Ludwik Hoffman

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Walbrzych
Poland
Interviewer: Jakub Rajchman
Date of interview: February 2005

Despite his 82 years, Ludwik Hoffman is in great shape, both physically and mentally. He is an active member of Jewish organizations in Walbrzych, where he lives, and Wroclaw, where he is the vice-president of the local Jewish community. During our meetings in his apartment near the Walbrzych market square, full of pre-war photos of his family, Mr. Hoffman told me the story of his life, stressing on many occasions that, unlike most Jewish settlers in Lower Silesia, his family had no working-class roots, but came from the middle class, the burghers of pre-war Poland's eastern territories. Mr. Hoffman prefers not to speak of his wartime and Holocaust experiences.

My name is Ludwik Hoffman. I was born on 15th April 1923 in Drohobycz [80 km south-west of Lwow, today Ukraine], into a merchant family. My father, Natan Hoffman, was a textile merchant, and, as I think of it today, he belonged to the wealthy class. My mother, Sabina, nee Sztegman, I don't remember. She died when I was three, upon delivering my younger and only sister, Stella. A clot had accumulated, she got up too early, fell down, and died. I only know her from other people's stories.

The accounts of those family members who survived and who during the war lived abroad suggest that our great-great-grandparents probably came from Hungary. A photo has been preserved of our great- or perhaps even great-great-grandparents with an annotation from there. I'm not sure, but it could have been Budapest. And because during the partitions period [see Partitions of Poland] 1, Drohobycz was part of Austria-Hungary, it's possible that it is there my father's family came from. Besides, my great-grandfather, or perhaps even my great-great-grandfather had a tannery in Drohobycz. Around the tannery building stood residential buildings, where my father's various relatives lived. It was a rather big family.

I don't remember my grandparents. The eldest members of my family, the family that I remember and which was quite numerous, were the sister of my paternal grandmother, and my father's siblings and his family, i.e. his aunts and cousins. I remember some of them, because by the time the Germans started dissolving the ghetto, some of them were still alive. My grandmother's sister was called Deborah Friedman. We simply called her Granny. She lived with my father's eldest sister in Truskawiec [well-known health resort ca. 100 km south of Lwow and 10 km from Drohobycz, today Ukraine], helping her run her business, a boarding house for vacationers. Truskawiec was a popular health resort and, since my early childhood, I often went there with my parents for vacations. I saw Granny there. She spoke Polish with us.

My father had one more sister and an elder brother, Aaron [Hoffman], who lived in one of those houses near the tannery. He was a merchant, too, and worked in the so-called covered market. He had four children. His daughter was called Syma Leja, the eldest son was Josel, the younger one

Calyl, and the youngest one Matys. And they all worked in the textile trade. I mean, one son worked with his father, the other one helped him, too, and the third even had his own business until some point. And after he went bankrupt in 1929, he worked with my father for some time.

Uncle Aaron wasn't as well-off as my father. I didn't understand that as a child, because we had no contact with the poor Jewry at all. Only once, I remember – I may have been seven or eight years old then, I'm not sure, it was after 1930, I had already gone to school, I may have been in the 1st or 2nd grade – my cousin, the daughter of my father's eldest brother, came to visit us with Uncle, it was winter time. Uncle Aaron was sitting in the living room by the fireplace, warming himself up. Uncle loved us very much, me and my sister. When my father came back home, I told him Uncle Aaron was already there. He came in, and I asked him, 'Father, can you tell me why do you have so many clothes in your wardrobe, and Uncle walks around in such old things? Why don't you give him some clothes?' When my cousin Syma Leja visited us some timer later, for my bar mitzvah, or some other occasion perhaps, she told me she'd never forget that I said that, as long as she lived.

I had two maternal aunts, my mother's sisters, Bronislawa [Jozesberg, nee Sztegman] and Jetka [Kitaj, nee Sztegman]. The former was married to a lawyer, and the latter was the wife of a kind of building technician, who was also a former member of Pilsudski's 2 Legions and an officer in the Polish Army [see Jews in the prewar Polish Army] 3. I don't know what rank he had during World War I, but by the time the World War II broke out, he had already been promoted to the rank of the lieutenant or even major. He was murdered in Katyn 4. We called him Luis. The other uncle, the lawyer, his name was Jakub, was a progressive Jew, meaning I'm not sure whether he went to the synagogue. They all lived in Drohobycz. Except probably one of my mother's brothers, who lived in America. I learned about him only after the war, but never got in touch in him, never tried to find him. His name was probably Chaim Sztegman, but I'm not sure of that either.

During the partitions period, Poland was divided into three parts. Drohobycz belonged to Austria-Hungary, and the so-called German emancipation [Haskalah] was there. Besides, people who were financially successful started adopting European customs, started going to Austria, Vienna, but also to Prague and Berlin, to study. That grandmother of mine who was still alive had relatives in Berlin. I don't know what kind of relation it was, whether it was her nephew or what, but he had completed his studies and was working as a doctor in Berlin. Similarly, one of my father's cousins, that is the son of my grandfather's sister, was a renowned and very wealthy doctor in New York. All those were people who had made big money and they were, I'd say, Europeanized and progressive.

My father was such a man, too. His name was Natan Hoffman. He was born probably in 1878, though it may have been 1882. I don't know whether he finished elementary school, but I know he had a merchant's title. According to his own accounts, he started working for a textile company when he was just 14. He could read and write in German and Yiddish, a bit less fluently in Polish, but still he could do all that.

He never wore the Chasidic dress. Nor did he wear the beard or the cap. Never, even as a young man. My grandfather may have worn the cap, and certainly one of my uncles did, my father's elder brother. He wore a small beard, a black cap, and a black hat. I don't, however, remember anyone wearing payes.

When World War I broke out [1914], my father served in the Austrian [KuK] army 5, was taken prisoner by the Russians, and spent a couple of years in captivity. He returned rather late [to

Drohobycz] and, from what his sisters told me, immediately went into business. It was probably then that he bought the house and the textile business from his principal. It was a textile shop, no ready-made clothes, only fabrics. In any case, when I was born, my father was over 45 years old, and was running that textile store or rather wholesale business, together with his partner. Whether the store was in the same place before my father bought it, I don't know. In any case, for Drohobycz's standards, it was a large enterprise. In 1928, 1929, they were doing really well. They had five or six employees at the time.

Also during that time many of my father's friends, merchants like him, decided to move to Lwow. And so my father's company too decided to set up a branch there. My father moved to Lwow then, and we stayed with our stepmother in Drohobycz. Until 1935, our life looked so that Father would come home every Friday night, and then leave again late on Saturday night or early Sunday morning for Lwow. And after the Drohobycz business had been wound up, we all moved to Lwow. That was, if I remember correctly, after I had completed elementary school and was to go to gymnasium. It was May or June 1935. We returned after more than two years, in September 1937, because business hadn't been as good as expected and the company eventually collapsed. My father decided to return to Drohobycz because that was where people had known him for years and he could restart the old business there. After all, he had worked there for some 40 years. After our return, the company had two salesmen, and the bookkeeping was done by Fajga, my father's wife, together with a bookkeeper who came twice a week. It went like that until the war.

I remember my father very well, I remember him from my early childhood. Probably because my mother died when I was three, and everyone knows what it means to be a child without a mother. As I was quite a fretful child, to find me something to do, something to play with, my father would bring me textile samples from work. Those were pieces of various materials bound together with a kind of ferrule. I used to play with it as a child and since then, all my life, I was involved with textiles. At home I played alone. In fact, I was brought up in specific conditions, not like the other children. As my mother was dead, I didn't have much to do with other children, and I developed my first friendships only in gymnasium, when I was a bit older. In elementary school, I played only with my sister and my cousin, sometimes with the other merchants' kids that you visited, for instance, on the occasion of their birthdays. But it wasn't the kind of growing up where you run around the yard and play football all day, even though our house had a yard and a garden. I sat alone at home, playing with those samples, living a life of my own.

I know little about my mother. According to some accounts, after the regaining of independence in 1918 [see Poland's independence, 1918] 6, she worked in the Drohobycz town hall as the mayor's secretary. I guess that was a distinction. After my mother's death, that 'Granny', my grandmother's sister, Deborah Friedman lived with us for some time, but then Father decided to marry again.

My father's second wife, and my stepmother, was called Fana Hoffman, Fajga in Hebrew [Editor's note: Fajga is a Jewish name]. She was a person about my father's age, who, until she got married, had worked as a clerk at an oil company. As for the exact position, I'd say she was the bookkeeper, or the chief accountant's deputy. My stepmother was a modest woman who didn't socialize too much. She was a very thrifty person, perhaps even a stingy one. She tried to keep the house the traditional way and the kitchen – the kosher way. She was a Jew in the full sense of the word. She lit the candles on Friday, and observed the other rules as well – the fasts, the holidays, and so on. But she wasn't conservative. She didn't wear a wig, dressed fashionably, wasn't afraid to turn on

the lights on Saturday.

As for her family, I only knew her sisters. One of those, Gienia Halsowa, was married to an oil industrialist whose name I don't remember. A progressive man, similar to my father, though perhaps a bit more religious. On Sunday afternoon, for instance, he'd hold the Havdalah – something we didn't do. And as they had a boy only a year older than me, Ignac, I sometimes visited them. I believe they derived their income from some oil stocks as well as from several tenement houses. My stepmother's second sister was divorced. Her name was Basia, Bajla in Yiddish. She had a daughter, much older than me and my sister, I don't remember what her name was. She graduated from Lwow University 7, with a degree in Polish literature, I think. Unfortunately, it was 1936 or 1937 and she couldn't get a job [due to Anti-Semitism in Poland in the 1930s] 8. I remember, when I was in gymnasium, she was giving me private lessons, chiefly helping me do the homework. She lived with her mother in the tenement of that uncle of hers, the husband of Gienia, my stepmother's other sister.

From when I was five and until I turned 18, we had one and the same maid, a Ukrainian woman of Catholic faith. Her name was Maria Sarachman, and I know she was still alive only recently, working as a housekeeper for some priest. But I've never met her after the war. Besides her, during our early childhood, we also had a nurse, or rather a housemistress. She came from Germany and was probably a nun, as I remember she wore the habit. She didn't speak Polish, so we only spoke German with her. This doesn't mean I didn't speak Polish as a child. Our whole family spoke Yiddish, but to us, the children, they spoke Polish. So I spoke Polish with the maid, with my stepmother, my father, as well as with the relatives. All those people, no matter what trade they plied, spoke Polish because they lived among Polish people. Some of them also spoke Ukrainian because they had contacts with Ukrainians. After we had grown up a little bit, the housemistress was dismissed, and a governess hired for my sister. First one, then another, both were Jewish. All those were girls from poor, but trusted, homes. They watched over the children, took them out, gave them lessons. Following our departure for Lwow in 1935, my parents stopped hiring governesses. The last one we had was called Bella or something like that. We later recommended her to a family in Lwow, so she sometimes visited us there.

The house in which we lived was a two-story house with a large garden on Shevchenky Street [today's name of the street; before the war it was called Mickiewicza], built, according to the documentation, in 1904. It was a modern-style, brick townhouse that stands in Drohobycz to this day. Those houses were built by people who had hit it big on oil, which means we didn't build it, only bought it. They were built according to European standards, in the fashion of the Vienna buildings, that's how it looked. In the basement there lived one Szmer Zanthaus, my father's business partner, with his family; he already had three or four children. We lived on the first floor, and the apartment was divided in such a way that we occupied one part of it, and in the other there lived some lawyer. Probably the previous owner had intended it for rent, and that's why the four or five-room apartment had been divided into two.

We occupied two rooms and a kitchen, and the other tenant had two rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. The man had already been there when my father was buying the house. His name was Wilner, I think, and he was a lawyer. Probably my father's partner had let him the apartment, and because of tenant-protection laws, he couldn't be evicted. He lived there until 1935 when he finally moved to Lwow. We took over the whole apartment then. The toilets were in the hall. The

apartment was furnished in a modern way, we had a gas stove, the coal-fuelled kind. I don't remember whether we had a telephone. We're not listed in the 1938 phonebook, so I guess we didn't. In the store, though, they had one absolutely. A rare novelty of the time was the radio. My aunt had one as early as 1932, whereas we bought our first radio in something like 1935 or 1936.

The same applies to our home in Lwow. It was a luxurious four-room apartment with many corridors and hallways. There was the so-called study room, a dining room, the children's room, a bedroom, and a room for the servants. There was also a kitchen and a dressing room, various kinds of rooms. It was a large apartment, two hundred something square meters. The entrance wasn't from the front but from the backyard. The windows faced two backyards. It was in downtown, though I don't remember the name of the street. Upon leaving Drohobycz, we rented the apartment there, so we couldn't return to it. We had to take up residence in another one, a rented apartment in a newly-built house.

There was also a period when we had our own car, a Ford, if I remember correctly. It had been bought jointly by my father's company and that wealthy industrialist, my stepmother's brother-in-law. It was parked in a garage next to that Uncle's house, close to our shop. On one or two occasions we took that car and went for a ride. The weather was unpleasant that day and people were saying there'd be an earthquake or something like that. So we took the car and went out of town to an area where things were supposed to be quieter. For the rest of the time, the car stood idle, I don't know why. Me and my cousin Ignac often played in that garage and we'd get into that car and tinker with it. What happened to it after we left Drohobycz, I don't know.

I went to elementary school in Drohobycz. It was a Polish school, a public one. It was located on Mickiewicza Street, so it wasn't far from my home. Young people of three denominations studied there: Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, and Jews. There were hardly any problems between them, though some professors were obviously disposed rather unfavorably towards the Jews. I remember one professor who, when you didn't know something, would say something like, 'You stupid little Jew!' But those were isolated cases. The obligatory religious class was organized so that the students were divided into three groups: A, B, and C, depending on their religion. All the Roman Catholics in a given class were allotted to, say, A, the Greek Catholics to B, and the Jews to C. And a teacher or priest would come and teach his religion. I certainly wasn't among the most talented ones, in fact, I never applied myself to study. I was interested in history, in a sense also Jewish history.

After we moved to Lwow, I went to gymnasium. I went to a private, Jewish gymnasium where the main language of instruction was Polish. It was a coed Jewish school, where there were perhaps two Christian students, and the rest were students from Jewish families. Among the obligatory courses were Hebrew, and Jewish history. It was a humanities-oriented gymnasium. Saturday was a day free of school, whereas we went to school on Sunday. During that time, or, more precisely, in 1936, I was preparing for my bar mitzvah and had to study intensely the whole ritual in Hebrew. To that end, my father had hired a private tutor, who, between let's say, December 1935 and March 1936 was preparing me for the ritual.

My bar mitzvah took place the traditional way, only there weren't too many guests. A special service was held at the synagogue, the one where we prayed in Lwow. It was called Yad Harutzim, the Hand of Justice, I don't remember what street it was on. After the service, Kiddush was served,

and after that a dinner was held at our home for the family and a few selected guests.

After returning to Drohobycz [1937], I spent the last years before the war studying at a coed gymnasium that adhered to the, say, humanistic tradition. At that one, Saturday was a school day, and Sunday was off. One of my teachers at elementary school, and then also in gymnasium, was Bruno Schulz 9. He taught me drawing. I even had at home drawings corrected by him or actually drawn by him, but at the time no one was paying any attention to that because Mr. Schulz wasn't a professor you talked much about. He kept to himself, and the only thing he'd ever say was, 'Good morning, good morning.' And the fact that he had written two books, 'Cinnamon Shops,' and 'Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass,' became popular knowledge only after the war. Perhaps there were some literary circles before the war, but we, as young people, didn't care about things like that. Whether the lessons taught by Schulz were special in any way is hard for me to say today.

From what I know, he was somehow related to us through his sister whose name I don't remember and who got married to a Hoffman. Her son was named Ludwik, too. How her husband was related to us, I don't know, but my close cousin, Henryk Hoffman, writes in his book 'From Drohobycz to the Holy Land' that his father, who was a doctor, was a frequent guest of Mr. Schulz's. My sister, in turn, claims that when she sometimes went with Father out for a walk on Saturday, they'd drop by at the Schulzes to visit his [Schulz's] mother. That's possible, because the Schulzes' house stood between our business and our house. The last time any of us had any contact with him was during the Soviet period, in gymnasium. I had left it in 1939, but my sister still went there. And on a photo of the class of 1940, you can see Bruno Schulz as one of the professors [the Blatt gymnasium, where Schulz taught, was in operation until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war in 1941].

At that time, we were already grown up enough to be flirting with the girls, and, as the school was coed, everyone had his girlfriend and life was starting to look different. We went with those girls to dancing parties, and on the holidays, for example Purim or Chanukkah, there was a dancing party for students at school, and unless there was a party on the same day at the Jewish orphanage, we'd go there. Because at the orphanage they also organized dancing parties on holidays. If someone of the friends had their birthday, they'd also organize a party. I remember I had a girlfriend at the time, her name was Halinka, the daughter of a lawyer who was the leader of the Zionist organizations in our town, I don't remember his name. I once took her to a dancing party at the Jewish hospital. I don't remember the occasion, whether it was Purim or Chanukkah. In any case, we went there, and then I was walking her home. It was then, on our way, that I kissed a girl for the first time in my life.

Then I remember a situation whereby a major of the Polish army who lived in our house had a maid, a young and healthy girl. I remember she often visited our Marysia. And one day she started provoking me and encouraging me that she'd teach me about love, I only needed to say yes. Naturally, I rejected her, because one of my friends had earlier had intercourse with a maid, and then she said she was pregnant and demanded money from him. He had to pay and that served as a warning for me.

We were a small group of people of similar income status. The sons of merchants, lawyers, and other affluent Jews who met with the daughters of engineers or industrialists. That's how things were. All my classmates were from middle-class, or even upper middle-class families. I was friends

with a doctor's son, an oil dealer's son, and a paper wholesaler's son, so that was four of us, and also with the son of the chief accountant of a major oil refinery. Those were Julek Hilzenrat, Izio Hercig, Artur Werdinger, and one more boy named Leszek, whose last name I don't remember. When I browse through the 1938 phonebook, I can actually remember some of the names. The girls were usually the daughters of engineers employed at the refinery, let's say, people who made in excess of 1000 zlotys a month, which before the war was a fortune. With the poor Jewry we didn't, I didn't, have any contact. And similarly we had very little contact with either the Polish intelligentsia or the Polish youth.

This pack of ours met virtually every day. We'd be doing our homework at home until something like four, and at five we'd meet at one of the boys'. We'd play cards, any of the various popular card games of the time, like Red King, i.e. Hearts, or Thousand. That took us until half past six, after which we'd go out for a stroll down the promenade. It was the main street – today Mickiewicza, then Shevchenky [Editor's note: inversely]. Boys and girls strolled separately, though sometimes we paired up and strolled in pairs. That lasted until eight, at which time we all had to go back home. It wasn't allowed for young people to be on the street after eight in the evening.

We also strolled on Sunday morning. That was when the Jewish and Polish intelligentsia strolled, though the latter in smaller numbers because most Poles were at church. And the Jews were strolling or visiting the cafes, especially to show themselves off, for others to see how they were dressed. That was due to the fact that Drohobycz was a town dominated by German culture; people were more open-minded and rather secularized. More and more people were also, for instance, practicing sports, and not only football, but there were also many Jewish young people who played tennis, cycled, or practiced skiing. I was also given my pair of skis. That was in 1939, and I even started skiing a little, we had a lot of good slopes there. But then the war broke out and that was it.

Sometimes we went for longer vacations. When I was a little boy, when my mother was still alive, we went to Iwonicz Zdroj [ca. 300 km west of Drohobycz]. It was a health resort, and as I was a rather sickly child, my mother took me there once or twice, and then I also went to Iwonicz with my stepmother. Later we went each year to mountain resorts, like Rebenow or Skole [ca. 30 km south of Drohobycz, today in Ukraine].

During the time when we lived in Lwow, we usually went for vacation to Aunt Laura, to Truskawiec. We went there twice, in 1936 and 1937. Her business was going better or worse, depending on the house she was renting at the given time: whether it was a large, twenty-room one, or a smaller, fifteen-room one. She rented various houses, of various standards, certainly not all had bathrooms. Naturally, the kitchen was kosher. Though not so strictly kosher that on Friday night they had to put chulent into the oven and on Saturday they wouldn't set fire under the stove. Some of the employees at those boarding houses were Christians, and it was them who did things like setting fire under the stove or reheating dinner on Saturday. When we went there the last time, Aunt was living in a detached house that had four or five rooms with a kitchen, but no bathroom. The toilet was outside. During the season, Aunt rented out two or three of the rooms, and as her husband, my uncle, whose last name was Roth – I don't remember his first name – kept a fuel depot, they had an extra source of income besides the boarding house.

Then, in 1938 and 1939, me and my sister went to a Jewish summer camp. Those were the so-called Jewish guesthouses for gymnasium students. My sister went to a guesthouse for girls in Skole, whereas I was in a guesthouse for adults in the same town. As the owners of those places owed my father some money, to recover the liabilities he was sending us there without paying.

As children, me and my sister lived in our own world. We lacked nothing, had everything we needed. We were only supposed to study and play. Nothing else was supposed to occupy our minds. Parents would go to work early in the morning. Father to the shop, Mother too, for she was the bookkeeper there. They'd return around 7pm. I mean, Father would either come home or go to the merchants' club where he'd play cards, and the like. And then he'd return very late.

My stepmother spent the evenings reading. We had quite a large German library at home. For us, the children, there was another library, with adventure novels and so on. We also read Polish books, but to get the required reading you had to go to the public library. We had no Yiddish books at all. Besides that, my father bought the Polish-language Jewish newspaper Chwila [1919-1939; Jewish political/cultural daily of Zionist sympathies, published in Polish, aimed at middle-class readers. The last editor-in-chief was H. Hescheles.], which had a morning issue and an evening one. Chwila was edited by Jews, but in Polish. I sometimes also bought the Czerwony Kurier, a richly illustrated Warsaw daily. What kind of a newspaper it was, I don't really know, as I wasn't interested in its contents. What I was interested in were the illustrations from the everyday events, the political ones, or those from the life of the upper classes. There was also the Swiatowid, but that was too expensive for me to buy. I only know it was a Cracow-based illustrated weekly. I liked to browse through those magazines but I never had enough money to buy them.

Sabbath was always observed the traditional way. It was like you see on old photos or in the movies today. My father would close the shop early, and, I suppose, go to the synagogue. My stepmother would light the candles, and when Father returned, we'd sit down to dinner. The atmosphere was very solemn, Mother would serve the traditional fish dish, for example gefilte fish, and some other appetizer, I don't remember what. Me and my sister didn't eat much, because we always waited for the cake. There were various kinds of cakes – every week a different one: a sponge cake for breakfast, gingerbread or honey cake after dinner.

After dinner, Father would rarely stay at home. Sometimes he'd listen to the radio but because the radio was a novelty, he didn't have much fondness for that. Instead, he'd rather go to the merchant's club to play cards, Hearts. On Saturday morning, after prayer, we'd sit down to a breakfast combined with supper. Once in a while father would have a bit to eat at the synagogue, a piece of herring or something, then he'd go to some meeting and come home for a solemn supper at one or two. During the time when I didn't go to school on Saturday, as was the case in Lwow, Father would take me to the synagogue for prayer. I started attending the prayers in the year that I had my bar mitzvah, and in which, as tradition demanded, I started wearing the tefillin. After dinner, father would take a nap and then go to a café or to the club again, and that's how it went. You can say that if one of those merchants didn't show up at the synagogue on Saturday morning, it would mean he was either sick or out of town. There weren't other things to do, like watching the TV today, so you always went to the synagogue. Some went to some sports events, but all the people from the class to which my parents belonged would observe Sabbath the traditional way.

The same was true for other holidays, such as seder [Pesach] or Purim. For Pesach, we'd eat matzot, which, at the beginning, were made at hardly accessible bakeries. During that time, the rabbis made matzah as well. They'd send us their black, whole wheat matzot, the so-called 'shmirematzot,' and use the proceeds for the holidays. In the later period, 1936, 1937, matzot were made by mechanized bakeries in Lwow, or brought over from other places. Those were like the ones you can buy today. But in the beginning, I remember, they'd be ordered at the baker and brought, I don't know, ten kilograms or more, in a dish for the whole holidays. Both the dishes and the cutlery were koshered. We never had any bread at home during the festival. Any chametz was given away, but whether it was genuine or fictional sale, I wasn't interested in finding out at the time.

Those days, any Jew's dream was to educate his children in some direction. I didn't have any talent for the technical things, like drawing and other things like this. I'd surely have gone, like my father planned, to a business college. When I think of my life today, it's clear to me I never had the kind of aspirations that many young people had at the time, for example to become a doctor, an engineer, or a scientist. I was always devoted to commerce. As a child, I played with the textile samples that my father brought me from work, and I never thought of any career other than in commerce.

I devoted my whole life to commerce, and my guiding principle in business was never to maximize profits but rather to offer the best and most elegant products. I was always interested in the most expensive and sophisticated fabrics and the most stylist fashions. As early as in my school days I was less interested in study and more in commerce, the store, some brilliant shop window display or men's fashion. In fact, I was always a strange kid because from very early childhood I liked to dress. I had many clothes, because when you operate a textile business, there'll always be some scraps. So they made me one dress, and when I grew out of it they made me another, and another, and there was always a new one to try. We were always well-dressed, and my parents' wardrobes were always full of clothes. Father, if he went to Vienna, would always bring us some stylish clothes. We didn't always want to wear them, for instance there was this woolen jacket with leather applications on the sleeves. Why am I supposed to wear a patched up jacket, I wondered.

As those days you usually went to study abroad, the plan was, as I've mentioned above, for me to enroll at a business college in Vienna. But 1938 thwarted those plans. After the Anschluss 10, I could no longer go there. We hadn't realized that anti-Semitism in Austria had reached such an advanced stage. There was no mention of that in our circles.

As for the town itself, Drohobycz had a population of thirty-something thousand, fifteen thousand of which were Jews. They didn't live in any specific parts of the town but were scattered across it. The neighborhood where we lived was close to downtown and was a wealthy one. On our street, Shevchenky, there stood 14 houses, of which five or six were inhabited by Catholic families and the rest by Jewish ones. On the main streets in downtown Drohobycz, the proportion between the Catholics and the Jews was, you can say, fifty-fifty. The poorer part of the Jewish population lived in a neighborhood called Lam, where the main synagogue was also located, one of the largest synagogues in the whole Galicia region.

That synagogue was something of a German-style 'templum.' I went there only for the state ceremonies, such as 11th November [anniversary of Poland's regaining of independence in 1918], Pilsudski's birthday or the 3rd May 11 holiday. Schoolchildren of Jewish religion took part in such

ceremonies obligatorily. We'd march in divided into classes, and then the rabbi would deliver a speech in Polish in the presence of the government officials, this is the district governor, the town mayor, and the military district commander. After the ceremony we'd join an official street parade. The synagogue building was a very imposing structure whose ruins have survived to this day. There's no one, however, to reconstruct it, the people living in Drohobycz are poor, and I don't think the Jews scattered across the world would be willing to do it. Besides the main synagogue, there were about 20 smaller synagogues and prayer houses in the town.

We prayed at a synagogue located near our house, at the back of the market place, on Garncarska Street. Besides us, it was frequented by several very wealthy merchants and industrialists, as well as by some poorer people. We sat at the main wall, this is the eastern one, near where the ark was located. My father occupied one of the most eminent seats in the synagogue. The synagogue was rather of the reformed style. It was managed by a gentleman who was also the chief accountant of a major oil company, and who also operated the registration office where the births and deaths were registered. He wore a derby hat and had a clean-shaven face. His name was Mr. Szpander. The chief rabbi was a captain in the Polish army and a doctor of theology, but whether he had his own synagogue or prayed at the main one, I don't know. Nor do I remember his name.

There were also many shochetim in the town. The poultry we bought, whether in Drohobycz or in Lwow, was always slaughtered by a shochet. Sometimes the shochet would come to our house and slaughter the chicken there.

My father was never politically involved. He certainly belonged to some pro-Zionist party, but I think chiefly because it was trendy to do so. Usually, however, he went to the merchant club to play cards. Myself, in turn, as early as in gymnasium – it was 1938 – I started attending the meetings of some Jewish organization. I don't remember what organization it was, but we all went there, both the working-class boys and the gymnasium students. The meetings were led by a reserve officer whose son was our age and went to a public gymnasium. The meetings would combine lectures with something in the vein of military drill exercises. The whole thing was more like scouting than like a paramilitary organization. It certainly was neither Betar [12] nor Brit Trumpeldor.

The house which we moved in upon returning to Drohobycz in 1937 had been built a year or two earlier and was very modern. It was owned by a Jewish merchant. It had three or even four floors. The first floor was occupied by two Jewish families, and the remaining ones by Christians. By 1938, Christians had become a majority in that neighborhood, the military barracks were nearby, so that's, for instance, where the garrison commander, the town's public notary, or the director of the savings-and-loan fund lived.

Anti-Semitism was something I encountered as early as in Lwow. Sometimes the tertian, this is the gymnasium janitor, would come to the class and warn us not to go near the university because anti-Semitic riots had broken out there. Later, in Drohobycz, I remember an action in which the brother-in-law of the above-mentioned garrison commander, a major who lived in our house, took part. That brother-in-law was a student, member of a Polish student fraternity [corporation] [13] that in the Christmas period organized an anti-Semitic action consisting in selling the so called 'academic fish' to Christians. Most of the fish traders at the time were Jews, and, to prevent Christians from buying from them, the students would sell the commodity themselves.

The major had a son, a little boy three or four years old, who would often stand on the stairs when I was going back home from school and cry, ‘Dirty Jew! Dirty Jew!’ One time I just couldn’t control myself, and I answered, ‘You son of a bitch!’ A few days later the major asked my father for a talk and threatened him that I’d be fired from school for offending the honor of the Polish army. I wasn’t afraid because, firstly, I didn’t go to a public gymnasium, and, secondly, war was coming up. So that’s how it looked more or less. We were, as young Jews, isolated, met in small peer groups, and we knew about anti-Semitism and its manifestations.

State-owned companies had stopped hiring Jews, and in my gymnasium some of the teachers were from as far away as Cracow, as, despite their degrees, they weren’t able to get a job there. That’s how it looked. We listened to the radio so we also knew something bad was brewing in Germany [see Anti-Jewish legislation in Nazi Germany] 14. But no one suspected things would get that far, would assume such catastrophic proportions. Some people, those who remembered World War I and who had lived under the Austro-Hungarian occupation, believed Germany was a decent nation and everything we were hearing was just propaganda. Or maybe it was simply beyond our imagination?

In 1939, talk started that there might be war. Following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact 15, it was clear that the situation was tense and that ‘something is wrong here.’ I remember how, in late August [1939], my father came home late in the evening and said people had been driving up to the square in front of the house because the military had ordered a requisition of all private cars. As if the people suspected something.

A few days before the war we started carrying all the merchandise out of the store and hiding it because we were afraid it’d get stolen. And indeed, immediately after the war broke out people started robbing shops, or at least buying up everything they could to get rid of the money. Several days later the Germans entered the town, and anti-Jewish riots began. That didn’t last long because the Germans left Drohobycz after seven or eight days, this is after the time they needed to empty all the oil and petrol stocks. [Pursuant to the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, the Germans withdrew from Drohobycz on 24th September, leaving it for the Soviet military administration to take over].

The Russians took over soon afterwards. A couple of weeks later we, as well as all the other tenants, were evicted, as the Russian military requisitioned the building. First we moved to the apartment owned by a certain industrialist. It was a five-room apartment, of which we occupied three. The Russians tried to nationalize our property, and to that end searched the shop and the house. They found money and jewelry. Some of that they returned later to us after it turned out the things had belonged to our late mother. Those were family assets, not things father had bought in a store. I don’t remember why, but they observed the law in that particular case. They didn’t return the money, though. Even the money that we hid between the fabrics for a rainy day. I’m sorry to say this, but those requisitions for the Russian army were always carried out by people of Jewish descent. Those were communists, aspiring to destroy the so-called capitalists.

In April 1940, we Jews were deported from Drohobycz as ‘undesirable elements’ [see Deportation of Jews from Drohobycz] 16. We received no-return passports with a provision saying we weren’t allowed to live in Drohobycz. We moved to Truskawiec, where our aunt lived. There we rented a room with a kitchen from some peasant and lived there until 1942 when all the Jews were deported

to Belzec 17 and when I lost virtually all my relatives.

By that time I had already ended my education due to the fact that I was banned from entering Drohobycz. Only my sister, who was too young to receive the passport with the no-return clause, was still able to go to school until the time the German-Soviet war broke out. She lived in various places, never sleeping in the same place for too long, hiding a bit, and she continued like that until June 1941. During that time I fell ill with pericarditis, or inflammation of the heart sac, and was confined to bed.

My father didn't have any job, and we had to survive by selling various private items. Sometimes Father went out to play cards or went fishing, or stood in a queue to buy bread. Most of the time, however, he did nothing. The Russians didn't forbid us to pray, and as there was a synagogue in Truskawiec, we normally went to pray. The synagogue was quite large due to the fact that Truskawiec was a major health resort. Very many Jews, both from Poland and from abroad, used to visit the place to treat kidney and asthma conditions. The synagogue could seat 100, or perhaps even 200 people. I went to Truskawiec in 1990 and found the place, but the synagogue was no longer there. I think some other building stands there now.

In June 1942, all Jews received special armbands 18 and were sent to work. That lasted until August 1942. Then, one day, all Jews were told to go to the synagogue. The first day the Ukrainian police (there was no German police in Truskawiec) went from house to house and took all the Jews they found to the synagogue. That was followed by a two-day lull, and what had happened to the people taken to the synagogue, we could only guess. People said they had been taken to a camp in Boryslaw [10 km south-west of Drohobycz] but that wasn't true [on 6th August, 1942, a transport of some 6,000 Jews from Drohobycz, Boryslaw and other places was sent from Boryslaw to the Belzec camp]. The only people around were our Christian neighbors. Later it turned out some Jewish families had been hidden. The Germans also left the Judenrat 19 in place to watch over the liquidation of Jewish property. Some two months later all of its members were executed.

On our way to the gathering point, my father met a Ukrainian police officer who told him to leave us at the station and said we'd be taken from there to a labor camp near Truskawiec. We had never heard of the place before. Father brought one more girl from the synagogue with who I later started meeting in the camp [at the vegetable grange in Truskawiec]. Then he returned to the gathering point and we never saw him again. Like we never saw again the rest of the family, taken away the night before [as part of the 6th August 1942 transport].

As I later found out, they were all taken to Belzec. I was left alone with my sister. The camp to which we were sent from the police station in Truskawiec was more like a grange where they grew potatoes, beets, all kinds of cereals for a military sanitarium. The place was in Truskawiec itself. It was a kolkhoz dating back to the Soviet times. Besides the vegetable gardens, they also had large stables there where they brought sick horses from the eastern front to treat them. There were initially some 30 Jews at the camp, then someone managed to escape. We wore special badges with the letter W, which meant we were working for the military: W stood for 'Wehrmacht.'

That lasted until April 1943 when it was decided it was inappropriate for the military to use Jews as labor force. They transported us to what remained of the Drohobycz ghetto. There I started working at an oil refinery. We found our cousin Matys, the son of Eliasz Hoffman, my father's eldest brother. He was a doctor and it was thanks to his contacts that we managed to avoid execution. Later I was

sent to work at a brickyard, and I lived like that in that camp created on the ghetto's remnants until February 1944, when they decided to dissolve the place and move us west. My sister decided to escape to Truskawiec with two girlfriends. There she was hidden by some Christians we knew. I was transported first to Plaszow [camp] 20, then, in October 1944, to Gross-Rosen 21, where I spent about six weeks and from where I was taken to Walbrzych. The Gross-Rosen camp had its branch there [Waldenburg], and it's there I was liberated on 9th May, 1945.

Of my whole family, the only ones that survived were myself, my sister, and that single cousin Matys, thanks to whom we actually survived, avoiding execution. Later I found out that one more cousin had survived who during the war was enlisted for the Russian army and returned from Russia in 1941.

When the war was over I settled in Walbrzych and registered with the Jewish committee [Central Committee of Polish Jews] 22. After I found my sister and my two cousins, I went first to Cracow, where Cousin Matys lived, and then to visit my sister who lived in Katowice. We all decided to return here and set up a business together with some friends.

My sister Stella got married here, to a man who once, before the war, had worked for my father – Izydor Kawe. Several years after getting married, I don't remember exactly, but I think it was in 1950, they immigrated to Israel and settled in Haifa. My brother-in-law died in a car accident over 20 years ago, and my sister still lives there, has two children, six grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters.

I visited my sister and her family many times. First time I went there in 1957, and the last time so far has been in 1998. Me and my wife went for all the weddings, bar mitzvot, and other special occasions. Besides, the cousin that lived with me here after the war immigrated to Australia. He is 95 today, so he comes no longer to Poland, but in the past he used to come to Walbrzych very often.

Soon after my sister left, I met my future wife. We got married and soon our daughter Sabina was born. We kept a house in which all holidays, both Jewish and Catholic, were observed. To this day we have tried to observe both traditions, and our daughter has done the same.

During a certain period in my life I thought about emigration. I was afraid, however, that we were a mixed marriage, without proper education, and that it would be difficult for us to establish a new life in Israel. Besides, my relatives in Israel weren't so well-off and simply didn't notice certain things. In particular the difference between capitalism and socialism, a difference we are able to notice today. It seemed to me it would be difficult for us to adapt to life in Israel. Later we had some opportunities to go to Australia, but we decided against it because of my mother-in-law, who would have been left completely alone here.

As far as my professional life is concerned, I initially operated, with a partner, a textile trading business. Then, after 1950 when they started nationalizing private businesses, I had to start working for public-sector companies. And so until 1990, when I finally retired, I worked for various state-owned domestic trade enterprises. Due to the fact that during my career I never joined the communist party, I never felt the impact of the various political changes on my skin.

In 1968, when I worked for the Spolem cooperative, I was openly told that, as I wasn't politically involved, I had nothing to fear [see Anti-Zionist campaign in Poland] 23. Neither myself nor my family were affected by any anti-Jewish campaign [Editor's note: not only politically involved Jews were harassed during the 1968 campaign]. Though it's possible such things took place, because very many people left Poland following those events.

There were between 15,000-20,000 Jews in Walbrzych after the war. Today, the Walbrzych branch of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland 24 has a mere 40 members. The only moment when I experienced discrimination because of my Jewish descent occurred when Solidarity 25 came. My former immediate superior was fired and the new one believed that, because I was drawing benefits as a war veteran, I could be sent into early retirement. He made efforts to fire me, arguing that I was blocking promotion opportunities for younger employees. But the other executives, who knew about my longtime professional experience in commerce, decided I could stay as long as I wanted. That's why, in 1989, at the age of 67, I decided I no longer needed to work and, due to the fact that I'd receive quite a high pension, I decided to leave.

As far as my activity in Jewish organizations is concerned, there wasn't any until 1982. That year they came to me to ask whether I'd agree to head the TSKZ. I did, and I still work there today as instructor. Besides that, I'm a member of the board of the Wroclaw community, and my daughter is the secretary general of the Polish-Israeli Society. The club functions normally, as always, though the sessions are a bit less frequent than they used to be. Our recent Chanukkah meeting gathered an audience of some 40. Young people also come, the Polish-Israeli Society, the Righteous Among the Nations 26. The club is open three days a week, and events such as the Chanukkah or Purim parties are organized if the budget allows it. Besides, the club's activity depends on the weather and the health of those old people; after all, some of our members are over 90 years old.

In my view, it doesn't make any sense for there to exist several Jewish organizations in Poland. Instead, they should all merge under the patronage of, say, the Jewish Congress, as is the case in all other countries. As it is today, it's pointless. You can have different views, conservative or liberal, you can be an atheist or a religious person, you can have different tastes and habits, but it's still one nation. The state of Israel. We all have to live together somehow.

I also believe that, since the state of Israel has emerged, we're all either Israelis or Poles of Mosaic faith. That's why I can't understand why they keep saying: Jew, Jew, Jew. According to what my Jewish friends from France, Greece, or the Netherlands told me, they have never said, 'I'm a Dutch Jew,' but always 'I'm a Dutchman.' And my religion is my private business. And here they've insisted on calling us Jews. Well, I won't change that, nor, I guess, will my generation.

For many years I've lived with my wife here, in Walbrzych. I have a daughter and two grown-up grandsons, Artur and Dominik. I did what I liked in life and what my father had taught me. I remember how he always told me that money is not made on the rich but on the commoners. Because the common people buy thousands of yards of cheap and poor-quality fabrics, whereas the material for an expensive suit you buy once in several years. And I was so used to that that to this day if I buy something, it has to be good quality and a good brand. I never buy cheap, that's not my style.

Glossary

1 Partitions of Poland (1772-1795)

Three divisions of the Polish lands, in 1772, 1793 and 1795 by the neighboring powers: Russia, Austria and Prussia. Under the first partition Russia occupied the lands east of the Dzwina, Drua and Dnieper, a total of 92,000 km2 and a population of 1.3 million. Austria took the southern part of the Cracow and Sandomierz provinces, the Oswiecim and Zator principalities, the Ruthenian province (except for the Chelm lands) and part of the Belz province, a total of 83,000 km2 and a population of 2.6 million. Prussia annexed Warmia, the Pomerania, Malbork and Chelmno provinces (except for Gdansk and Torun) and the lands along the Notec river and Goplo lake, altogether 36,000 km2 and 580,000 souls. The second partition was carried out by Prussia and Russia. Prussia occupied the Poznan, Kalisz, Gniezno, Sieradz, Leczyca, Inowroclaw, Brzesc Kujawski and Plock provinces, the Dobrzyn lands, parts of the Rawa and Masovia provinces, and Torun and Gdansk, a total of 58,000 km2 and over a million inhabitants. Russia took the Ukrainian and Belarus lands east of the Druja-Pinsk-Zbrucz line, altogether 280,000 km2 and 3 million inhabitants. Under the third partition Russia obtained the rest of the Lithuanian, Belarus and Ukrainian lands east of the Bug and the Nemirov-Grodno line, a total area of 120,000 km2 and 1.2 million inhabitants. The Prussians took the remainder of Podlasie and Mazovia, Warsaw, and parts of Samogitia and Malopolska, 55,000 km2 and a population of 1 million. Austria annexed Cracow and the part of Malopolska between the Pilica, Vistula and Bug, and part of Podlasie and Masovia, a total surface area of 47,000 km2 and a population of 1.2 million.

2 Pilsudski, Jozef (1867-1935)

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

3 Jews in the prewar Polish Army

Some 10% of the volunteers who joined Pilsudski’s Polish Legions fighting for independence were Jews. Between the wars Jews were called up for military service just like all other citizens. Like other ethnic minorities, Jews were hampered in their rise to officer ranks (other than doctors called up into the army) for political reasons. In September 1939 almost 150,000 Jews were mobilized within the Polish Army (19% of the fully mobilized forces). It is accepted that losses among Jewish soldiers in the September Campaign approached 30,000, and the number of prisoners of war is

estimated at around 60,000. Like Poles, Jews were also isolated in POW camps in the Reich. They were separated from the Poles and imprisoned in far worse conditions. At the turn of 1939 and 1940 Jewish privates and subalterns started being released from the camps and sent to larger towns in the General Government (probably as part of the 'Judenrein' campaign in the Reich). Jewish officers of the Polish Army, protected by international conventions, remained in the 'Oflags' [German: officer POW camps] until the end of the war. This wasn't the case for Jewish soldiers who were captured by the Russians. More than 10% of the victims of the Katyn massacre were Jews, mostly doctors.

4 Katyn

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

5 KuK (Kaiserlich und Koeniglich) army

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

6 Poland's independence, 1918

In 1918 Poland regained its independence after over 100 years under the partitions, when it was divided up between Russia, Austria and Prussia. World War I ended with the defeat of all three partitioning powers, which made the liberation of Poland possible. On 8th January 1918 the president of the USA, Woodrow Wilson, declaimed his 14 points, the 13th of which dealt with Poland's independence. In the spring of the same year, the Triple Entente was in secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary, offering them integrity and some of Poland in exchange for parting company with their German ally, but the talks were a fiasco and in June the Entente reverted to its original demands of full independence for Poland. In the face of the defeat of the Central Powers, on 7th October 1918 the Regency Council issued a statement to the Polish nation proclaiming its independence and the reunion of Poland. Institutions representing the Polish nation on the international arena began to spring up, as did units disarming the partitioning powers' armed forces and others organizing a system of authority for the needs of the future state. In the night of 6th -7th November 1918, in Lublin, a Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland was formed under Ignacy Daszynski. Its core comprised supporters of Pilsudski. On 11th November 1918 the armistice was signed on the western front, and the Regency Council entrusted Pilsudski with the supreme command of the nascent army. On 14th November the Regency Council

dissolved, handing all civilian power to Pilsudski; the Lublin government also submitted to his rule. On 17th November Pilsudski appointed a government, which on 21st November issued a manifesto promising agricultural reforms and the nationalization of certain branches of industry. It also introduced labor legislation that strongly favored the workers, and announced parliamentary elections. On 22nd November Pilsudski announced himself Head of State and signed a decree on the provisional authorities in the Republic of Poland. The revolutionary left, from December 1918 united in the Communist Workers' Party of Poland, came out against the government and independence, but the program of Pilsudski's government satisfied the expectations of the majority of society and emboldened it to fight for its goals within the parliamentary democracy of the independent Polish state. In January and June 1919 the first elections to the Legislative Sejm were held. On 20th February 1919 the Legislative Sejm passed the 'small constitution'; Pilsudski remained Head of State. The first stage of establishing statehood was completed, despite the fact that the issue of Poland's borders had not yet been resolved.

7 Lwow University

founded 1661 on the basis of a Jesuit school by a founding act issued by Jan Kazimierz, King of Poland. It originally had two faculties: theology, and philosophy. Reopened 1784 by Austrian Emperor Joseph II as a university with four faculties (philosophy, law, medicine, theology) with Latin as the lecturing language. Moved to Cracow 1805. Reactivated 1817 with German as the lecturing language. After Galicia was granted autonomy in 1868, the university was Polonized. In the late 19th century, Lwow University became an important research center, especially in terms of the liberated arts. Following Poland's regaining of independence in 1918, it was named the Jan Kazimierz University. After 1924 it had five faculties, close to 5,000 students, and 400 lecturers. One of those was Professor Stefan Banach, originator of the world-famous Lwow school of mathematics. Following the Red Army's entrance, the academy was renamed Ivan Franko University and Ukrainian was introduced as the lecturing language. After the war, many of the university's Polish professors joined the newly created Wroclaw University.

8 Anti-Semitism in Poland in the 1930s

From 1935-39 the activities of Polish anti-Semitic propaganda intensified. The Sejm introduced barriers to ritual slaughter, restrictions of Jews' access to education and certain professions. Nationalistic factions postulated the removal of Jews from political, social and cultural life, and agitated for economic boycotts to persuade all the country's Jews to emigrate. Nationalist activists took up posts outside Jewish shops and stalls, attempting to prevent Poles from patronizing them. Such campaigns were often combined with damage and looting of shops and beatings, sometimes with fatal consequences. From June 1935 until 1937 there were over a dozen pogroms, the most publicized of which was the pogrom in Przytyk in 1936. The Catholic Church also contributed to the rise of anti-Semitism.

9 Schulz, Bruno (1892–1942)

painter, graphic artist and writer of Jewish descent who wrote in Polish. He was born and lived in Drohobycz (today Ukraine). He studied architecture in Lwow and painting in Vienna. He made his literary debut in 1933 with the novel 'Cinnamon Shops' (Sklepy cynamonowe, retitled 'The Street of Crocodiles' in the English edition). His second book, a collection of short stories, 'Sanatorium Under

the Sign of the Hourglass,' was published in 1937. Both were highly praised in Warsaw literary circles. He uses poetic prose and his books are known for their freedom of composition and elements of mysticism and fantasy. He was also a literary critic. His paintings did not survive the war, only the drawings and illustrations did, among which the best known is the volume 'The Book of Idolatry' (Xiega Balwochwalcza) and the illustrations he did for his own 'Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass' and Witold Gombrowicz's novel 'Ferdydurke.' From 1924 on, Schulz was an art teacher in Drohobycz. He was executed in the Drohobycz ghetto.

10 Anschluss

The annexation of Austria to Germany. The 1919 peace treaty of St. Germain prohibited the Anschluss, to prevent a resurgence of a strong Germany. On 12th March 1938 Hitler occupied Austria, and, to popular approval, annexed it as the province of Ostmark. In April 1945 Austria regained independence legalizing it with the Austrian State Treaty in 1955.

11 3rd May Constitution

Constitutional treaty from 1791, adopted during the Four-Year Sejm by the patriotic party as a result of a compromise with the royalist party. The constitution was an attempt to redress the internal relations in Poland after the first partition (1772). It created the basis of the structure of modern Poland, as a constitutional monarchy. In the first article the constitution guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion, although Catholicism remained the ruling religion. Members of other religions were assured 'governmental care.' The constitution instituted the division of powers, restricted the privileges of the nobility, granted far-ranging rights to townspeople and assured governmental protection to peasants. Four years later, in 1795, Poland finally lost its independence and was fully divided up between its three powerful neighbors: Russia, Prussia and Austria.

12 Betar

Brith Trumpeldor (Hebrew) meaning the Trumpeldor Society. Right-wing Revisionist Jewish youth movement. It was founded in 1923 in Riga by Vladimir Jabotinsky, in memory of J. Trumpeldor, one of the first fighters to be killed in Palestine, and the fortress Betar, which was heroically defended for many months during the Bar Kohba uprising. In Poland the name 'The J. Trumpeldor Jewish Youth Association' was also used. Betar was a worldwide organization, but in 1936, of its 52,000 members, 75 % lived in Poland. Its aim was to propagate the program of the revisionists in Poland and prepare young people to fight and live in Palestine. It organized emigration, through both legal and illegal channels. It was a paramilitary organization; its members wore uniforms. After 1936, the popularity of Betar gradually diminished. During the war many of its members formed partisan groups.

13 Corporations

elite student organizations stemming from Germany [similar to fraternities]. The first Polish corporation was founded in 1828.They became popular in the 1920s and 1930s, when over 100 were set up. In the 1930s over 2,000 students were members, or 7% of ethnic Polish male students. Jews and women were not admitted. The aim of the corporations was to play an

educational, self-developmental role, to foster patriotism, and to teach the principles of honor and friendship. Meetings included readings and lectures, and the corporations played sport. The professed apoliticism of the corporations was a fiction. Several players fought for influence in the Polish Union of Academic Corporations – the Union of Pan-Polish Youth (Zwiazek Mlodziezy Wszechpolskiej), the Nationalist-Radical Camp (Oboz Narodowo-Radykalny), and the Camp for a Great Poland (Oboz Wielkiej Polski). Before the war most corporations were of an extreme right-wing ilk. This also included anti-Semitic attitudes. Students in corporate colors participated in anti-government campaigns and hit squads, resorted to physical violence against Jews, and supported the “bench ghettos” at universities and the idea of numerus nullus, a ban on Jewish students.

14 Anti-Jewish legislation in Nazi Germany

in Germany in April 1933 a bill on state officials was passed and ordered the discharge of Jews working for government offices (civil servants, army, free professions: lawyers, doctors and students). According to the new legislation a person was considered a Jew is he was a member of a Jewish religious community or a child of a member of a Jewish community. On 15th September 1935 during a session in Nurnberg the Reichstag passed legislation concerning Reich Citizenship and on Protection and Honor of German Blood. The first one deprived German Jews of German citizenship, giving them a the status of ‘possessions of the state.’ According to the new law anyone whose at least 3 grandparents belonged to the Jewish religious community was considered a Jew. The second bill annulled all mixed marriages, banned sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jews, and the employment of Germans in Jewish homes. After the great pogrom called the Crystal Night in November 1938, an entire series of anti-Jewish bills was passed. They were, among others, so-called Aryanizing bills, which gave all Jewish property to the disposal of the ministry of treasure, to be used for the realization of the 4-year economic plan, excluded Jews from material goods production, craftsmanship and small trading, banned Jews from purchasing real estate, trading jewelry, ordered them to deposit securities. Moreover, Jews were banned from entering theatres, cinemas, concert halls, obtaining education, owning vehicles, practicing medicine and pharmacology, owning radios. Special stores were set up, and after the war broke out, separate air-raid shelters. At the beginning of 1939 a curfew at 8 pm was started for Jews, Jews were banned from traveling by sleeper trains, staying at some hotels, being at some public places.

15 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which became known under the name of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Engaged in a border war with Japan in the Far East and fearing the German advance in the west, the Soviet government began secret negotiations for a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German agreement of friendship and non-aggression. The Pact contained a secret clause providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

16 Deportation of Jews from Drohobycz

in April 1940, all new citizens of the Soviet Union were issued Soviet passports; under the so called paragraph 11, refugees from central Poland were banned from living in the poviat towns (Drohobycz was one of those). A special annotation to that effect was made in their passport and

they had to move to the countryside. Drohobycz had taken several thousand Jews from Poland in the first months of the war, so a decree forcing them to leave town could be interpreted as anti-Jewish harassment.

17 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.

18 Armbands

From the beginning of the occupation, the German authorities issued all kinds of decrees discriminating against the civilian population, in particular the Jews. On 1st December 1939 the Germans ordered all Jews over the age of 12 to wear a distinguishing emblem. In Warsaw it was a white armband with a blue star of David, to be worn on the right sleeve of the outer garment. In some towns Jews were forced to sew yellow stars onto their clothes. Not wearing the armband was punishable – initially with a beating, later with a fine or imprisonment, and from 15th October 1941 with the death penalty (decree issued by Governor Hans Frank).

19 Judenrat

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

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 Gross-Rosen camp

The Gross-Rosen camp was set up in August 1940, as a branch of Sachsenhausen; the inmates were forced to work in the local granite quarry. The first transport arrived at Gross-Rosen on 2nd August 1940. The initial labor camp acquired the status of an independent concentration camp on 1 May 1941. Gross-Rosen was significantly developed in 1944, the character of the camp also changed; numerous branches (approx. 100) were created alongside the Gross-Rosen headquarters, mostly in the area of Lower Silesia, the Sudeten Mountains and Ziemia Lubuska. A total of approximately 125,000 inmates passed through Gross-Rosen (through the headquarters and the branches) including unregistered prisoners; some prisoners were brought to the camp only to be executed (e.g. 2,500 Soviet prisoners of war). Jews (citizens of different European countries), Poles and citizens of the former Soviet Union were among the most numerous ethnic groups in the camp. The death toll of Gross-Rosen is estimated at approximately 40,000.

22 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.

23 Anti-Zionist campaign in Poland

From 1962-1967 a campaign got underway to sack Jews employed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the army and the central administration. The background to 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 a lack of loyalty to the state and of publicly demonstrating their enthusiasm for Israel's victory in the Six-Day-War. This address marked the start of purges among journalists and 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 condemned and anti-Semitic and anti-intelligentsia slogans shouted. After 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.

24 Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (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, however, who have been involved with it for years.

25 Solidarity (NSZZ Solidarnosc)
a social and political movement in Poland that opposed the authority of the PZPR. In its institutional form – the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity (NSZZ Solidarnosc) – it emerged in August and September 1980 as a product of the turbulent national strikes. In that period trade union organization were being formed in all national enterprises and institutions; in all some 9–10 million people joined NSZZ Solidarnosc. Solidarity formulated a program of introducing fundamental changes to the system in Poland, and sought the fulfillment of its postulates by exerting various forms of pressure on the authorities: pickets in industrial enterprises and public buildings, street demonstrations, negotiations and propaganda. It was outlawed in 1982 following the introduction of Martial Law (on 13 December 1981), and until 1989 remained an underground organization, adopting the strategy of gradually building an alternative society and over time creating social institutions that would be independent of the PZPR (the long march). Solidarity was the most important opposition group that influenced the changes in the Polish political system in 1989.

26 Righteous Among the Nations
a medal and honorary title awarded to people who during the Holocaust selflessly and for humanitarian reasons helped Jews. It was instituted in 1953. Awarded by a special commission headed by a justice of the Israeli Supreme Court, which works in the Yad Vashem National Remembrance Institute in Jerusalem. During the ceremony the persons recognized receive a diploma and a medal with the inscription “Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world” and plant a tree in the Avenue of the Righteous on the Remembrance Hill in Jerusalem, which is marked with plaques bearing their names. Since 1985 the Righteous receive honorary citizenship of Israel. So far over 20,000 people have been distinguished with the title, including close to 6,000 Poles.