Chaim Henryk Ejnesman

Chaim Henryk Ejnesman
Podkowa Lesna
Poland
Interviewer: Marta Cobel-Tokarska
Date of interview: October – December 2004

I met with Mr. Ejnesman four times. Chaim Ejnesman is a charming, elderly gentleman, tall and blue-eyed; he hasn't yet regained full mobility after suffering a stroke. He's very modest and shy. In fact, only during our last meeting did he manage to relax enough to look me in the eyes, joke and answer more freely. Unfortunately, Mr. Ejnesman doesn't have the temperament of a storyteller; he is not talkative. In addition to that, his memory doesn't serve him well; I asked him about certain issues several times and still he didn't manage to reach some far-away memories.

My family history

My family was large: the Tenenbaum and Ejnesman family. The Ejnesmans, from my father's side, lived in Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski. I didn't know them; I had only heard about them. We never went there, to Ostrowiec, from Radoszyce. My father would sometimes go there, but he never took us with him. On my father's side, they were all very religious, more than on my mother's side. I don't remember my grandmother, as I never did meet her. But I do remember what my grandfather's name was – Mordka Ejnesman. He made leather; he had a small factory, a tannery in Ostrowiec.

We all lived in Radoszyce. We kept in touch more with my mother's family because they were close by. I remember my grandparents from my mother's side; that is Grandfather died early, but I remember my grandmother very well. She was a good granny, like grannies are. Her name was Chaja Tenenbaum. I don't remember my grandfather's name. It's been so many years. Grandfather Tenenbaum was a councilor in the community. My grandmother died before the war, I think I was little then. And my grandfather also died early. I didn't know any of my grandfather's or grandmother's siblings. It was a large family, all of them born in Radoszyce. They spoke German perfectly, because they all studied in Austria. They were a merchant family. Everything was – 'biznes' [Mr Ejnesman uses the English word – business]. They did well.

They were more of a modern family, not that they ate treyf food; they kept the Saturday tradition and everything, but not as much. Because on my father's side it was different, there was no possibility of playing with Poles. On my mother's side that was different. [The mother's family had contacts with Poles, for example business contacts.] So, how did they meet up? How did my parents meet? Well, like it used to be then, through a matchmaker: they courted and they made

the match. After all, they didn't go to a disco, because there were no discos then. My parents spoke Polish and Yiddish. It was really a true Jewish family. You can't say there was no assimilation; everything was normal. My mother was at home and took care of the children, and my father worked.

My father's name was Chil. I don't remember which year he was born in. He was a very pious man. Not that he'd wear sidelocks, no, but he was pious. He'd wear a chalat [kaftan]; he had a different one for weekdays and for holidays. For the holidays: Saturday, Sunday or Yom Kippur he had a shiny satin one. We celebrated all the holidays at home. My father was an ordinary person, like me. He went to a rabbinical school: a yeshivah. I don't know if it was in Kielce, or maybe in Ostrowiec. He was a good singer. He had a vibrant voice. I'd always think that the ceiling would fall down when he was singing. He would have been much more successful in America than in Radoszyce. He had a beautiful voice. So beautiful!

I'd also sing, I inherited this talent, yes. But when I had the stroke [in 1990, in Canada], something got damaged there. After all, I used to go along with my father and sing with him. He'd always take us, my older brother and me. I was already able to help him in many things. I'd sing the Kol Nidre with him. On Saturday, the holiday, one could never go anywhere, one had to stay with my father, because I had to sing with him.

My father worked for a cotton-wool maker, where they made wool for blankets. He supervised there. There was a carding mill; this wool would be spun and he'd cut it when it was finished. But during the holidays he was only a cantor. He'd get up at 5am and go to the prayer house, because he had to get to work by 6am every day. And he went to the rabbi to pray, every day in the morning and evening, before sunset.

In Radoszyce there were two rabbi brothers. Their last name was Finkler. One was a rav, the second one was a rabbi; in Yiddish that's a rav and a rebbe. Everyone knows what row and rebbe means. The rav is the one you go to see when you feel something's wrong. And he was supported by the community. And the rebbe, the second one, lived only off the gifts of people who'd come to see him. The row took care of all the matters of local Jews. He was a wise man. Both brothers were wise. After the war, already in Canada, in Toronto, I met the sons of this row, those who survived; the rebbe didn't have any children. And the row had two sons left. Alive. They hid in the forest and they survived. And one son, the third one, died when he left the partisans in the woods. After the war they went to Canada. Before the war one of them taught Hebrew in Szydlowiec, this Finkler. And the second one was young, like me.

On holidays, especially on Yom Kippur, my father would go to Ruda Maleniecka [a small town several kilometers from Radoszyce]. There was a tiny prayer house there; not many Jews lived there and they didn't have their own cantor. So he'd go there and sometimes take me with him. I remember when my father went there once for a wedding. And then, after the wedding, the musicians drowned. They went for a swim and they drowned. It was so unfortunate, so much talk, everyone talked about this.

My mother's name was Laja, maiden name Tenenbaum. She spoke Polish well. She went to school in Austria; I know that, because it was often mentioned at home. So she spoke perfect German. When she was absent-minded, she'd speak German to us, but it was almost like Yiddish, so we'd understand everything. My mother kept the house, she took care of us, and she cooked by herself.

We weren't rich enough to have a nanny. Just like my father, she could also sing, she'd walk around humming all kinds of songs. She was gentler than Father. She ran a store. A kind of general store, everything was sold there, paint, lime, etc. in the market square in Radoszyce.

She had beautiful dark eyes. She wore a sheitl; after all, she had no hair. But I heard that when she was young, she had long wavy black hair. I had such hair as well. These waves. Though I look more like my father, and my sister Mania looked more like my mother. My mother was pretty. Sure she was, but it doesn't matter. They are all dead by now anyway. It's been so many years since the war. There's simply nothing to talk about. You've got to come to terms with it. It's difficult, but you've got to. I haven't got even one picture of my mother.

My mother had many siblings: there was Uncle Szmul Aron, Aunt Bela, Uncle Icek, Aunt Tauba, Aunt Sara and one more aunt, whose name I don't remember. They were all quite well off, both those, who lived in Radoszyce and those, who lived elsewhere. They could afford anything.

Uncle Szmul had a rye warehouse in Radoszyce. And other grocery products, Uncle Icek lived in Radoszyce, next to the church on Koscielna Street, in a large brick house. I don't even know what's there now. Uncle Icek had a large stationer's store. There were all kinds of accessories there, paper, books, everything. He had Jewish books as well, I remember. Now this would be something like a bookstore. I knew my way to that store, because I used to carry all kinds of goods there. Teachers would give me a piece of paper with an order, what to bring, for home and for school, and my uncle would send me. I always helped him. Then my uncle got married to a lady from Opoczno. They met through a matchmaker. He could have married in Radoszyce, but he didn't. He was one of the wealthier people in town. His store was the only one in the area. He sold supplies to teachers everywhere. He could have even afforded a car, but he didn't have one. There were only a few people in Radoszyce who were as wealthy as Uncle Icek, for example the one who owned a gas station; I don't remember his name.

There was also Aunt Tauba in Kielce. She lived on Bodzentynska Street. I remember this exactly; I just don't remember the number. Before the war I went to Kielce many times, because Uncle Szmul Aron used to buy rye and take it to Kielce, to Grossman's mill. My uncle had a car and we'd go there twice a week. There weren't as many cars then as there are now. There were maybe two or three trucks in Radoszyce. I didn't even see any small cars. So when we'd go to Kielce with my uncle, we'd visit Aunt Tauba. Her husband had died, so she was left alone. She had two sons in Paris [France] and her daughter got married in Canada. Aunt Tauba used to tell us, when she'd come to Radoszyce, that she had a daughter in America. At that time you wouldn't say Canada. Just America. That was the cousin I met in Edmonton [after the war, in the 1950s Chaim Ejnesman immigrated to Canada]. But she's dead now, too.

My mother had one more sister in Lodz. I have to think what her name was … yes, Sara. She lived in Lodz, on Zydowska Street, and her husband worked at Szajbler's. This was some kind of workshop, but I don't remember what they produced. I stayed with them for three years. First my sister Mania lived with that aunt, then, when she'd managed to put away some money, she rented an apartment and then she sent for me. Aunt Sara ran a kosher house. She kept all the holidays, but there was a different system there. My uncle sometimes had to go to work at Szajbler's on Saturdays. Not always in the morning, he could go in the afternoon sometimes. He worked there in a warehouse; they had to take inventory, so he had to go. In Radoszyce it was unheard of to work

on Saturdays.

There was one more aunt, I don't remember her first name; her last name was Przytycka. She had a kosher restaurant opposite the rabbi's house, there on Zydowska Street. She also had some daughters and a son. A large family. My aunt had a house on the corner and there was a well next to it. When the customers came to the restaurant, they'd go wash their hands there. This I remember well. And I would carry water from that well to my aunt's house. These customers were mostly Jews from Czestochowa; on Sundays they came by car to visit our Rabbi Finkler. They had no rabbi there, so they came all the way to Radoszyce. [Editor's note: It's very unlikely that there was no rabbi in Czestochowa.] They drank coffee at the restaurant. I saw this grinder they used to make that coffee. There was also a samovar at the restaurant. We didn't use to drink coffee at home, just grain coffee, 'Inka,' there was no real coffee.

And on my father's side there was an uncle in Bodzentyn: Nusen Ejnesman. He was very pious as well. His children attended a rabbinical school. After the war, when I was supposed to leave for Australia, I got a letter from Kielce, from a lawyer [a copy of this letter still exists, it's dated 1961], and it stated that my uncle in Bodzentyn had a store and someone had supposedly sold that store and signed with my name. So they ordered me to come to court immediately, because they didn't know it wasn't me [who sold the store]. I didn't go, because I was afraid. There were such disturbances then, so I thought: I managed to survive, why should I take risks now? This was after the pogrom in Kielce 1, so I was afraid to take the train. [Editor's note: The reason why Mr. Ejnesman didn't go to court was probably a different one, because the events he was afraid of took place 15 years earlier]. And I couldn't do anything, because it wasn't easy then: just make a phone call, catch a train and go.

The second uncle on my father's side, I don't remember his name, left for Brazil, for Rio de Janeiro. My father never mentioned this; perhaps because he didn't know himself that he had a brother in Brazil. I found out only after the war, from this cousin in Edmonton. This uncle was pious, like my father's entire family; I'm sure he was among the very pious people there.

We also had an uncle in Konskie, but he wasn't my father's brother, but some cousin. I don't remember what his name was. He had a small factory, which produced brass knobs, for kitchen cabinets. I went to Konskie several times; I stayed there for some weeks. My uncle would work and I would help, I cleaned these knobs. But I don't remember what street this was on in Konskie. I don't remember Konskie at all. It must have been somewhere close to the market square, because I remember going there. In three weeks, how could I have gotten to know the place? During the days I worked and on Saturdays we didn't work, so I would quickly walk through the town. Kronenblum, I think, had this iron factory. And Hercfeld. Yes, Hercfeld and Kronenblum. We'd go to this Kronenblum to get these knobs. They weren't finished then, because it was my uncle who would make them yellow [these were brass knobs, which become yellow after they have been polished]. That's why I remember.

I also had a more distant uncle in Warsaw. I don't remember what his name was. First, my brother Hilel went to work in Warsaw, and then he sent for me. He lived on 13 Nalewki Street, because 15 Nalewki was a connecting house, with the yard backing out on Zamenhofa Street. I remember this precisely. It was the same at my uncle's house; the house was kosher. My uncle was pious, too, and so was my aunt. They were both the same. My aunt would cook kosher food, always. On

Saturdays fish, and afterward they would go to the prayer house.

Growing up

I was born in Radoszyce, on Zydowska Street, on 8th August 1921. My name is Chaim. Now it's Chaim Henryk. Even in my passport it's Chaim Henryk. They added the name Henryk in Canada. This was because I entered a new society, and it wasn't proper, maybe. I don't know. Perhaps so it would be easier to spell? In any case, now I use both names. For example, when I go to rehabilitation, they call me Henryk. But when I come to the [Jewish] Committee, they call me Chaim. In my identity card it's written: mother Laja, father Chile. Anyway, Chaim is no different from Henry. And today no Jew is called what he used to be called.

There were six of us: three boys and three girls. I was the second. Hilel was two years older. And Jankiel was younger than me. When I left for Lodz, I was 14 years old and Jankiel was six or seven. He stayed at home in Radoszyce. My sisters were: Mania, who was older, and Rywa, and the youngest one, who was born when I was already in Warsaw; I don't remember what her name was. Mania could sing very well. She lived in Lodz, 7 Wolnosci Square. When I stayed with her in Lodz, she was only engaged; she hadn't gotten married yet. Her fiancé was a boy from Lopuszna. She met him in Lodz, at Debinski's, the dance school on 15 Poludniowa Street. And the other two younger girls, they stayed at home with Jankiel.

My brother Hilel left for Lodz before me, and then some factory owner took him to Warsaw. He was tall, just like me; he didn't have a belly. We attended the same elementary school together. He later used the name Mojzesz as well; I think he had two names. He left Radoszyce two years before I did. Then he took me to Lodz, I went with him right away and that's where I learned to work. Then Hilel took me to Warsaw. I was the closest to him, but he died, I don't know where. When the war broke out in Warsaw, there was mobilization. Hilel signed up on the first day and I never saw him again. No one knows if he died somewhere or escaped and left, but we looked everywhere and couldn't find him.

Well, my mother had her hands full with us. She needed help with the house. My sister had already left for Lodz, she was older, so there were four of us left at home; then I left and then there were three at home. But it was still difficult, in spite of that. We tried to send them some money, and we used to send them one or two zloty each week, for cigarettes for my father. My father smoked Wandy, I remember, the cheapest brand. I remember these cigarettes although I never got into that habit. I never tried smoking cigarettes. Such things weren't appealing to me.

In Radoszyce we lived in a house on Zydowska Street, with my aunt and uncle. It was a large house. Aunt Bela, my mother's younger sister, lived downstairs. Uncle Szmul Aron lived on the other side, and we lived upstairs. There were three rooms. My parents had one room and the children had one; there were no separate bedrooms. Girls slept separately and boys slept separately. There was a kitchen, too. There was no water in the house. You had to carry it from the well. By the time I left [for Lodz in 1934], there was electricity. There was this water-power plant in Ruda Malenicka. But earlier there'd be a lamp, a kerosene lamp. There was no garden. The house was right next to the street. There was a backyard, but we never planted anything there. There were other people living on the side of the backyard. A cart driver, who used to go to Lodz every week. He'd leave on Sundays and come back on Fridays, for the Saturday ritual.

Our house was made of bricks, but old. Grandfather Tenenbaum built it. And these other houses on Zydowska Street, they were old wooden houses; they must have burned down long ago. There was a mezuzah above the door in our house. There's a mezuzah in my house [currently, in Podkowa Lesna]. My wife brought it from Israel. There were no Jewish houses in Radoszyce without mezuzahs. When you built a house, it had to be there. Even if someone wasn't very religious, either way, he still had a mezuzah. Everyone did. Our house in Radoszyce was normal. It was a Jewish house. We always celebrated all the holidays: Purim, Pesach, Yom Kippur, Simchat Torah. I remember all these holidays.

Sabbath was Sabbath. My father didn't work; he went to the prayer house on Saturday, like a chazzan did. He had to sing. I remember how my mother prepared for Sabbath. She made fish: she cooked it in the morning and then she'd always finish on Friday afternoon. My mother cooked broth, noodles and these broad beans. I remember there was always challah and how my mother would always light the candles on Friday evening, I remember it all.

My mother cooked soup, so there'd be soup for Saturday. Vegetable soup. That's why she went to buy vegetables on Wednesday. Everything was good. My favorite soup was kreplakh: dumplings with meat. The dough would be kneaded, like it is now for pierogi. And this was added to broth. My mother would usually make this for Saturday. And on weekdays, we'd first eat soup and potatoes, then a little piece of meat, because meat was expensive, especially kosher meat. It still is expensive. I can see the difference in price, in this small kosher shop on Grzybowska Street. Kosher meat can't be taken from the back. When they killed a cow, they had to take half of it to the Polish slaughterhouse, because Jews wouldn't buy such meat. I don't remember if that was the front or the back. In Radoszyce there were only two stores that sold kosher meat.

It was always different then; my mother would bake everything for the holidays. You wouldn't go to a store somewhere and buy it. At that time, there were no such things. She made everything by herself, at home. We'd take different cakes and chulent to the bakery. They'd be left there for the night, so they'd be warm for Saturday. There was no oven at home. I'd take them there on Friday afternoon and pick them up on Saturday. When the baker baked bread, he'd put it all in the oven. I used to go to the baker's, because my brother was still little. This bakery was close by, on the market square. We'd come back from the prayer house at noon or 1pm and then I'd go straight to him to pick up the chulent. Potatoes, beans, meat – it was all good. There's a restaurant in Canada where they sell chulent. But it's best when it's homemade. My mother made the best chulent at home.

It was very pleasant on Sabbath. We didn't do anything: my father or anyone. It was all so quiet at home. It was like that in Lodz as well. Everything was closed. You'd stay at home. Well, we kids went out to play, but my parents stayed in the house. We ran around the backyards. Well, what were we supposed to do? We played ball or something. That's how you'd live. We'd go see my uncles and aunts after the prayer house, in the afternoon.

Sabbath goy - yes there was one, he'd come to everyone on Zydowska Street. There was a small village near Radoszyce and he came from there. I remember that he was there as many years as I was in Radoszyce. The same one all that time. A Pole, I don't remember his name. Older than me. He was maybe 20 at that time. But I don't remember if he got paid or whether they'd give him something, I don't know. He must have gotten something; he went along the entire street. There

were several of them, not just one. After all, it was a large street. And so many Jews living on each street. Each street had their Sabbath goys. He'd just make sure there was a fire in the furnace. There was no electricity in my time. Uncle Icek had light. There was light on that street, on Koscielna. And we'd light the lamps in the evening. After saying Mincha and Maariv, you could light them yourself.

And for Sukkot we had a special booth in the backyard. This would be built, like a small garage is now; the walls would be made of bricks and some pine branches on top. The booth would be there all the time, for good. This was at our neighbors', we shared a backyard, there was this addition. We'd decorate it nicely on the inside. These colorful ribbons and chestnuts. I remember it all. And we'd eat there in the evening. We'd take out the table. We ate different cakes, and broth with noodles. My mother would bring the food from the house. My sister Mania, when she was still at home, she used to help my mother. And then she'd always come from Lodz for Sukkot. But we didn't sleep there. No, on Sukkot you don't sleep in the booth, you just eat there. [Editor's note: Orthodox Jews also sleep in the booth.] You go home for the night. Sukkot was very nice. You'd pay visits, my father wouldn't work, they'd take us to see my aunt.

For Chanukkah we'd always get gifts, it was called Chanukkah gelt, from my uncle. He'd always give something to everyone. One zloty or two. But he'd give something to every child. My uncle had no children of his own. This was the uncle who had the bookstore – Icek. We'd go and visit him and he'd give us money, or cakes or something. He could afford it. He was well off. We'd keep this money for candy. Or we'd play the spinning top, the dreidel. Poles used to make these dreidels and sell them. There was this special village where they made them, somewhere on the way to Mniow [a town between Radoszyce and Kielce]. And we'd always buy dreidels there. I remember all this well. And there was a special meal for Chanukkah, I forget what it's called… Latkes! Yes, potato pancakes. They'd be salty or sweet, different in each town. Ours were sweet, fried in oil. A little sugar would be put on top. In Lwow [today Ukraine], I know, they'd put onions on the latkes. In Radoszyce they were sweet. And we wouldn't add any sour cream. My mother also baked all kinds of cakes. I remember carrot cake and apple cake, apple pie, I remember this, too. We'd light candles. Every day, starting on the first day. That's how it was at our house.

And when Purim came, there was dancing in the street, lots of fun. They'd dance in the rabbi's backyard, so it was like a carnival. There was no theater. But children would dress up. They'd go from house to house; everyone would give them something. Some candy or something. We used to do this as well, yes, we used to dress up. You'd put an apron over your head. You'd dress up like this, like a clown.

And for seder, we'd all sit together; there would be both sweet and bitter dishes at the table. I forgot what this is called in Polish. A kind of horseradish – maror. We'd always be asked why this night was different from others and we'd have to answer. I always answered, because the other children were too young. When I left, then I think my younger brother would say this. And my father would tell the Haggadah - why this night is different from others. And we'd eat matzah. We still eat matzah at my home.

I also remember what weddings were like in Radoszyce. They used to be merry, with Jewish songs. After all, there was klezmer music. There was a band at cheder. It really wasn't some large choir, just a few musicians. They used to play and sing at weddings. My father didn't sing at weddings.

When the wedding was very pious, then he'd go. I remember the chuppahs. They smashed the glasses - Mazel Tov.

I was 13 when I had my bar mitzvah. It wasn't very festive, only my family attended. It was in Radoszyce, at the prayer house; first, the ceremony, then prayers and that was it. And then there was some continuation at home. In those days you wouldn't do it like it's done now, there'd be some vodka, some jelly, all homemade. Beef jelly, from the cow's feet. Also some broth with noodles, chicken, beef; we didn't eat ham or anything.

There was a butcher. He also did the circumcision when I was born. I forgot what his name was, but he was called mojl [mohel], not butcher. He was on Zydowska Street, next to the rabbi. You'd take chickens there, and everything was kosher. All he was there for was to slaughter chickens. The butchery and meats were separate.

On Wednesdays there was a market, on the market square. There was this market square with shops all around it. They used to sell everything there; sour cream, milk, cheese. They'd all bring their stalls. And not just groceries, for example, our cousin was a hatter, he had eleven sons and one daughter; he made hats and sold them there, at that market. People would come and trade there, bakers, carpenters, everything was sold there. They would come from the region, Ruda Maleniecka, and Mniow, I remember, because that's on the way to Kielce. Some 20 kilometers from Kielce. We had a shop there as well, at Aunt Bela's grocery store. You'd always put something out on the street: herrings, flour, sugar. There weren't only Jewish stalls at this market, but others, too. Cows, horses, everything would be sold there. My mother did the shopping, and sometimes I went with her. There was a dairy in Radoszyce. A kosher dairy, and we bought cheese and milk there all week long, because it wasn't kosher at the market. But on Wednesdays my mother used to do her shopping at the market. Carrots, parsley, vegetables, fruit, all these things.

Everything was there in Radoszyce: A rabbi, prayer houses, matchmakers. It was a Jewish town. It was a small town: there were cobblestones on the streets, Jewish shops around the market square. In Radoszyce a Jew even owned the gas station. His name was Molasa. Jews ran everything. Uncle Szmul Aron from my family operated the wheat and rye purchasing place.

There was a mikveh on Zydowska Street. Yes, we went to the mikveh every Friday. And always on Wednesdays, or Thursdays, the women went there. A separate day, but the same mikveh. It wasn't far from my aunt's restaurant; it was in the same building. The mikveh was on the corner. It was run by the man who lived there. I don't remember his name. It's been so many years. And it was a large house, with this kind of a swimming pool downstairs. It was as long as the house was. You'd take the stairs and go down. I don't remember if you had to pay. But probably yes, because this had to be maintained somehow. So there must have been some fee. The Jewish religious community operated this; after all, there was a Jewish community in Radoszyce.

There was a large cemetery, but it was far away. Very far from town. I never went there for funerals. At that age, I wasn't interested in cemeteries. But we'd always know when someone died. There would be a procession through the town, on Zydowska Street and then they'd turn. It was so far away that I don't think anyone destroyed it. [Editor's note: The last burial at the cemetery in Radoszyce took place in 1942. The cemetery, like most Jewish cemeteries in Poland, was destroyed during the war; after the war it gradually got completely devastated.]

In Radoszyce there was one church and four or five prayer houses, and they were close to our house. The town was 70 percent Jewish. And that was all on our street, on Zydowska. This street ran straight from the market square for some two kilometers, and only Jews lived there. Some Poles lived there, too, including the mayor, who lived near the rabbi, on the other side. But I don't remember what his name was. He was an older man. We had many neighbors. But Jews didn't live only on that street. My uncle lived on Koscielna, right next to the church. There was no ghetto. Young people, both Polish and Jewish, would meet on Sunday evenings on the market square. There, next to the firemen's depot. There were dances, a firemen's band would play and they'd be merry and dance. I didn't. I was a little too young. The police station was on the other side of the market. This street with the police station was a shortcut to Uncle Icek's house. Because otherwise, you'd have to go all around to Koscielna Street. But on foot, next to the police station, you could go straight to Uncle Icek's.

In Radoszyce everything was as it should have been. Sukkot was Sukkot and Sabbath was Sabbath, and that's all. On Sabbath it was very quiet, because the stores were mostly Jewish, so they were closed. There was no possibility of anyone opening a store on Sabbath. They were closed on Sundays as well. That's how everyone respected the second religion. When the rabbi walked by, everyone really showed respect. Yes. And when a priest walked by – it was the same. They were all born there, raised there, and everybody knew everybody else there. Radoszyce was a hole. Like a village. But was that good or bad? I don't know. What to do, that's how you lived and that's how you should live. My children wouldn't want to live like that. But it was a good life. Calm. We were never hungry. If it wasn't for the war, that's how you'd live your entire life.

I went to a Polish school in Radoszyce and to cheder as well. I went to school in the morning; then straight home to eat; my mother always made lunch. And then to cheder. And then back home to do homework. The entire day was busy. Where the school was, there was also a children's playground, and you could play ball and everything.

I got used to speaking Polish, there was no problem. I always adapt easily to everything. Anyway, I had some Polish friends, we played together, but I don't remember their names anymore. So that's why I spoke Polish well right from the start. Our teacher's name was Ogonowska. I don't know if she's still alive. She was my teacher until third grade. And her husband was the principal, Ogonowski. I also remember her father, he had an orchard, and he'd always give us a bucket of apples. About half of the children at school were Jewish. It was an elementary school. Boys and girls. They went there together.

I studied Yiddish, I went to cheder all the time. Both during school and before. But I don't remember all of this, it's been so many years. If I was to use it, I speak a little Yiddish. [Editor's note: Mr. Ejnesman knows Yiddish perfectly.] There were three cheders in Radoszyce. On Zydowska Street there was one shul and one cheder. And a third one at the rabbi's. The shul was somewhat more modern. There they wouldn't teach that, say, driving was forbidden on Yom Kippur. They were kind of reformers, those who went there. Some rich people, who kept their distance, they'd go to the shul.

This cheder was in a private apartment. A female teacher taught us. She was older, although, it might have seemed to me like that then, perhaps she was 20 years old and I'm saying that she was older. Why a woman? I don't know. After all, there was a melamed, but he taught other children,

and in the shul. I don't remember what his name was now; I didn't go to see him. Two girls, sisters, taught us. The one who taught us was Chaja, I don't even remember the second one. This second sister taught the older children Hebrew. She didn't teach the younger ones. We had these groups there: Smaller children and older ones. Girls also attended separately; they had a different teacher. In the same house, but on the other side. It seems to me that this Chaja taught us until seventh grade. They graduated from these schools, they didn't just teach, they must have graduated from a special school, a school for melameds, to teach us how to read and write in Yiddish. No, they didn't attend these schools in Radoszyce, I think it must have been in Lodz. Or in Piotrkow, or Konskie. I don't know.

I remember we'd go there twice a week for an hour and a half in the afternoons on Tuesdays, and Thursdays. There were different hours for different groups. There were vacations in cheder. But at a different time than in school. Usually there was a break for the holidays. It would start with Rosh Hashanah, then Yom Kippur and Sukkot and that's all. I don't remember exactly. I learned Yiddish, but I don't remember anything now, nothing goes into my head now. I get the 'Midrasz' [socio-cultural monthly magazine in Polish, published since 1997] and the 'Folkssztyme' 2, but I can't read anything anymore. I used Polish, I always read, and I didn't use Yiddish. And I forgot. I never studied Hebrew. My father didn't teach me Hebrew either. Perhaps he could speak it, I don't know. I was eleven years old, in fifth grade, when I stopped going to school.

Then I started learning a trade: I made sweaters, gloves. The neighbors had this plant. There was work after they brought the materials from Lodz. We'd do it and then Kajlt Dizel, the cart driver, would take the sweaters, gloves and various undergarments to Lodz. It was difficult to support a family in Radoszyce. I went to work in Lodz in 1934. I was 14 years old [Editor's note: The interviewee was 13 years old in 1934]. My sister was in Lodz and she took me in. All of Radoszyce lived in Lodz. When you grew up a bit, right away you'd go to Lodz, Skarzysko or Kielce. They'd also go work in Konskie. Konskie is 18 kilometers from Radoszyce. There'd be a bus leaving from the market square every hour. I went to Konskie so many times. Konskie was a county town; you couldn't compare it to Radoszyce. There was nothing to do in Radoszyce. In Radoszyce there was carpentry, textiles and some other trades. Nothing more: just blacksmiths that shoed horses, and made carts. There were no factories, you'd have to go to the city looking for work.

And so this first time I went to Lodz in a horse-drawn cart. With this neighbor who used to go to Lodz every week. I helped him and he took me along. I came to Lodz and my aunt found me a job at her neighbor's nearby. It was a textile company on Old Market Square that made various undergarments, for men and women. I carried the goods, because they had to be carried to the overlock. I got practically nothing for that, just enough for bread.

That was the first time I saw a large city. I never understood how the radio worked. There was no radio in Radoszyce. And at my aunt's there was a radio; I heard something playing, so I looked and they made fun of me, because I didn't know at first who was singing there, inside. And life was different in Lodz. There were cars. Streetcars. A different life. My aunt lived in a tenement house on Zydowska Street, upstairs. She had a nice apartment in Zydowska, where Stary Rynek [Old Market] is. Only Jews lived there. Close to Kilinskiego Street, where Biderman had a factory. Baluty was a Jewish district: Zgierska, Nowomiejska, Stary Rynek. There was a prayer house on Stary Rynek. I liked Lodz better: the people, there were Jewish organizations there, you could go somewhere, not like in Radoszyce; there weren't many such things even in Konskie. People lived differently in Lodz.

You wouldn’t worry about everything being kosher, exactly. At home there was a different bowl for milk and for meat. But not there!

There was no cinema in Radoszyce. But there were cinemas in Lodz. I went to the morning screenings. Yes, the Zacheta cinema in Lodz. Dymsza [Adolf Dymsza, a popular Polish comedy actor before the war] always starred. For children. It cost ten groszy, but you could stay there, and they wouldn’t throw you out. On Saturday mornings I would go to the prayer house with my uncle and aunt and then I had some free time. My aunt knew that I’d go to the cinema. We’d also go to the club. A Jewish club; it was a Zionist club, Hahalutz 3. My parents never spoke about politics at home as they weren’t interested. I never belonged to any parties, only to that club. We’d always do some reading there, stay for a few hours and then leave. It wasn’t like it is now; there was no television. I never went dancing, I was too young. Those who came to the dances were older, mostly 20 - 25 years old.

In Lodz I met Jozek. He lived in Lodz, on Brzezinska Street. He’d always invite me to his house. His mother was more assimilated. He never said that his mother was mixed. When I came there, she would never say such things to me [that she was half-Jewish]. Anyway, I was young, why would she talk to me about such things. Jozek didn’t come back either, he died somewhere during the war. I don’t know what happened to him. That’s how life is.

With regards to anti-Semitism, I remember these events in Lodz. But I didn’t have any problems; I walked around the town in peace. I could speak Polish fluently, because I went to a Polish school. But those, who wore sidelocks, could have had some problems. You had to be careful in Baluty. But well, you had to adjust to everyone, no matter what. You had to adjust to everything; you can’t do it differently, can you? But in Radoszyce, we’d never play separately. At school, on the street, always together. Anyway, Mrs. Ogonowska would never allow such things [the discrimination of Jewish children]. We played together and that was it. That’s how it was. Everything depended on the town, on the mayor, whether he was heating up the atmosphere for someone to be against Jews or not. Maybe in Konskie, it was a larger town, after all. But not in our town. It was calm at home.

I stayed with my aunt for three years, I worked there, and my older brother Hilel had a clothing warehouse in Warsaw. They made sweaters, socks, etc. He was a kind of manager, as you’d now say. And one day he told me, ‘Come to Warsaw, you’ll get better wages,’ and he took me from Lodz to Warsaw. I went and worked for a year there. And indeed, the wages were better. I could finally send several zloty to my parents and they were a bit better off. Before the war broke out, I was working in Warsaw, on Zamenhofa Street, also in the textile industry. I never went back home. And I never had any contact with anyone from my family again.

During the war

In 1939 I went to Lodz to see my sister and aunt. The Germans found me there and I couldn’t go back to Radoszyce. The first day of the war, 1st September 4. I found out that the war had broken out, because there was some uproar on the streets of Lodz. They said there was a war, that the Germans had bombed this and that. I think they first talked about Garwolin [a town about 50km south-east of Warsaw]. I wasn’t in Lodz when the bombs went down. I was there only for a little while when they were organizing the ghetto. The ghetto was in Lodz 5 in 1940, I think, I was there for five months. No one knew anything at that time. They kept us locked up in Baluty. I don’t

remember the date. I know that when they started sending people off to forced labor, I ran away from Lodz back to Warsaw [probably in fall 1940].

In Warsaw I was alone. My brother had been drafted into the army. I lived there at my aunt's, on 13 Nalewki Street, still the same address. Were there any regulations in Warsaw against Jews? I, for one, don't know. I wasn't interested in such things, in politics. Nothing changed in our lives, I only know that I ran away and they stayed. There were posters or something like that, I'd never read these things. We didn't have a store in Warsaw, so I wasn't interested. I wasn't in the Warsaw Ghetto 6.

From Poland to Ukraine

Then, later [in 1940, before the ghetto in Warsaw was formed], when I walked out on the street, the Germans started doing these round-ups and then it wasn't yet important whether you were Jewish or not, only if you were young. So they took us to Zoliborz [a district of Warsaw] to dig trenches. They gave us shovels and that's it. I did that for several weeks. I remember, under Kierbedzia Bridge. That's where I ran away from, because it was raining and there was no one to guard us. I ran east with one other guy. It was difficult to get some transport to Lublin, so we walked. We went to Lublin because it was closer to the eastern border. Everyone said that it was better to run away to Russia, even my sister said so. They had no ties with the communist party, that's just what they came up with. We walked through Garwolin, where planes had bombed everything.

We stopped in Lublin for one day. We looked around and there were cigarettes on the street, everything on the street, so we kept on walking. And then, as we were walking, German planes came. I moved around a tree, on my knees, and my friend lay down in the ditch. The Germans shot from planes, they even shot at cows. And they killed my friend, but they didn't get me.

I kept on walking until I got to Lwow [today Ukraine]. We stayed there somewhere next to the church [refugees from territories occupied by the Germans]. In front of the presbytery, near the parish, there was a large hall next to the church. People slept wherever they could find some space, on the floor, on the stairs, it wasn't like staying in a hotel. There were many refugees. Thousands: both Polish and Jewish. I was alone, so I slept wherever I lay down. They gave us some food at the presbytery; they'd always cook some soup for refugees and give it to everyone, without asking who you were.

They took me to Siberia from there. Not just me, they took everyone. The Russians didn't tell us it was Siberia, they told us we were going home. Then we traveled for 24 days by train; those were cattle trains. They didn't tell us where we were going. Then we started thinking that it can't be to Warsaw, because it doesn't take that long to get there. They gave us food: a loaf of bread and that was it.

We arrived in Arkhangelsk, which was already Siberia. There was a place where they divided us into different colonies. Trains with prisoners arrived there. But I was no prisoner, because I had no sentence! I went to the Komi SSR. I was there with some young fellows, many were in the army from Lodz. There was even a general. But this general didn't want to work, so he died. He'd always say, 'I won't ever work for these 'kacaps'' [Polish word meaning idiots, cads; in this case, Russians]. So I told him, 'Mister, you can't do this, you've got to survive somehow!' But he was maybe 60

years old anyway. Or older. And his son Jozef was with me. We worked together.

I can't complain, I was a 'stachanowiec.' [Editor's note: in the period 1930-1950 in the USSR – an efficient, leading worker, etymology – from the last name of a miner from Donetsk [today Russia]: Alexey Stakhanov (born 1905)] I got bread, like I should have; I didn't have any problems. I was young, still strong for work, so I worked. Several times I was sick with 'cynga' [scurvy] from malnutrition, and that's normal. They'd give us some food in the morning, at 6am, when we left for work, then they'd give us some soup with bugs, and that was all the food we got. And bread. And it was hard work in the woods; we cut trees and built iron roads [railroads].

I don't know if we were all treated the same; I'm not saying we all were. I can only speak for myself. No one admitted if they were Jewish or Polish. No one said anything. There really were no such questions. Where are you from? From Poland and that's all. And I spoke Polish normally. I lived in a barrack, 75 of us lived there, each one had this bunk. No, no, I didn't have any problems. I can't talk about something that wasn't there.

I was there until 1941. Then we got away. They began setting up Anders' Army 7, so they let us go. Along with Jozef, the son of this general who died, we left for Buzuluk [in Russia, near Kuibyshev, Orenburg oblast]; he joined the army, and I started working. I wasn't suitable for the army; they said I was too weak, too emaciated. I had to improve a lot, get better, and I had scurvy and my hair was falling out. So they sent me to work in Kazan [in Russia, the capital of Tatar Autonomic Socialist Soviet Republic, near Kuibyshev]. We went there, there were lots of us. They assigned us to a steel mill. We worked there and I belonged to the Polish Patriots' Association in Kazan. I even had an identification card. I got food from them many times as a kind of benefit. I also got parcels from UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, an international organization created on 9th March 1943 in Washington, which organized aid for allied countries, which were the most devastated by the war, in the period 1944-1947], which were sent there. Oh, and coffee, or something.

I was in Kazan for about a year. I don't remember the exact date or month, because it's been 60 years. And then I belonged to 'wojenkomat' [army drafting committee]. They supervised us, because we were there kind of like in the army, but we were workers assigned to trudarmia 8 for labor.

They assigned me to Kirovograd, which is in Ukraine. And then they sent me to Oleksandriya, in the Kirovograd district. There were maybe twelve of us; some of us were sent here, others there, others to a kolkhoz 9. I worked in the Maslozavod factory. Where they made butter. In a dairy. It was different there; you could eat a piece of cheese of something. I wasn't starving there, I can't complain. I always fared well. What could I do? I had to get by. And I don't know how many people were left there, those who couldn't get by. There was a cemetery there; thousands of people died there. Very many people died.

It was there, in Ukraine, where I met my first wife. She was Russian. Her maiden name was Kulbyk. She was Tania Kulbyk. She had a child, a son; his name was Wladek [Wladyslaw]. He was my adopted son; he always lived with us, there in Poland, and later in Canada. Wladek just died recently; he had been sick. And she died recently, too. She wasn't Jewish. We got married there, in Russia. A kosher house? There was no possibility, no way!

After the war

I remember that on 9th May 10, or some other day, we were working in this dairy and they announced on the loudspeaker, in Russian, that the war was over. After all, we could speak Russian, and also Ukrainian. So that was it. Then they gave us an address, where we were to show up in Lwow, at a repatriation center. I went there, to Lwow, I remember this like it was today, and they told me that they'd let me know when it would be my year to be sent back to Poland 11, because they'd take people from different years separately. The war ended in 1945. And in 1946 we left Ukraine. We went back to Poland by train.

Some news from Poland did reach Siberia, but I didn't get anything, because nobody wrote to me and nobody knew where I was. But the guys, who received letters from home, read them to us. I didn't know what was happening to my family. I was sure that, because the family was so large, the ones in Radoszyce, and they were young people, like this cousin who had eleven sons, I thought that they were always so strong, so I thought that someone could have survived in hiding. I later met this Finkler, this son of our rabbi from Radoszyce, and I asked if he had seen someone from my family. He said that they weren't with them in the woods. I don't know how they died. When I left in 1939, they were still alive. I looked for them, but there was no one left. I don't know how come that there's no one left from the Ejnesmans or from the Tenenbaums. Where did they all go? When I came back from Russia, I went to Lodz and I found Chaim Tenenbaum's name on the list of surviving Jews. Uncle Szmul Aron's, my mother's brother's son. Before the war he had a store in Radoszyce, a house, he had everything. But I never found him. He had left – where, I don't know. So I didn't go back home. I went to Walbrzych.

I didn't choose to go to Walbrzych, they did [the repatriation committee]. They would send people to Wroclaw or to Walbrzych, but mostly to Walbrzych, because that city was empty, the Germans had left; at least we got an apartment. When someone would go to work in the mines, like I did, he'd get an apartment. I wanted to go to Lodz, but there were no apartments left, there was nothing, they asked, 'What will you do there?' I didn't meet anyone; I didn't see anyone. Yes, in Walbrzych you'd begin your life anew.

In Walbrzych I registered with the Jewish Committee 12 at once. I belonged to TSKZ 13 and Bund 14. Bund was a Jewish organization. It was on Moniuszki Street. We had meetings there, we could sit, read. As a miner I got these packages from the Jewish Committee, they have my file at The Jewish Historical Institute 15. Those were times when people would sign up even if they weren't Jewish, because they had heard that there was some aid. I even met one of them [non-Jews pretending to be Jews], he didn't even know what the holidays were and so on. I didn't need to do this, because my name was Chaim Ejnesman. I have a clean conscience; I don't need to lie. And it's all written down. But in Russia they changed my name from Chaim to Giennadij.

So I worked in the mine and later they organized the Dua textile cooperative, so I went back to working in my trade. I was the chairman of the audit committee there, because I knew all about it. I worked there until our departure. My sons were born in 1947 and 1950, respectively. They are called Morys and Sam. We sent our children to a Polish school. There was no school in Walbrzych, where they taught Yiddish. If you wanted to learn Hebrew, you had to go to the rabbi. There was a rabbi in Walbrzych and a slaughterhouse, everything was there. [Editor's note: in 1949/1950 most Jewish institutions and services were nationalized or liquidated. Mass emigration of Jews in the

1950s and then in 1968 brought to an end the development of the Jewish community in Lower Silesia.] I went to a prayer house on Slowackiego Street. They knew me. I went there for Sukkot, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah. There were many Jews. They came from Russia, and then they left, went here and there: to cities.

Then [in the 1950s] all kinds of disturbances began and, although I wasn't feeling it, people from Bund predicted something bad would happen. And they started saying that we should leave, so we needed to leave. So we did; the committee organized such things. Many people left Poland at that time. It was a difficult decision to make, to leave Poland. I had a job in Walbrzych, we had an apartment and yet, we decided to leave. I think I didn't want to stay in Poland any longer, what for? Everyone would leave for wherever they could, such were the times. The Jewish Committee found me a supposed cousin in Australia. I got these papers and I left for Paris [probably in 1959]. Such transit. We stayed there, they supported us, gave us a place to live, from social services. We got a small room in a hotel, we stayed there. And we went to eat at a canteen, where there were people from all over the world. We stayed in Paris for three years. People told me, don't go to Australia, because it's too hot. Better go to Canada. So I said that my head hurts when it's too hot. And I waited until they found me a cousin in Canada. In Edmonton; this was Aunt Tauba's daughter, from Kielce.

So we went to Canada. My cousin's friend, Dudzelzak, helped us then. She called him and told him that I was coming and he took us in. We decided to stay in Ontario and that's where we stayed until we left for Poland [1992]. We got by. I worked in so many places; first I worked on Golfring Place... I can't recollect everything; it's too much. I worked everywhere, wherever I could. Then I opened my own store, worked there with my family, a store with men's clothing, and then we also ran grocery stores.

My wife Tania didn't like it there; she wanted to go back to Russia. But how could I go back to Russia. We broke up. I was alone for seven years, then I met my second wife [we got married in 1973]. Her name is Otylia, nee Jablonowska. She's from Lwow, born there in 1930. After the war she ran these deluxe stores in Gliwice. [Editor's note: delicatessen – grocery stores offering products considered luxurious at the time of market shortages in the Polish Democratic Republic, for example colonial goods, citrus fruit, etc.] And then her husband died, she came to Canada. She had an aunt here. She doesn't come from a Jewish family, but she did business with Jews. She's just interested, that's all. Thank God, that it all worked out like this. Otylia is very talented. She made all these portraits by herself, and this is handmade. [Mr. Ejnesman is referring to cross-stitched paintings, hanging in the living room.] I can't complain, everything is all right. We later opened this store together, men's and women's clothing. The boys found jobs. We also have two daughters [they are Otylia's daughters: Jolanta and Anna Barbara], they're in Canada as well. We were there together. Now we have eleven grandchildren: Deren, Tina, Monica, Sasza, Nina, Natasza... I don't even remember all of their names. And even more great-grandchildren.

During the time I was in Canada, I had no contacts with Poland. Never. I didn't have anyone here. Only my wife had a sister in Poland. This sister also has a Jewish husband; he had to assimilate during the war. He was in the army. He's dead now. Yes, they were a good family, I can't complain.

One day I got sick in Ontario [in 1990], they took me to the hospital with a stroke and I had to leave. There are no possibilities there. There you have to be rich when you fall ill. And I had a Polish

passport, because I never gave it back. I never took Russian citizenship, or any other.

My wife brought me to Poland [in 1992], to a sanatorium in Iwonicz. I was there for several months and I was getting better. A lot better. We even wanted to buy an apartment there, in Krosno. But they convinced us to move closer to Warsaw. I didn't care much. Because after this stroke, I was in bad shape for quite some time. So they got this house. And we're living here, [in Podkowa Lesna]. I wouldn't want to live in Warsaw, because there's too much noise. But this will have to be sold. It's difficult to maintain a house now. Our children are in Canada and we stayed here. They come here from time to time to visit us.

I registered as a war veteran in Warsaw, that's when we started going to the Jewish Theater 16, to TSKZ. People visited me from Spielberg's Foundation, they were making a movie. We celebrate Jewish holidays, because my wife likes that. She goes to the rabbi to get the matzah; by now he knows her better than he knows me. She's more involved, but because I can't walk, how could I get involved. And life goes on, thank God, we're living all right. I go to rehabilitation, they take me; you live as long as you can, don't you?

It's so difficult, recollecting everything. So many years have passed, and you still need to live. You can't just lie down in your grave when you're still alive. I'm the only one left of all of them, only because I ran away to the east. I don't know where they took them; maybe to Piotrkow Trybunalski. There was no ghetto in Radoszyce. There was one in Konskie – then maybe to Konskie. I never did find out, there wasn't even anyone I could ask. But you must live. What else to do. I probably won't find anyone now. I'm so old by now, they were all even older. You have to come to terms with it, can't change that, can you? Nothing will change.

This is the entire story of my life. A man can't remember like he used to, these dates, months, they keep getting mixed up. Like Wedel's mix [a type of chocolates popular in Poland].

Glossary:

1 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.

2 Folksztyme /Dos Yidishe Wort
Bilingual Jewish magazine published every other week since 1992 in Warsaw in place of 'Folksshtimme', which was closed down then. Articles are devoted to the activities of the JSCS in Poland and current affairs, and there are reprints of articles from the Jewish press abroad. The magazine 'Folksshtimme' was published three times a week. In 1945 it was published in Lodz, and from 1946-1992 in Warsaw. It was the paper of the Jewish Communists. After Jewish organizations and their press organs were closed down in 1950, it became the only Jewish paper in Poland. 'Folksshtimme' was the paper of the JSCS. It published Yiddish translations of articles from the party press. In 1956, a Polish-language supplement for young people, 'Nasz Glos' [Our Voice] was launched. It was apolitical, a literary and current affairs paper. In 1968 the paper was suspended for several months, and was subsequently reinstated as a Polish-Jewish weekly, subject to rigorous

censorship. The supplement 'Nasz Glos' was discontinued. Most of the contributors and editorial staff were forced to emigrate.

3 Hahalutz

Hebrew for pioneer, it stands for a Zionist organization that prepared young people for emigration to Palestine. It was founded at the beginning of the 20th century in Russia and began operating in Poland in 1905, later also spread to the USA and other countries. Between the two wars its aim was to unite all the Zionist youth organizations. Members of Hahalutz were sent on hakhshara, where they received vocational training. Emphasis was placed chiefly on volunteer work, the ability to live and work in harsh conditions, and military training. The organization had its own agricultural farms in Poland. On completing hakhshara young people received British certificates entitling them to immigrate to Palestine. Around 26,000 young people left Poland under this scheme in 1925-26. In 1939 Hahalutz had some 100,000 members throughout Europe. In World War II it operated as a conspiratorial organization. It was very active in culture and education after the war. The Polish arm was disbanded in 1949.

4 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.

5 Lodz Ghetto

It was set up in February 1940 in the former Jewish quarter on the northern outskirts of the city. 164,000 Jews from Lodz were packed together in a 4 sq. km. area. In 1941 and 1942, 38,500 more Jews were deported to the ghetto. In November 1941, 5,000 Roma were also deported to the ghetto from Burgenland province, Austria. The Jewish self-government, led by Mordechai Rumkowsky, sought to make the ghetto as productive as possible and to put as many inmates to work as he could. But not even this could prevent overcrowding and hunger or improve the inhuman living conditions. As a result of epidemics, shortages of fuel and food and insufficient sanitary conditions, about 43,500 people (21% of all the residents of the ghetto) died of

undernourishment, cold and illness. The others were transported to death camps; only a very small number of them survived.

6 Warsaw Ghetto

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

7 Anders' Army

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

8 Trudarmia (labor army)

Created in the USSR during WWII. In September 1941 the commissioner of military affairs of Kazakhstan, Gen. A. Shcherbakov, acting upon an order issued by central authorities, ordered the conscription into the so-called labor army (trudarmia) of Polish citizens, mostly of Ukrainian, Belarus and Jewish nationality. The core of the mobilized laborers consisted of men between 15 and 60 years of age and childless women. The laborers of trudarmia mostly returned to Poland as part of the repatriation scheme in 1946. The last wave of repatriates, mostly Jews, came back from the USSR between 1955 and 1957.

9 Kolkhoz

In the Soviet Union the policy of gradual and voluntary collectivization of agriculture was adopted

in 1927 to encourage food production while freeing labor and capital for industrial development. In 1929, with only 4% of farms in kolkhozes, Stalin ordered the confiscation of peasants' land, tools, and animals; the kolkhoz replaced the family farm.

10 Victory Day in Russia (9th May)
National holiday to commemorate the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II and honor the Soviets who died in the war.

11 Evacuation of Poles from the USSR
From 1939-41 there were some 2 million citizens of the Second Polish Republic from lands annexed to the Soviet Union in the heart of the USSR (Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians). The resettlement of Poles and Jews to Poland (within its new borders) began in 1944. The process was coordinated by a political organization subordinate to the Soviet authorities, the Union of Polish Patriots (operated until July 1946). The main purpose of the resettlement was to purge Polish lands annexed to the Soviet Union during WWII of their ethnic Polish population. The campaign was accompanied by the removal of Ukrainian and Belarusian populations to the USSR. Between 1944 and 1948 some 1.5 million Poles and Jews returned to Poland with military units or under the repatriation program.

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

13 Social and Cultural Society of Polish Jews (TSKZ)
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. It is primarily an organization of older people, who, however, have been involved with it for years.

14 Bund in Poland
Largest and most influential Jewish workers' party in pre-war Poland. Founded 1897 in Vilnius. From 1915, the Polish branch operated independently. Ran in parliamentary and local elections. Bund identified itself as a socialist Jewish party, criticized the Soviet Union and communism, rejected Zionism as a utopia, and Orthodoxy as a barrier on the road towards progress, demanded the abolition of all discrimination against Jews, fully equal rights for them, and the right for the free development of Yiddish-language secular Jewish culture. Bund enjoyed particularly strong support

in central and south-eastern Poland, especially in large cities. Controlled numerous organizations: women's, youth, sport, educational (TsIShO), as well as trade unions. Affiliated with the party were a youth organization, Tsukunft, and a children's organization, Skif. During the war, the Bund operated underground, and participated in armed resistance, including in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising as part of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ZOB) led by Marek Edelman. After the war, the Bund leaders joined the Central Committee of Polish Jews, where they postulated, in opposition to the Zionists, a reconstruction of the Jewish community in Poland. In January 1949, the Bund leaders dissolved the organization, urging its members to join the communist Polish United Workers' Party.

15 The Jewish Historical Institute [Zydowski Instytut Historyczny (ZIH)]

Warsaw-based academic institution devoted to researching the history and culture of Polish Jews. Founded in 1947 from the Central Jewish Historical Committee, an arm of the Central Committee for Polish Jews. ZIH houses an archive center and library whose stocks include the books salvaged from the libraries of the Templum Synagogue and the Institute of Judaistica, and the documents comprising the Ringelblum Archive. ZIH also has exhibition rooms where its collection of liturgical items and Jewish painting are on display, and an exhibition dedicated to the Warsaw ghetto. Initially the institute devoted its research activities solely to the Holocaust, but over the last dozen or so years it has broadened the scope of its historical and cultural work. In 1993 ZIH was brought under the auspices of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. It publishes the Jewish Historical Institute Quarterly.

14 Ester Rachel Kaminska Public Jewish Theater

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