from Sosnowiec stole my watch. I got it back, but there's no knowing how many times he stole from me at the house. He could have stolen money from my wallet, because I never kept tabs on it. I was trusting; I never thought that anyone would rob me. And then he said goodbye because he was going with a different group. After three weeks they took us away in this lorry, to the station in Lwow. We didn't know where we were going. They loaded us into cattle cars. There were these bunks with palliasses, and a tiny window with a grille. The heat was terrible, but every day it got colder, which meant that we were traveling north. They gave us a meal once a day. They gave us this kind of round loaf to share between four. Then some of the others among us, in their underwear, got out at lunchtime and carried a pot with noodles. They were pleased to be out a bit in the fresh air. They called it 'lapsha' over there, noodles.

We traveled for six days and got right out to Rybinsk. There we got out and were given a set of clothes, camp clothes, dark blue, our own belt and a dark blue hat with a peak. They gave us dinner, and then took us to the barber, who shaved our heads. But when I was at the barber, the others went to where General Rapaport was giving a speech. He talked about our obligation to

work and about discipline. That was Friday. They loaded us onto a ship. We sailed up the Sheksna. The Sheksna flows into the Volga. There were a few devout Jews among us on the ship. And they wanted a minyan, so they co-opted me. They weren't at all worried that we were going to a camp; they just prayed. Then they put us off at the camp, which was called Turgenevo.

There we got these little pink tokens and on that basis we got breakfast and dinner. Only twice a day there was food: before going to work and after coming back. And during the day only work. The next day early in the morning this 'nevalny' woke us up. 'Nevalny' is Russian for 'orderly', and we were called 'zakluchony', which means 'prisoner'. Everyone got a saw and axes. And they took us to the forest, where we had to fulfill a plan. I sawed; we were clearing forestland. We had roll calls as well. It's called 'povyerka' in Russian. Every gang foreman had 16 people. One was called Epstein. He offered us cigarettes; the first cigarette I'd ever smoked in my life. Some of them preferred to smoke than to eat bread; they'd exchange bread for cigarettes. There was a roll call before we went to work, a roll call in the forest, and a roll call after work. And then again in the zone, in the camp, another roll call, to check that no one had escaped.

In Turgenevo there were some who tried to form a minyan. So they got me into the minyan and gave me a prayer book, because I didn't have one. They took my prayer book off me in a search; there were ten searches, you see. They took my prayer book and my tefillin. But they left my tefillin batu, that's this bag for the tefillin, I still have it to this day [Tefillin batim is the cover of tefillin; 'batu' is the local pronunciation of the word]. And then, it was Yom Kippur, this one functionary Russian found my tefillin. And he ripped it out of my hand, took my prayer book off me. We didn't even get a chance to pray on Yom Kippur. 'You're not allowed to pray!' But one old man managed to keep his tallit. So he prayed, put it on sitting on his pallet on the top bunk. And my friend, who I was in Georgia with afterwards, and back then in the camps, saved his tefillin, because he hid it under his knee. I was in Turgenevo for a few months. They sent us out there on 20th July 1940.

Then, in the winter, they took each one of us with a different gang in a different direction. In the next Gulag 13 there were better conditions. The conditions in Turgenevo were harsh, you see, at first you weren't allowed to write letters, weren't allowed to have a pencil. You weren't allowed more than 50 rubles, or jewelry, or a watch, or any sharp instruments. If anyone had jewelry they handed it in, it was put into the safe and they got a receipt. I was the only one who had a watch, hidden on my elbow, wrapped in a kerchief and tobacco. But at first I had it inside my trousers. So they'd say 'Bertram - your trousers!' when they wanted to know what the time was.

The second camp was called Kanatna Droga. We went there in the winter, by sleigh - I even drove the sleigh. And there were 'boytsy' [this is what they called Russian soldiers] there. There were a few of us [Jews]. Stones were transported there; it was on the Volga. From one bank to the other on this cable car thing these little trucks went back and forth. They were called 'kubonetki' in Russian and were 0.6 cubic meters, these little trucks. The stone was transported to our bank. It was washed automatically and sorted. And our people carried these 'nosilki', 'carriers' all day long. Stones on these carriers. I felt as if it was 4,000 years ago in Egypt, where the Jews were slaves. And for the most part the majority of us were Jews, but there were Catholics too. There was this one priest, Father Jacek, without a cassock. There were Silesians too. For the most part they were older people; I was one of the youngest. Well, at Kanatna Droga I worked voluntarily as well, in my free time. Then that job ended and I said goodbye to them.

I was taken to yet another camp, Piatiy Uchastek. And we were there for another few months. We were driven there, because it was a different season. We were driven in lorries, but not petrol powered, but wood powered. Every few kilometers the driver would stop and throw the blocks of wood into this cylinder. And that's how we traveled. We didn't know where to until we came to Piatiy Uchastek, or 'the fifth section'. They were always chopping and changing the groups, a different team every verse end. Different people. A stranger among strangers, I was. I didn't know anyone. And work again. The conditions were harsher there. The best conditions were in Kanatna Droga.

There was this huge project: there were an awful lot of Russkies [derogatory term for Russians], who were building a hydroelectric power plant. We were reinforcing the sluicegate, all the time, near the Volga. And then one day, one night, 4th September 1941, we found out about the Sikorski amnesty. We didn't know about Majski then [the Sikorski-Majski Pact] 14. The next day we were called out to the registration committee in alphabetical order. And they asked me where I wanted to go. Did I want to go to Kokand [Uzbekistan] or to Tashkent? I wanted to go to Astrakhan, because there was Russian industry there. But a friend from Cracow told me that the Cracovians were going to Georgia, and that I should go there too.

So I went to Georgia: anywhere to be free, so to speak, and not in a camp. There was no question of the West, only what was then the Soviet Union. And everyone could go where he or she wanted, it only had to be at least 100 kilometers from the border, meaning from the front, and we weren't allowed to go to the central cities. They didn't want a large influx of people. They suggested Kutaisi [today Georgia], so that was what I chose.

So we went to Georgia, arrived in Tbilisi. Before the war it was called Tiflis, and afterwards Tbilisi. We get there and straight from the station went to the prayer house. It used to be called a prayer house. Synagogues are built differently, you see, and a prayer house is this tiny room, or in somebody's house. There it was a small room. There were Jews from Kiev there, who had escaped. And it turned out that when we got there it was Rosh Hashanah. Morning and evening we had to go to the prayer house. In the evening, when the hakham spoke, I didn't know what he was saying. I thought he was speaking Yiddish and that's why I couldn't understand him. It turned out he was speaking Georgian. He was appealing to all the Georgian Jews to look after all of us that had come out of the camps. And they invited us for dinner and let us sleep that first night. I got this host where I had dinner and I slept one night there.

There in Georgia this Georgian woman asked me: 'Is it true,' - because she had been reading the newspapers - 'is it true that they are killing Jews?' I replied that I didn't know anything. But two people from Lwow came to Georgia. One was called Zelmanowicz and the other Gutman. And they said that there, in the ghettos, there was starvation. I don't know how they got to us. But we went to this one prayer house every Saturday afternoon. And one of these Kiev Jews gave a 'droshe'. 'Droshe', in Ashkenazi 'drasha', in Sephardi, means 'speech'. And he gave this speech about the Torah what is said on a given day, what 'parsha' [parashah], or 'polsyk' [according to Mr. Bertram the word used in prewar Cracow for parashah]. And right at the end he told us about the tragedy, that over on the other side they were killing people by then. He already knew everything; perhaps he had read a Russian newspaper or a Georgian one. Perhaps he had found out from Georgian Jews. But we didn't really believe it; we didn't really take much notice, because we didn't know whom it affected. We just listened.

I had a few friends in Georgia. On the whole they were good people, though a bit selfish. I've got a photograph of them. The oldest one, in glasses, with the Lenin beard, was from Podgorze [then a town near Cracow, now a district of Cracow]. He was an artistic signwriter, could turn his hand to anything and did very well for himself. He promised me that I would be his partner. That was Abraham Lamesdorf. His wife had stayed behind; she died with their son, probably in Belzec 15. My other friend was called Dawid Kos Klajman. He had two names, I don't know why; I think he was some kind of salesman. He said he came from Brygl. Brygl, I think in Polish that must have been Brzesko. He never said it in Polish, all he said was Brygl. He had a secret from us: he had a lady friend, who fed him, and he was at her place all day long, after work, of course. We didn't keep tabs on whether he went to the synagogue on Saturday or not. But it was a small town; it was uncomfortable in that little town to be seeing a non-Jew. Especially because on Saturdays and holidays I went with the friend I talked about to the synagogue. There was no one else from among our people at the synagogue, only the two of us.

We went regularly, but we didn't have access to the 'liye' [according to Mr. Bertram the word used in prewar Cracow for 'aliyah' - going up the bimah to read the Torah]. We didn't have any money, and you had to pay an awful lot. And the hakham called people up. It went to the highest bidder. 'Assima naty, to...orrasi manaty, sammassi manaty... tiskula mitzvah'. That was what he said, in Georgian and Hebrew. 'Tiskula mitzvah' means 'you will be doing a good deed', or 'commandment'. And what I said at the beginning, that was the bidding. 100 rubles... 'mana' is rouble [in Georgian]. '100 rubles, 200 rubles, 300 rubles.' We couldn't afford such luxuries.

We sat at the side, and over there they were bidding for the reading. That's the way it is all over the world, except in Poland. Others of our people didn't go to the synagogue because they were busy with work. And one of them criticized me terribly when I asked him if he'd been to the synagogue, because I was surprised that he hadn't been. Well, he offended me terribly. He found out that I'd been to the synagogue, and told me that I was 'as stupid as a shoe off the left foot'. But the older one in glasses said to me: 'Don't worry, Bertram, the Lord won't forsake you.' This barrister, Goldberg, was in the apartment too, and he added: 'If the Lord God doesn't forsake you, then people will!' And I can't forget that. Very few people went to the synagogue there. Synagogue was luxury. They were busy working, to earn money to buy bread. But because we went to the synagogue, we had these hosts. And they would invite us to their homes every Saturday and every holiday. And we would eat Georgian kosher food; we waited for that meat all week, of course, because other than that, privately, I didn't eat it. For lunch we had gruel, flaked corn. And that was our lunch. I don't think I ate anything else. We didn't get a second course there. And as for breakfast, they did very well for themselves, only I was the worst off. I'm talking about our private lives now, not about the factory.

There was a time, you see, when I didn't even have enough money for breakfast. I went through a whole month like that, and they persuaded me to sell my Tissot [a watch-brand] that I'd been given by my father when I graduated from school. Well, I sold it. I wanted 5,000 rubles, but I only got 3,400 or 3,500. And then I had to give my two housemates some money to buy oil, for arranging the sale.

I was working in a clothing factory. 'Shveyna fabrika', or 'The Kiev Clothing Factory'. The director was called Macharadze, and the other one Karikashvili. A year I worked there; then I got seconded to the Labor Battalion [group of the prisoners from the Labor Camp, who worked in much harder

conditions]. I was in that Labor Battalion six weeks; those were the harshest conditions. No prison on earth has conditions like that. Six weeks I slept on the bare ground; it wasn't a hut, just a tent with no roof. No roof, just branches. So I spent six weeks in my clothes, six weeks on the ground, six weeks without a bath, and on top of that: lice. I didn't know how long I'd stick it there, because the work was hard and they gave us very little to eat. I got weak, could hardly walk; like an old man. I stayed in Georgia from the time they liberated us from the camp on 4th September 1941 almost until the end of the war.

Post-war

The war ended on 9th May 1945, and I left Georgia on 22nd April 1945. I left, but at that time we still weren't allowed to leave! My neighbors left earlier than that; they kept it a secret from me, but they came back. They were turned back by this NKVD functionary, because he asked them, on a train during an inspection: 'Where are you going?', and they said: 'To Poland.' 'Go back, there is no Poland!' They came back, and then my neighbor got himself and me passes from the militia, to travel on family affairs, but not to Poland! We only got two rail tickets: on one we were to travel to Slavuta [Ukraine], and in Slavuta we were to throw that ticket away and go to Kamenets Podolski. We were traveling for three weeks, changing trains every other day, because there was no other way.

It was very hard to get on a train, and the conductor was on the running board, and people everywhere. How were we supposed to get on, with a rucksack, and him with a briefcase? Well, that neighbor of mine was cunning, the one in glasses, with a beard. 'Comrade, sir!' - he said and winked conspiratorially. So he [the conductor] got all excited that he was going to get some money. And when he'd let us into the wagon, he didn't give him any. And he would do the same thing with every conductor.

In Tbilisi my wallet was stolen. I had 90 rubles in it, my school ID, my secondment papers from the camp, and three or four letters or so from my parents, postcards. And at the militia station where I reported the theft, they put my witness and me in a cell: all night, with young Georgian criminals. And in the end the duty officer opened up and the chiefs came with a list and let us all out. They'd let my witness out earlier, at 8 o'clock in the morning. But I'd been kept in until noon.

Once I was free I picked my things up from the deposit. They gave me to understand that I should travel without a ticket if I didn't have any money. Outside the guy with the beard, Lamesdorf, and my other future partner were waiting for me. And we went on. So we were in Kamenets Podolski, and the border is in Rovno. There they told us that we had to hand our passports over. So we handed them over, and we then had to get a stamp on our passports and military service books. We went individually, not waiting for a transport. We got on a train in Rovno. All of a sudden there was an inspection; this NKVD functionary came round. He let the three of us through, and we were on our way to Poland. In Kovel, at 2 o'clock in the morning on 8th May 1945, there were shots. I asked what the shots were, and they said that the war was over. From there we went in the direction of Cracow. The one from Brzesko went straight to Cracow too, because there were lots of people coming to Cracow from small eastern towns.

We arrived in Cracow on 9th or 10th May. We reported to the Jewish Committee and there they registered us. And there, this couple, Aleksandrowicz was their name, a young married couple, asked me: 'Do you have a cousin named Olga?' So I said, 'Yes.' And she said that she used to go to

school with her. And she told me that she had left Lwow and crossed the border somewhere with a guide. And I found out that she had managed to get to Los Angeles, via Yokohama, together with her husband, who was called Erteschick, from Cracow. They hadn't managed to get married here, but they got married there, in Los Angeles.

I registered with the Committee, and from time to time they gave us some money, some food: dried cod. There may have been dinners there too. They helped us as much as they could, because we weren't working and didn't have anything. Everyone who came back from Russia was poor. We reported to Albin Kenner, who was a friend of Lamesdorf's from cheder, but he had also been in the same camp as us. He was the chief administrator in the hostel, and told us that there was no room for us. There were only places for people from the German camps. So I went to another registration point, but for Catholics. And there they were surprised, and said that they could give me a ticket to a hut with no floor. 'Why don't you go to your own people?' So I went back to the other place, and Lamesdorf had somehow managed to persuade that Kenner to take us in, as a favor. We slept on straw mattresses on the floor, for two weeks, in this tiny little room on the ground floor. We were happy just to be lying on those straw mattresses.

Later on, in the early hours of the morning, I heard that my aunt had arrived. And my sister-in-law; I recognized her voice. Later on, I met up with them. My uncle, my aunt's husband, Aleksander Eintracht, was still on his way back; he had been in a different camp and came back much later. I went to the radio with my aunt and there we registered that we were seeking our family. That was where everyone went who was looking for family, Polish Radio. We put out an announcement that we were seeking our family. We gave first names and surnames, I my nearest and my aunt her husband's. But we never found them...

After that, two weeks later, we were offered a better place in the Jewish hospice. Downstairs used to be a firm, Michal Kahan and Company. He had materials downstairs, and upstairs I think there was a warehouse. It was in the same building where our School of Commerce had been. We sawed up shelves to have somewhere to sleep, because there weren't any mattresses. I took my neighbor, Lamesdorf, to see our old apartment from before the war. We looked at it; I only went into one room. A family called Werner was living there. He was the director of the Cyganeria cafe, where Liebeskind 16 from the ZOB 17 had thrown the grenade [see 'Cyganeria' Campaign (22 December 1942)] 18.

We went to the lawyer, Keiner, who later changed his name to Korczak. His son was called Janusz, just like the famous Korczak 19. That lawyer, Keiner, or Korczak, said that if the judge knew what was what, he would allocate me at least one room. There was a hearing. The judge was called Guzek. He said: 'If you had a mother I would allocate you one room, but since you're alone you'll manage.' And they carried on living in our apartment, because that Werner came to the hearing, to the second hearing, with the caretaker, a woman called Mikolajowa. She was the caretaker from before the war, an old woman by then. And she said that my father had sold the furniture for 5,000 zloty to some guy from Warsaw [this probably should prove, that there was no property in the apartment, which could be claimed back; but also that moving had been planned].

Apparently my parents had moved to Czerwony Pradnik [a district of Cracow] before they went into the ghetto; I didn't even know. I also found out from my aunt that my parents had lived on the ground floor in the same building in the ghetto as her. And they had gone in the first transport, on

2nd June 1942. Apparently, first of all, on a Saturday, they had gone to do some road works, and my father hadn't managed to get them a blue card, which could have helped them live longer [Editor's note: The card confirming employment and necessity for the Germans, and permission for staying in the ghetto, was of blue color and attached to the 'Kennkarte']. And people who didn't have a blue card were deported at once along with the whole transport via Plaszow camp 20, and at Plaszow into what were probably cattle wagons. My uncle told me that they spread lime there. And then, when they went to Belzec, there weren't gas chambers at that time, but just exhaust fumes from motor vehicles. They weren't all taken away at the same time; other relatives went in later transports. All my relatives were there, my uncles and my aunts. They went in later transports.

My aunt, Otylia, or Tyla, from Mannheim, she and her family must have gone to Belzec too. And my uncle, the one whose name was Eintracht, who after the war settled in Czestochowa, and the others, were lucky: they went in different transports, to other camps, and somehow managed to survive the Holocaust. Hania, my Mom's sister, died, unfortunately. During the war she was taking kosher meat into the ghetto, as an Aryan. She looked Aryan. At the time she was living in Sedziszow, and she probably died there with her children. Her husband was shot in Lwow. It was him I had met in Lwow; he was the bookkeeper in Redlich's restaurant there. The Germans shot him and the Russians deported me. It was he, Izydor, who had tried to persuade me to go back to Poland. But I had registered myself and he hadn't. And it was probably because he hadn't registered that the Germans shot him. A guy I knew in the camp, Pukiet, told me about that.

Bluma, my mother's sister, had two children, two sons. One was perhaps five when the war broke out. The other was born in 1939. The elder was called Beno, and the second Macius. During the war, it could have been 1942, the end of 1942, the children were taken to the woods in a cart. Bluma and her husband were in the camps; they survived the Holocaust. Afterwards they lived together and had a daughter, Danuta. They are dead now. They were the only ones of the Stiel family to survive from Poland. Bluma is buried in Radomsko, because the Jewish cemetery in Czestochowa has been closed for a long time. My uncle was buried before her in the Jewish cemetery in Radomsko. And I made sure that my aunt was buried in a Jewish cemetery, because she was in danger of Poles burying her in a Christian cemetery. I couldn't have let that happen.

Their daughter is handicapped, mentally unstable. She lives in Czestochowa. She doesn't listen to me when I give her advice. I help her out financially. She dresses nicely, even gets a little benefit. She has a son, too, but from a mixed marriage. They live apart, because her son doesn't want to have anything to do with his mother; he hates her. He was christened without her knowing. Her husband, persuaded by the neighbor, took him to church to have him Christianized. They said they were going to the dentist. But my cousin doesn't know herself whether she's a Jew or a Pole or a Christian. I wrote to her and told her that she is a real Jew, but she doesn't know the Jewish religion; as a child she went maybe once to a prayer house in Czestochowa with her parents. I don't know whether she remembers.

Otylia Ryngiel, Dad's sister, died too. In 1938 her husband had to leave Germany because of Hitlerism. He used to come to Poland via the border crossing in Zbaszyn, and then he would come to Cracow and go to some place in Podgorze district. Dad told me that he was worried that he would commit suicide, that he would jump into the Vistula. But he didn't jump. In 1939 my aunt sent him a telegram: 'Our panes smashed'. They had a beautiful shop, you see, a fashion house

selling clothes. And Uncle Jakub didn't know what that meant. He thought that 'our panes' [in Polish 'szyby'] was some minister in Africa... And she moved out of their four-roomed apartment and sent all the furnishings from the four rooms here, to an apartment where some Poles lived. That's what my uncle said. And they both died, probably in Belzec. When I went out that day, back then on 5th September, to my friend's place to ask him if he wanted to escape with me, I met her. And she said goodbye to me and kissed me. I didn't know it was for the last time. You see, everyone was saying, lying, that the war was only going to last two weeks. A group of us from the Jewish community organization went to Belzec, in 1960 or 1961. There's a mass grave there. Those who wanted to cried, and then Fogiel recited the Kaddish.

We stayed in the building on Stradomska Street for a long time, until 1947, 14 of us, sleeping on bunks on mattresses. There was one woman, who slept on the floor under the window. She said she had been in hiding in the Missionaries' Church, just next door. But she left very soon. She was an older woman. Then Goldberg the barrister put this young woman from Gliwice in with us. She didn't have anywhere to sleep, and he let her stay. But there was this one older man there, a very devout man, who had worn a beard in Georgia. But when he came to Poland he shaved it off completely because he was afraid of anti-Semites. And he made a great fuss to the barrister: 'you can't do that, it's forbidden, our religion doesn't allow it, and it would be yayzokhore! [Polonized Yiddish]' In Yiddish 'yeyzey hara', 'temptation'[evil desire, yetzer hara in modern Hebrew]. But the barrister defended her and she slept there one night.

There were 14 of us there, and there were families in the neighboring rooms. There was a friend of mine from school, from another, higher grade, Gries, with his parents, who had managed to survive, in the Soviet Union perhaps. There was another family, called Fajg; he was a tailor. He and his wife lived next door. They already had a son, and their daughter was born there. They emigrated.

In January 1947 I moved into a little room on my own. There were a few houses like ours [shelters for Jews]. After the war whole families lived in them for quite some time, each family in a separate room. One night a family of Kiev Jews who had come from Georgia stayed there: two couples, older parents with a daughter, who had married a guy called Mozes from Lodz out there in Georgia. We went to their wedding. But all the families there were thinking about leaving and they emigrated. In the former Jewish Theater the Zionists were agitating, encouraging people to go to Palestine. And then there was a talk on the subject in another theater. This guy from Canada [a Polish Jew who survived the Holocaust in Canada] came and said that he was going to Palestine. They held these lectures and tried to persuade other people to go to Palestine. I went to two of those meetings. I thought about going. At the time the talk was of illegal emigration, just as emigration before the war was illegal.

When we arrived in Cracow in 1945, on Shavuot we went to Kupa Synagogue. There were entrances on two sides. On one side of it there was a market, and they would hang their rugs and other wares on the wall. And there was this one young chazzan, or cantor, but not a professional one. And he was leading the prayers. And during 'Shmoneesre', one of the lads from the market threw a stone on the roof. And after 'Shmoneesre' the chazzan took him into the synagogue. He didn't do anything to him, he was just in there a few minutes, and then he let him out. The prayers finished and we all left the synagogue on the other side. But the market traders had already got in position, all men, in two rows. And we went out down the middle, and were very lucky that they

didn't beat us up or kill us. I don't know exactly what the casualties were. Someone just said to me that some woman called Bergier was killed and someone dragged her along a street. And then there was talk of the Kielce incidents, perhaps a year later [see Kielce Pogrom] 21.

When it started here, with that stone, the caretaker ordered us to keep the door of our house locked. Some people started getting worked up and thought that the only thing to do was to get out of here, emigrate to Palestine: because if people were coming back, out of German and Russian camps and then started throwing stones at them here too, then things were very bad. Some people coming back to their homes were threatened, and they had to go to Palestine because they didn't have anywhere to live. And then in Kielce I think 42 people were murdered because they wanted to live in their own homes. No one did anything to us. We lived together, kept ourselves to ourselves, stayed on the street where our house was. And we had one route: from there to the synagogue and back. That way we didn't come into contact with Christians. Lamesdorf went to his friends', Poles, because he knew them from before the war. They were very nice people.

The largest emigration wave was between 1945 and 1950. You either needed an invitation or you went illegally - to Israel, to Palestine. As for me, my uncle promised to get me out. Uncle Luzor kept in touch with the family in Poland and pressed them to get me to go out there. When I went to HIAS 22, and asked if there was any chance of going to Argentina, they said that they could pay for me as far as Gdansk or Gdynia. I could have paid that, too; it was the journey on from there that was the problem. Aunt Karola wrote to me saying that the journey cost 10,000 pesetas. I didn't know how much that was in dollars. I didn't go. Karola persuaded her sister to go, though, after the war. My uncle wrote to me saying that I should borrow the money for the journey from her. But I didn't want to ask her, that Mrs. Hudes. Her first husband had been a barrister; the second one was the director in a materials factory. She was pleased that I didn't want to ask her for a loan. She emigrated with her son, a dental technician whose name was from his Aryan papers - Adamowicz. Her second husband died. After that I lost touch with them. They emigrated towards the end of the 1940s.

Another one of my uncles promised that we would go together, but I wasn't to tell anyone. He was going with his sister-in-law, because his wife had been killed. And he went. His ex-fiancee told me that if I would work with her then I could go with her. I worked for her for a few months. And she went and I stayed. Before that, my uncle ordered me to split from my friend, who I'd been in the camps with, and in Georgia, and in Cracow. And that friend went too, and I was left alone, high and dry. So they all fleeced me.

Then when I tried to arrange to leave through official channels, the authorities refused me. I paid 5,000 zloty, and went [to Warsaw] for a passport, because I received a summons. So I went and stood in the queue at the Ministry of Public Administration in Warsaw. This tiny little window; there weren't any bars like there are in prison, you just stood in the corridor. Apparently ten people were refused that time, and I was one of them. You either had to have 'protection' or you had to bribe them. I didn't have any protection there. One lady told me that she'd met a tailor up there in Warsaw who made the superintendent's clothes. So she managed to get one through her connection to him. I didn't know how you did these things. They told me to go back home and go to work. So I went; it was a holiday, the end of Sukkot. During Sukkot I was still up in Warsaw, but I was in a hurry to get back to Cracow, because I hadn't taken enough money with me.

After the war I changed my [first] name; I don't remember which year that was: perhaps it was 1954, or earlier. I changed it for a position. I wanted to get a position. A policewoman asked me whether I wanted to change my name. So I said 'Yes, to Daniel'. But when I went to the registry office, she said: 'That's just as bad.' Friends were changing their [family] names. One of them was called Sternrei. So he changed it to Sterynski. Goldwaser changed his name to Garda. In the Jewish Community people weren't interested in whether you changed your name or not. I wasn't interested in who changed their name and who didn't. People who converted must have changed their names if they had Jewish ones. We had this teacher in the fourth or fifth grade, and he said: 'You can say you're a Catholic, but you mustn't say that you believe in Christ.' That's what he said to us. I don't know how many people in Cracow converted after the war.

There were a lot of people who had had Aryan papers during the occupation and that's how they survived. They got these papers from a priest; I don't know if they had to convert, or pray, or if they had to kiss the cross. Or if they had to convert, or if they got the papers just like that. I think they must have had to learn prayers and play the role of a Catholic. However, my wife and I met a woman who lives near here. She looks like ten Jewesses, Semitic. And she says that she hid in churches. But she would only travel in 'nur fuer Deutsche' [the signs on the streetcars actually read 'Fuer nicht Juden']. But that seemed unlikely to me. And that woman deceived me, offering me help with formal matters connected with compensation [financial compensation for being sent to the Soviet Union and for the forced work there during the war].

Initially after the war I had casual work; it was hard to find a steady job. Amongst other things I took orders for signs that my friend made, and I started training in a watchmaker's workshop. I also worked in the Cracow Vodka and Liqueur Factory. Then I did office work in a few design offices for the coke, construction and mineral industries. After that I found employment in the Wawel Transport Cooperative and for a few years I was in their department in Balice [a village near Cracow]. In subsequent years I was a bookkeeper in the Cepelia Artistic Crafts Foundation and in the company RSW Prasa Ksiazka Ruch. I've been retired since 1985.

After the war in Cracow, in the first few post-war years, marriages between Jews took place; there were weddings. There was this one marriage between these children from an orphanage. The bridegroom was a teacher, I think. And they were married, and then there was a reception in the Jewish Community building. The people there were mostly orphans, who later emigrated. It was Maciej Jakubowicz [president of the Cracow Jewish Community till 1979] who organized it so that they could go. There were about 40 of them, but some people say that there were 100. All the children from the Jewish orphanage went to Palestine.

After the war prayers were held in Kupa Synagogue at first. I went there perhaps once. After that we went to Tempel [Synagogue] all the time, 25 years to Tempel. And other people went to Remuh. There was this split: Tempel and Remuh. The community organization decided, you see, and the Jewish Social and Cultural Society [TSKZ] 23, and this one barrister, Maurycy Wiener. I believe it was he who decided which synagogue to have renovated, to be open. One of all those synagogues had to be chosen to be open. They chose Tempel and Remuh. And I went to Tempel. And once I went to Remuh, because I wanted to observe an anniversary, because I'd been directed there. So this Gries, from the board of the Jewish community organization, told me that if I went to Tempel, I shouldn't go to Remuh. And then another guy from Remuh co-opted me from Tempel, told me I should go there [to Remuh], because there were fewer and fewer people there. I didn't

know what had happened for there to be fewer and fewer people. I thought that they were dying, but in fact they were emigrating.

Far more people went to Tempel than to Remuh. After the war I even saw my teacher Mr. Aleksandowicz there; he greeted everyone, including me, as one of his pupils. I liked going to Tempel, because it was close. The president of the Jewish community organization, Maciej Jakubowicz went there too, and lots of other people. That synagogue was renovated in 1946 or 1947. And I painted the Magen David, the Star of David, and the four letters, the name of God. A full renovation was carried out much later, between 1994 and 2000, thanks to an American foundation.

The first seder was held in 1946. At that time Maciej Jakubowicz was the chair of the community. But for ten years under First Secretary Boleslaw Bierut 24 seders weren't allowed. The chairman was afraid, and the community was afraid, because the country authorities didn't allow it. And then there was the time when all the chairmen of all the Jewish communities and presidents of JSCS had to sign a declaration saying that they were against the Israeli-Arab war. Anyone who didn't sign was arrested. Maciej Jakubowicz didn't sign and he was arrested and sent to Wroclaw, and was in prison there. And then when we did have a seder after that, the chairman wasn't there, because he had been arrested for not being against the war in Israel.

Just after the war, when I was learning watch mending, the shop where I was working was open on a Saturday. But I was excused and didn't go to work on Saturdays. I went to Tempel. They [the shop-owners] were Jews, so they let me. And they worked. They were all camp survivors. I knew two of them from school. I went with one of them to Mizrachi, and with the younger one to the School of Commerce. They left too; two of them with their families went to Israel, and the third, a bachelor, went to Belgium. The family was called Tennenbaum, one was Benek, the second Izek, and the third Moniek. Their mother survived a concentration camp. Their father had been a watchmaker before the war; he'd had a little shop in the entranceway to our School of Commerce. He didn't survive the war. And the guy who worked with them, called Dawid Rap, he emigrated to where his brother was; it could have been New York. I saw him off at the station.

The policy of the state after the war was such that if they greased somebody's palm or if they had contacts they could go to Israel. But if you didn't know the right people and didn't give a bribe, you couldn't go. They had a quota, a limit. So and so many people could go. And the people who went, even illegally, were in camps after the war [Displaced Persons camps]. They lived in Germany for two years, waiting for them to get houses ready in Israel, in Palestine. There was no repression for belonging to the Jewish community. Anyone who was Jewish, who had ID, could be a member. I didn't have any unpleasant experiences at work on that account, other than a few incidents.

Back then, I don't know if it was 1968, Gomulka was on his way out [see Gomulka Campaign] 25. He fired people on the quiet; there was this order that all Jews who were directors should be fired. And he had them branded Zionists. They didn't have anything at all to do with the synagogue, or with religion. They hadn't seen a synagogue in their lives. Gomulka gave a speech and made a show of not being anti-Semitic. He gave a shameful speech, and the whole world knew it. Everybody got fired and had to leave, because they couldn't get work. There were already others in their places. And because of Wladyslaw Gomulka the economy got a lot worse and there were riots. And the army came; there were tanks on the street. On the Square [the Main Square in Cracow]

there wasn't a soul. I wanted to get to the streetcar. I got near to the crowd at the corner of the Square. The police didn't let anyone onto the Square. When I joined the crowd there was gas, tear gas. We had to cover our eyes and noses and get off the street. Yes, he made the situation worse. He took people who weren't experts to head important enterprises.

My partner Renata Zisman was born in Zywiec. She had one sister. She lived in Zywiec with her parents and her grandparents. Her father came from Poronin. There's even a card that he wrote to his wife-to-be, his fiancee, in German. They lived in Silesia, so they spoke German, like all Germans. It was a progressive family. They would go to the synagogue there when it was the feast of Pesach, or Yom Kippur. But other than that they didn't keep kosher. Her grandmother had kept kosher, but they didn't bother. Renata stuck together with her sister, because they were in five concentration camps together, to the very end.

Renata was 18 when the war started. She was seeing Jerzy Sussman, a friend from Zywiec. He came round to her house a lot. Renata's father didn't like his visiting her, but he came anyway. During the war Renata and her family were sent to the Cracow ghetto. When her parents were taken away to Belzec on 28th October 1942, Jerzy looked after Renata and her sister Elzbieta. From the ghetto the two girls were both sent to the camp in Plaszow. While she was in the camp [in Plaszow] Renata managed to cross the wires into the men's barrack. There, before witnesses, she and Jerzy Sussman were married. After that there was kogiel mogiel [made of egg and sugar, the symbolic wedding party, cause they didn't have anything else], but Renata didn't say who ate it. And that was the end of the whole ceremony. I don't know who married them.

Soon afterwards Renata and her sister were transferred to Auschwitz- Birkenau. After that Renata was in two more camps in Germany. She stayed together with her sister Elzbieta all the time; they were together in all the camps. Usually families were split up but they managed to stay together until the end. After the end of the war Renata first went back to Zywiec, because it was her hometown. Then she came to Cracow and lived here with her sister, in the home of some servant of her grandparents: temporarily, because she didn't have a roof over her head. Her sister, Elzbieta, went to music school, and had a very nice mezzo-soprano voice. I didn't know her, because she died very young; she was 39. She left two sons. She had a very nasty husband. She was very unhappy with him.

Later on Renata found her husband, who was in a group of returnees from the camp. They went back to Zywiec together. After selling the family home they returned to Cracow. Because they didn't have any documents confirming their marriage in Plaszow - no ketubbah had been drawn up - after the war they had to have their marriage confirmed by the courts. My wife [partner] taught piano at a music school. She taught for 40 years in the same school, and it was very hard to make a living from one school. There were several head teachers, and one was Jewish; Hoffman, his name was. Another one was called Tippe. My wife Renata was a member of the Jewish community organization and the JSCS. She also belonged to the association for survivors of Auschwitz-Birkenau. And she would often play [the piano] there for free. She got acknowledgements in 50 different newspapers. She went to the synagogue, but the women didn't go regularly. The women only used to go on holidays, or when there were prayers for the dead. My partner didn't know the Hebrew alphabet. The best proof of that was that when she sat in the synagogue she held her prayer book upside-down. And someone told her. Sometimes she'd come to the synagogue without informing me in advance. I didn't know whether she'd be coming or not.

Renata didn't want to be alone. She was a widow when I met her. Her first husband had died; he was 22 years older than her. We were together a long time, 20 years. We couldn't get married because I told Renata that there was no rabbi. At that time there really was no rabbi. And secondly - I don't know whether, if there had been a rabbi, he would have let me marry a widow. I'm not allowed to marry a divorcee; as to a widow I don't know. [Mr. Bertram is not sure whether he could marry a widow, but in fact - according to the law- he could.]

My wife liked her nephews very much, but they emigrated. One lives in Holmes, which is some 600 kilometers north of New York, I think. And the other one lived in New York and in California. He was there with his wife. And after eight years they had a little girl. After 14 years he came here and gave some lectures on American business. He didn't live in Cracow, but in Myslenice. And to this day he lives in Myslenice, but I think he commutes to Cracow. He's in real estate brokerage, with his half-brother Marek. Their father had two sons with Renata's sister and a third with his third wife. He had three wives. The first wife and their little daughter were murdered by the Germans. His second wife was Elzbieta Rand, Renata's sister.

Before 1989 I used to go abroad like all Poles. Because we had very low wages, in the 1970s and 1980s we used to travel to trade [to other countries of the former socialist bloc]. All the Poles used to do it, everyone who was young and healthy. We used to buy things here - we knew what to buy here, what to sell there, and what to buy there, to bring back here to commission shops. I used to go to Romania, and after that to Hungary. When I started traveling with Renata I stopped trading.

My wife went to Israel two or three times at the invitation of her uncle. It was very hard to get a plane ticket. And later, thanks to Renata, I went too, invited by her uncle. It was the 1980s when I went, because I remember communism was still in force. I spent twelve days there and came back. That was when my wife was still alive. She died in 1999. After the death of my partner I also saw Europe. I've been to places including Britain and Germany.

After the war, I was riding on the back running board of the streetcar when I heard a familiar voice from my childhood. I recognized it as my friend Reinstein, Szymek or something, his first name was, I can't remember exactly. And I turned round, and it really was my friend Reinstein. He said that he was now called Rogulski, and had come back with his wife. They had come from Paris. I don't know whether she was Polish. She spoke Polish, but she could speak very good French. Where he managed to survive I don't know. He was working here in some design office. He wasn't here for long. The kid, a son, was at boarding school. That was in the Gomulka era. The little boy was persecuted. And she, the mother, hauled her husband over the coals, the father of her son. She said she was leaving Poland. She said that in France, the richer a Jew, the more respect they have for him. And she was going back to France. An energetic woman, she was. So they went to France; I saw them off at the station. On the last day, when I was at their apartment, I saw that they had a cross concealed. A big cross, hidden behind this kind of wooden partition wall from a bed. I don't know if he converted.

Another friend of mine, Henryk Kleinberger, was in the camp at Turgenevo. After that I lost touch with him, because he was deported to another camp with another gang. And after the war, when I was back in Cracow, I didn't know where he was. I met him near Tempel. He had come back from Germany. After that he studied pharmacy, and when he graduated he did his compulsory military service, as a pharmacist. While he was in the army, they asked who wanted to go to Israel, or to

Palestine. So he was among those who decided to go. He was in the army at Olsztyn. After that he came back to Cracow, was here for a short time, and then he started to prepare to leave for Israel. He went there and got married. I found out later from his wife, when I wrote him a letter, that he was dead; he'd had a stroke. He died young; he was 57, I think. And I met him in that camp, so far away, and he'd lived so near me before the war.

After the war I worked in various enterprises, and I was the only Jew so I had to get used to that company. Over about two years I traveled [as a sales representative] to 22 shops and 16 towns on business. I didn't have a private life at all, and I was always alone in hotels. I went on one of those trips with this woman Asbury. We were doing inventories. And once she offended me; she said to me 'You Jew!' I was offended; I didn't want to go to work. There was another woman there, who persuaded me to go. So I went to work as if nothing had happened. But after that they had this conciliatory committee, for her to apologize. That was a meeting in the workplace where she had to explain herself. Asbury claimed she had been out of her mind. I didn't know what right she had to be drinking alcohol before work; we started work before 7 or at 8. And she should have apologized to me. But the commission said that I had to kiss her.

The second was Mrs. Krawczuk, the wife of a judge. Well, her husband worked in the courts, so I don't know whether he was a judge or a prosecutor or the porter. I wasn't afraid of her, but she offended me. She said 'You Jew!' too. First she asked me about Gomulka, about Palestine, and about what Zionism was. I answered: patriotism, love for one's fatherland. And one time she said to me: 'You Jew!' So I had her up before the commission just the same, so that she would apologize to me. And in spite of requests I didn't withdraw my motion. When I was at the Workers' Publishing Co- operative Prasa Ksiazka Ruch there was this one Ukrainian woman there, Marysia Wlodarska. And at 3 sharp everyone left. I was getting my coat on too, taking it off the peg. And Marysia came in with her friend. She opened the door, and I was stuck between the door and the wall. 'That Icek's gone!' [Icek - a derogatory name for Jews, from a shortened Jewish name Yitzhak]. And I just stood there and didn't say anything. And then she closed the door and saw that 'Icek'. That was the anti-Semite she was.

Other than that all the other women were very good. There was one time I brought a packet of matzah to work. And I gave each woman one - they were all women there. Only one of them didn't want to accept it, because she had been brought up to believe that there was Christian blood in it [the blood libel myth]. And she wouldn't accept it. Otherwise she was very good to me, but she wouldn't take the matzah.

There were two rabbis in Cracow after the war. One was called Steinberg and the other Lewertow. Lewertow went to the US, and there, apparently, he was rescuing someone from being run over and was run over himself and died. They didn't stay long in Cracow, because rabbis didn't want to stay here. They thought they wouldn't be able to get kosher food here. The only kosher food was from the Jewish community organization, where you could eat lunch for free every day. But they thought it was their sacred duty to go to Palestine or to the States. They thought that there wouldn't be any Jews here any longer, that they wouldn't have anything to do here. Why would a rabbi want to stay around here with only non-Jews. So for a long time there was no rabbi at all. Even if anyone had wanted a wedding, a ritual one, they couldn't have, because there was no way. There were only civil weddings. Only later did Rabbi Joskowicz come, for a few years. [Pinchas Menachem Joskowicz, the chief rabbi rabbi of Poland from the late 1980s till 1999, officially lived in

Warsaw, but spent most of his time in Israel.]

After him came Sasza Pecaric [the rabbi working at the Lauder Foundation center in Cracow till 2003]. And if anyone wanted to get married, he married him or her. He married perhaps two couples. As to the first one, she was English and he was an Austrian from Vienna. We went to the wedding service and the reception, which went on all night. And the wedding took place on Lag ba-Omer, which is the 33rd day counting from Pesach. I can't remember what year that was in, but I have a photograph. After the war marriages tended to be mixed. All the people who have been going to Remuh for some time now, those who stayed and didn't emigrate, all of them have Polish wives, except Reiner. Reiner's wife was Jewish. And I didn't have a Polish wife. But other than that they all had Polish wives.

My wife died on 30th July 1999. I had to organize her funeral. It was very hard for me, because the chairman said the funeral would be soon, and he set the date. I had too little time. Some people came back from vacation especially for the funeral. My wife had an awful lot of friends. And there was a speech at the grave. The chairman's wife, Ribenbauer, spoke. And as well as that there was an article in the press; it could have been Gazeta Wyborcza [a Polish national daily]. And there was one in a Warsaw Jewish paper as well. It was on 2nd or 3rd August 1999. I had a tombstone made, a beautiful one. And I listed all the camps: her name and surname, and her maiden name, and the date of her death. The Jewish community organization took care of funerals. There had to be a minyan, ten people, at least. And there was this one guy, Fogel and either he recited the Kaddish or 'Eyl mole rakhamim' [El mole rachamim - God full of mercy] at the cemetery, or Stein did [Wlodzimierz Stein, cantor in the Cracow Jewish Community]. Since Fogel's been gone [dead], Stein recites it. But it's getting harder and harder to get a minyan together in Cracow.

After the collapse of the system in 1989 I didn't work any more. I retired in 1985, in January. I was 65 then. I wasn't needed in my workplace any longer; the feeling was that young people should be taken on. I looked for a job in other places, but the only one I was offered was as a porter, so I turned it down. Not very much changed in my life in 1989. Only the fact that you started talking about the war, with both friends and people you didn't know. We reminisced about being expelled, about our time in the camps. We hadn't talked about that since the war, you didn't talk about who had survived and how. But after 1989 television crews started coming, and they began a series of interviews about experiences during the war. So we started reminiscing. A lot of Jews came to Cracow, but most of them were no one we knew. After the collapse of communism people who had formerly been conspiratorial about being Jewish started to reveal it and started coming to the synagogue, people who often had changed surnames, sometimes even people who had been baptized as Catholics.

During Jewish holidays I go to the synagogue, and on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings too. I have been a member of the Jewish community organization since 1945; I mean first I joined the Jewish Committee and then the community organization. I am one of its oldest members, because a lot of people have died, a lot of people have moved away. I also belong to the TSKZ, and recently we've had a Seniors' Club created. I take part in the meetings of the TSKZ Jewish Combatants' Association. Unfortunately not many people come to these meetings. There are a lot of older people, but then again the type of activities on offer don't appeal to everyone. We are informed about all the most important events, we organize trips together, we meet in rooms owned by the TSKZ and the Jewish Community.

These institutions also offer various types of assistance: material, medical, rehabilitation. During the week, for instance, I get free kosher dinners. A few times a year I go on 'camps' [organized by the Lauder Foundation] to Srodborow or to Ladek Zdroj, or to a sanatorium. I also meet other Cracow Jews on Sabbath and holidays at the synagogue. But not many people come to the synagogue [Remuh synagogue on Szeroka Street], and unfortunately we can't make up a minyan. The only ones who come are [Wlodzimierz] Stein, Tuszynski, Akerman and Liban. Liban is this kind of caretaker, shammash, who didn't start coming to the synagogue until 1989. Or maybe even later. Usually there are five of us, but [Henryk] Halkowski [trained as an architect, but by choice a journalist and translator, author of a collection of essays, 'The Jewish Life'] also comes in at the very end of the prayers. And when groups [of tourists] come to the synagogue, mostly from Israel, then there is a minyan. Jews from other countries come too, and then we usually speak in English in the synagogue.

Glossary

1 German occupation of Poland (1939-45)

World War II began with the German attack on Poland on 1st September 1939. On 17th September 1939 Russia occupied the eastern part of Poland (on the basis of the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact). The east of Poland up to the Bug river was incorporated into the USSR, while the north and west were annexed to the Third Reich. The remaining lands comprised what was called the General Governorship - a separate state administered by the German authorities. After the outbreak of war with the USSR in June 1941 Germany occupied the whole of Poland's pre-war territory. The German occupation was a system of administration by the police and military of the Third Reich on Polish soil. Poland's own administration was dismantled, along with its political parties and the majority of its social organizations and cultural and educational institutions. In the lands incorporated into the Third Reich the authorities pursued a policy of total Germanization. As regards the General Governorship the intention of the Germans was to transform it into a colony supplying Polish unskilled slave labor. The occupying powers implemented a policy of terror on the basis of collective liability. The Germans assumed ownership of Polish state property and public institutions, confiscated or brought in administrators for large private estates, and looted the economy in industry and agriculture. The inhabitants of the Polish territories were forced into slave labor for the German war economy. Altogether, over the period 1939-45 almost three million people were taken to the Third Reich from the whole of Poland.

2 Sephardi Jewry

Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin. Their ancestors settled down in North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, South America, Italy and the Netherlands after they had been driven out from the Iberian peninsula at the end of the 15th century. About 250,000 Jews left Spain and Portugal on this occasion. A distant group among Sephardi refugees were the Crypto- Jews (Marranos), who converted to Christianity under the pressure of the Inquisition but at the first occasion reassumed their Jewish identity. Sephardi preserved their community identity; they speak Ladino language in their communities up until today. The Jewish nation is formed by two main groups: the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi group which differ in habits, liturgy their relation toward Kabala, pronunciation as well in their philosophy.

3 Hasid

The 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.

4 November Uprising

from the end of the 18th century until World War I the territory of Poland was divided up between the Russian and the Habsburg Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia. Poland's attempts to regain its sovereignty gave rise to a number of armed uprisings in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th. The November Uprising, which covered the lands of the Russian partition, lasted from 29th November 1830 until October 1831. It erupted on the back of the European revolutionary movements, but its main cause was the internal situation in the Kingdom of Poland (violation of the 1815 constitution, tax pressure, and repression). The uprising was prepared by a conspiracy of officer cadets.. The defeat led to a curbing in the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, intensified oppression of Poles in all the lands of the partitions, and a wave of emigration from the Polish lands to Western Europe.

5 Ozjasz Thon (1870-1936)

born in Lvov, studied theology and philosophy at Berlin University. On obtaining his doctorate he became a rabbi at the progressive Tempel synagogue in the Cracow Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, where he worked from 1898-1936. He helped Theodor Herzl organize the First Zionist Congress in 1897. He was one of the fathers and activists of the Zionist movement in Galicia, as well as a member of the World Zionist Organization's Executive Committee, the leader of the moderate fraction of 'Et Liwnot' (time to build) and the initiator of the convening in 1918 in Cracow of the Jewish National Council. In 1918 he went to Paris, where he was later a member of the Jewish delegation to the Paris peace conference. In 1919-1935 he was a deputy to the Polish Sejm [Parliament], and also the chairman of the Polish Jewish Deputies' Parliamentary Club. A Rabbi, a politician, and also a publicist, he wrote articles and papers in Polish, Hebrew, Yiddish, German and English. He is buried in the cemetery on Miodowa Street in Cracow.

6 Hatikvah

Anthem of the Zionist movement, and national anthem of the State of Israel. The word 'ha-tikvah' means 'the hope'. The anthem was written by Naftali Herz Imber (1856-1909), who moved to Palestine from Galicia in 1882. The melody was arranged by Samuel Cohen, an immigrant from Moldavia, from a musical theme of Smetana's Moldau (Vltava), which is based on an Eastern European folk song.

7 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.

8 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.

9 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'. In Poland the JNF was active in two periods, 1919-1939 and 1945-1950. In preparing its colonization campaign, Keren Kayemet le-Israel collaborated with the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod.

10 Keren Hayesod

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. Keren Hayesod operated in Poland from 1922-1939 and 1947-1950.

11 Kazimierz

Now a district of Cracow lying south of the Main Market Square, it was initially a town in its own right, which received its charter in 1335. Kazimierz was named in honor of its founder, King Casimir the Great. In 1495 King Jan Olbracht issued the decision to transfer the Jews of Cracow to Kazimierz. From that time on a major part of Kazimierz became a center of Jewish life. Before 1939

more than 64,000 Jews lived in Cracow, which was some 25% of the city's total population. Only the culturally assimilated Jewish intelligentsia lived outside Kazimierz. Until the outbreak of World War II this quarter remained primarily a Jewish district, and was the base for the majority of the Jewish institutions, organizations and parties. The religious life of Cracow's Jews was also concentrated here; they prayed in large synagogues and a multitude of small private prayer houses. In 1941 the Jews of Cracow were removed from Kazimierz to the ghetto, created in the district of Podgorze, where some died and the remainder were transferred to the camps in Plaszow and Auschwitz. The majority of the pre-war monuments, synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in Kazimierz have been preserved to the present day, and a few Jewish institutions continue to operate.

12 NKVD

People's Committee of Internal Affairs; it took over from the GPU, the state security agency, in 1934.

13 Gulag

The Soviet system of forced labor camps in the remote regions of Siberia and the Far North, which was first established in 1919. However, it was not until the early 1930s that there was a significant number of inmates in the camps. By 1934 the Gulag, or the Main Directorate for Corrective Labor Camps, then under the Cheka's successor organization the NKVD, had several million inmates. The prisoners included murderers, thieves, and other common criminals, along with political and religious dissenters. The Gulag camps made significant contributions to the Soviet economy during the rule of Stalin. Conditions in the camps were extremely harsh. After Stalin died in 1953, the population of the camps was reduced significantly, and conditions for the inmates improved somewhat.

14 The Sikorski-Majski Pact

concluded on 30th July 1941 between the governments of Poland and the USSR in London, it contained a declaration by the Soviet authorities that the Soviet-German pacts of 1939 regarding territorial changes in Poland were no longer valid, a joint declaration of the resumption of diplomatic relations, mutual aid and support in the war against the Third Reich, and Soviet consent to the creation of a Polish Army in the USSR. Auxiliary protocols provided for the amnesty of Polish citizens imprisoned in the USSR (on the basis of the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR of 12th August 1941 several hundred thousand people were released).

15 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.

16 Liebeskind, Aharon Adolf 'Dolek' (1912-1942)
central activist of the religious Zionist Akiva movement and member of the Jewish underground in the Cracow ghetto. He was secretary of the Akiva movement (appointed in 1939) and went to live in Warsaw until the war broke out. Liebeskind refused to accept a Palestine immigration certificate, which would have saved his life. In December 1940 he was asked to run an agricultural training program on a Jewish settlement near Cracow. He used his position to cover a variety of underground activities in Cracow, including the distribution of pamphlets, organization of money transfers, and contacts with other Jewish underground organizations. The deportation of Cracow's Jews convinced Liebeskind that the only response to the German mass murders was armed combat. Along with his best friend, Avraham Leibowicz (Laban), he became commander of the fighting organization of the Pioneer Jews, Hachalutz Halohem. In November 1942 Liebeskind and his Akiva staff moved their headquarters to the non-Jewish side of Cracow. On 22nd December 1942, the joint forces of Hachalutz Halohem and P.P.R. Jewish Units attacked German targets. Following the attack, the headquarters of the youth movement fell, as did most of the Hachalutz Halohem members. On 24th December 1942 Liebeskind was caught and killed in the bunker of the movement headquarters.

17 ZOB (Jewish Fighting Organization)
An armed organization formed in the Warsaw ghetto; it took on its final form (uniting Zionist, He-Halutz and Bund youth organizations) in October 1942. ZOB also functioned in other towns and cities in occupied Poland. It offered military training, issued appeals, procured arms for its soldiers, planned the defense of the Warsaw ghetto, and ultimately led the fighting in the ghetto on two occasions, the uprisings in January and April 1943.

18 Cyganeria Campaign (22nd December 1942)
one of the key campaigns of the Cracow branch of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB): a bomb was lobbed into the German coffee house 'Cyganeria' in Cracow. Among those who took part in the campaign were Dolek Liebeskind, Jicchak Zuckermann, Jehuda Liber and Chawka Foldmann. No one died in the attack, but a few days later the German police picked up the location of one of the ZOB bunkers. During the shoot-out Dolek Liebeskind and Jehuda Tennenbaum were killed.

19 Korczak, Janusz (1878/79-1942)
Polish Jewish doctor, pedagogue, writer of children's literature. He was the co-founder and director (from 1911) of the Jewish orphanage in Warsaw. He also ran a similar orphanage for Polish children. Korczak was in charge of the Jewish orphanage when it was moved to the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940. He was one of the best-known figures behind the ghetto wall, refusing to leave the ghetto and his charges. He was deported to the Treblinka extermination camp with his charges in August 1942. The whole transport was murdered by the Nazis shortly after its arrival in the camp.

20 Plaszow Camp

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

21 Kielce Pogrom

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

22 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 U.S., 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 emigres, helped deal with formalities involved in emigration, and provided material assistance and care for emigres.

23 TSKZ (Social and Cultural Society of Polish Jews)
founded in 1950 when the Central Committee of Polish Jews merged with the Jewish Society of Culture. From 1950-1991 it was the sole body representing Jews in Poland. Its statutory aim was to develop, preserve and propagate Jewish culture. During the socialist period this aim was subordinated to communist ideology. Post-1989 most young activists gravitated towards other Jewish organizations. However, the SCSPJ continues to organize a range of cultural events and has its own magazine, The Jewish Word. However, it is primarily an organization of older people, who have been involved with it for years.

24 Bierut Boleslaw, pseud
Janowski, Tomasz (1892-1956): communist activist and politician. In the interwar period he was a member of the Polish Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Poland; in 1930-32 he was an officer in the Communist Internationale in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. Starting in 1943 Bierut was a member of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party and later PZPR (the Polish United Workers' Party), where he held the highest offices. From 1944-47 he was the president of the National Council, from 1947-52 president of Poland, from 1952-54 prime minister, and in 1954-56 first secretary of the Central Committee of the PZPR. Bierut followed a policy of Polish dependency on the USSR and the Sovietization of Poland. He was responsible for the employment of organized violence to terrorize society into submission. He died in Moscow.

25 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.