

The Holocaust of the Jews of Drohobycz

Memoirs



Translated from Polish by Eli Buchman, son of Amalia Buchman (nee Shönfeld) from notebooks written by her during the Holocaust and presented to the Custodians of the Yad VaShem Institute in Jerusalem in April 1997.

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Memoirs



This manuscript is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Buchman Shlomo and Amalia (nee Shönfeld, born in Drohobycz and my family who were annihilated in the Holocaust.

These memoirs have been immortalized in the archives of Yad VaShem - The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in April 1997 under the serial number 13119

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Introduction

Foreword

I have known for many years of the two notebooks in which my mother recorded her memories of her city of birth Drohobycz in the Ukraine during the Holocaust.

Quite honestly, I wanted to probe and read them for some time and even began to study them a few times, although the indistinct writing and language in Polish which I have slightly forgotten required more than simply reading.

The memories were written in two thick checked-paper notebooks in 'chemical-pencil' *. The two notebooks and the pencil were acquired by my mother in exchange for a gold watch she owned which had been given to her by her parents, my grandparents. Because of my mother's illness, I felt it necessary to return from the USA where I was spending my Sabbatical leave, and to live in her home for an extended period. In the natural course of things, I was quickly drawn to the two yellowed notebooks hidden in the large cupboard. At first my mother was very much opposed to my starting on the translation as she claimed that these were her personal memories and no one had the right to probe into them. After some argument which at times reached high tones, my mother was persuaded and from that moment on I began to explore and to study them in depth for hours.

At first the translation was difficult and exhausting. However as I progressed my mother's handwriting became comprehensible to me so that the translation proceeded more rapidly. In addition to translation I required my mother's assistance in identifying names of people, clarifying events and dates. The aid my mother provided was extensive however she had forgotten many details.

To supplement the missing details I turned for help to my uncle, my mother's older brother Icik Shönfeld, who endured most of the holocaust with her and who was a great help to me. Despite his advanced age of over 90, he had up to that time, memories of many details from this horrendous period.

In addition I was given help on the historical background by my uncle Shönfeld Adek, my mother's cousin, whose brother Leizer Shönfeld had spent a certain time together with my mother in the bunker where she was hiding.

For several years I believed that all the details on my family, particularly those of my grandparents were known to me from the stories which I had heard many times at family gatherings.

* chemical pencil – a pencil commonly used in Poland, the lead replaced with a chemical compound which could not be erased when wet

At almost every family meeting the subject of the holocaust arose with the memories of this period. To my surprise I now learnt details about them that my mother had never told me, mainly of the bitter ending of some of my family and also further stories.

I tried in the translation, to adhere as closely as possible to the original style and consequently left all the original names of the communities and people recalled in this historic document, in the original script.

The document and recollections recorded in it were written at the actual time they occurred and convey authentic data on what happened to the Jews of Drohobycz in the Ukraine during the Holocaust. In addition to the Foreword, in order to complete the picture, I found it appropriate to write a short summary on the history of the city where my parents were born and on the history of the Jewish community in the surroundings where my family roots rest.

The history of Drohobycz (Drogobycz) and the Jewish community

The city of Drohobycz is located in the Ukraine in eastern Galicia, west of Russia not far from the eastern border of Poland.

Until 1772 and between the two world wars, the city belonged to Poland. Between the years 1772 and 1919 the city was governed by the Austrian empire. It was known that Jews existed in the city already from the beginning of the 15th century. In this period the Jews worked as contractors in the trade of the salt which was mined in the area. Most of them lived in the city and established a base for the local Jewish community. From the year 1578 it was forbidden for Jews to live in the area although with a government permit a few Jews were allowed to live on the outskirts of the city. This situation continued until the end of the 17th century. After cancellation of the decree the Jews returned and settled in the city, coordinating most of the trade and labour and at the same time establishing Jewish guilds which competed successfully with the Christian guilds. This success, which was won by many of the Jews, quickly led to disputes between them and the Christian population.

The Jewish community of the city was represented as one of the communities of the county of Rzeszów. In the mid 18th century a Jew by the name of Zalman Ben-Ze'ev (Wolfowitz) took control of the lives of the community members in the city, a brutal and corrupt farmer, who was used by the government to collect taxes and customs. He took advantage of his high standing to elevate family members to positions of power (he assigned his brother-in-law to the post of Rabbi of the community) and was 'famous' for his callous handling of affairs, rapidly making himself hated by Christians and Jews alike. Being informed upon to the government in 1755 for deceitfulness, he was indicted and eventually sentenced to death. The interventions of the leaders of the community to the government led to this sentence being amended to life imprisonment. After some time in prison he converted to Christianity and died as a member of the Carmelite Order in 1757.

The city was conquered and brought under Austrian rule in 1772. The intrusion of the Austrian administration in the lives of the Jewish community by means of heavy taxation on their business trade impaired the lives of the established community.

Later, with the beginning of exploitation of the natural resources of the surroundings, salt and crude oil at the start of the 19th century, the condition of the Jews was very much improved. In 1810 a Jew by the name of Hecker was one of the first who dealt with the search for crude oil and in the mid 19th century, 1858-9, a Jew by the name of A. Shreiner established a refinery for crude oil next to the neighbouring city of Boryslaw. At the same time the crude oil industry and its products were also developed in the U.S.A. Many Jewish families were active in all facets of the oil industry and became prosperous. From the end of the 19th century and onwards the large oil companies appeared which gradually reduced the activities of the Jewish companies. After the First World War a decline began in the quality of life of the Jewish community which at that time comprised some 12,000 people.

Towards the end of the 18th century Hassidism and educational movements spread throughout the city. From 1883 until the first world war erupted, a German bi-weekly printed in Hebrew letters named 'Drohobycner Zeitung' came to light in the city,

which from time to time between the years 1886-7 and accordingly in 1897, issued supplements in Hebrew called 'Zion'. Towards the end of the Habsburg regime the Jewish population was represented in the Austrian parliament by a converted Jewish envoy who was known to be a supporter of the Polish government, with full backing from the government. In 1911 elections to the Austrian parliament were organized and a Zionist delegate promoted by the Jewish community campaigned against the representative supported by the government. The authorities were accused of falsifying election results, disturbances swiftly erupted and the army was called in to suppress the unrest. In order to rapidly restrain the rebellion the army fired at the demonstrators killing 13 local Jews and wounding many.

The city was considered the 'Kolel' * of Galizia from 1890 up until the holocaust which befell the community in the Second World War. Haim Shapira, the last of the *AdMoR* ** of the city, was the last of the 'righteous' who officially joined the Zionist movement and immigrated to Israel in 1922.

The Jewish population comprised 1,924 persons in 1765, 2,492 in 1812, 8,055 in 1865, 8,683 in 1900 and 11,833 in 1921, which was at that time approximately 44% of the entire population of the city.

In September 1939, with the occupation of the city by the Russians, the Jewish population numbered 17,000 people. Immediately after the occupation the Russians imprisoned the Zionist leaders and closed down the Hebrew schools. The Jewish population also included some Jewish refugees from western Poland, who had found shelter in the city when most of the refugees were sent to Russia. On the 3rd July 1941 the German army entered the city and already the next day, with the help of most of the Ukrainian population, instigated a pogrom on the Jewish population in which 400 Jews lost their lives close to the local courthouse and the Jewish cemetery. In the month of March 1942, 1,500 Jews were sent to the Belzec concentration camp. On the 18th and 19th August a huge 'roundup'*** was organized, in which 2,400 Jews were sent to concentration camps and 600 persons were murdered in the surroundings of the city itself. On the 1st October the Ghetto was established in the city, in which some 9,000 Jews lived. These included the survivors of the roundups and Jewish refugees from neighbouring cities and villages. At the end of October another 2,300 Jews were sent to Belzec and 180 elderly and ill were shot and killed in the streets of the ghetto. With the realization that the Germans intended the complete destruction of the ghetto and annihilation of the remaining Jewish population, the Jews began to build bunkers and hideouts in the forests surrounding the city and to search for concealed shelter with the Aryan population. The Germans simultaneously continued the executions and the

* Kolel - refers to an institute for advanced studies of Talmud and of rabbinic literature for post-graduate Jewish adults.

** *AdMoR* - Each Hasidic group refers to their leader as "The Rebbe". A Hasidic leader is also known as an *AdMoR* (an acrostic for "Ad[oneinu] Mo[reinu] R[abeinu]", "[Our] Master, Teacher, Rabbi").

*** 'roundup' – this word is taken from the Polish word 'akcja' which means the brutal hunting down of the Jewish population and sending them to the concentration camps.

roundups for annihilations, the most extensive of which took place throughout November of 1942, in which the Germans decided to obliterate all the remaining refugees. Bronica Forest, which was adjacent to the city, rapidly became an immense mass graveyard comprising the Jews of the city and its surroundings and also did not overlook the members of the Judenrat.

On the 23rd of July 1943 the Jewish personnel of the city workshops were executed. A very small number of the Jewish community saved themselves by finding hideouts in the city and surroundings. A small number succeeded in escaping to Hungary by crossing the Karpat Mountains and even less succeeded in rescuing themselves by obtaining forged 'Aryan' documents. With the liberation of the city by the Red Army in August 1944, some 400 Jews remained alive.

After the war the city was relinquished to the Russians as a Ukrainian city. Most of the Jews left the city and the area, making their way to Israel and other countries throughout the world.

The First Notebook

Introduction

It never entered my mind that I would write a manuscript which would be read by others. I have no talent or any idea regarding writing. However this time something so appalling, so incomprehensible happened, that it put into the shade every catastrophe that had befallen the Jewish people from the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the Spanish Inquisition, the Crusade, Chmielnicki, Milnitzki and Platura pogroms combined.

All the instances of persecution of Jews known to us from history are nothing compared to what we, the Jews, endured since the invasion of the German army into our area. I am writing these lines from the city of Drohobycz in Galicia, although similar events occurred in other cities and cities throughout Poland and beyond her borders, and apparently in all areas which were under the Nazi oppression.

I tried to write a manuscript which documents the tragedy which befell the Jewish community of Drohobycz particularly and the Jewish people as a whole, a defenseless people abandoned by fate into the hands of the Nazi murderers. A terrible tragedy, in which crimes that were done then with a cruelty not of this world, are incomprehensible to the human mind. Also I, who experienced these horrors in the flesh, to this day find it difficult to believe, some two years after the Nazis entered our city, that a nation considered the most cultured of the 20th century, was capable of the murder of women, children, the elderly and sick, and of slaughtering in cold blood, in a manner calculated and prearranged with absolutely no conscience or scruples, for one and only reason – that they were Jews.

All the murders were organized and carried out with the precision and exactitude which the Nazis were taught and trained for and therefore only they were capable of implementing them. All the organization and implementation of the murders were carried out with great accuracy and to date, some two years since the invasion of the Nazis into our city, we see that they have prepared a devilish plan, methodical and horrific of general annihilation, in the full meaning of the word, obliteration of the entire Jewish population in the city and its surroundings.

The massive numbers of murders which followed the rounding up of Jews were part of the general program the aim of which was the extensive annihilation of all the Jews wherever they were. This horrific plan which was named 'The Final Solution' was organized and carried out according to the command of the occupying German Government.

The organizations and groups which took part in the annihilation

The Nazis established a large organizational alignment to carry out their evil plan. Part of the organizations and groups were already in existence before the German occupation and part of them were established later. The Germans used the hate of the local population towards the Jews and incited them against the Jewish population. Most of the Ukrainian population took part in the destruction, because of envy and blind hate,

In addition to these organizations, two Jewish organizations were also established, which I will describe later.

The organizations and groups which collaborated with the Nazis in the annihilation of the Jews were:

1. (SIPO) Sicherheitspolizei – the Gestapo. This group became the top authority which governed all the other groups and organizations.
2. The Black Ukrainian Militia.
3. (SZUPO) Schutzpolizei – The civil guard.
4. The Red Ukrainian Militia.
5. The SS
6. (SD) Sicherdienst - The special destruction unit of the Gestapo.
7. (KRIPPO) Kriminelpolizei – The police dealing with crime
8. Reiterpolizei – Cavalry Police.
9. Bahnschutzpolizei – Railway Police.
10. Werkschutzpolizei – Workshop Police.
11. Bahndienst – Railway Workers. They were responsible for the loading of victims onto the trains for transport to obliteration.
12. In addition to the groups and organizations specified above, the local police, most of the Ukrainian population of the city and the surrounding villages can be added as being directly involved in the destruction.

As already mentioned the Germans also established two Jewish organizations which collaborated with the occupying conquerors.

Judenrat - the group responsible for managing the lives of the Jewish population living in the Ghetto.

Ordnungsdienst - the group responsible for controlling order in the Ghetto.

It appears that the Germans and their allies invested great resources, effort and thought to the destruction of the Jewish population. All this while operating a wide-ranging world war, one of the main events since the beginning of humanity, against the largest and strongest super-powers in the world like England, France, the United States of America and Russia. This encompassing war demanded of the German nation, discipline, maximal sacrifice and planning, and despite all this the Germans succeeded in establishing at the same time an extensive mechanism in almost every city they conquered, which included many hundreds of people armed from top to toe

whose aim was the annihilation of the Jewish nation. The destruction of the Jewish community was carried out with almost absolute precision and thoroughness.

The most appalling of all in this hell, and perhaps the most appalling since this world was created, were the Jewish Organizations the Judenrat and the Ordnungsdienst, which were established by the Gestapo and were the authorized representatives of the Jews. These organizations will be the 'mark of Cain', a source of shame and disgrace and a stain that will never be eliminated from the annals of the Jewish nation.

The Nazis did dreadful things which are unparalleled in the history of humanity, the worst of which was the establishment of these organizations. Into the Judenrat the Germans accumulated the 'cream' of the Jewish population: doctors, lawyers, writers and educated people, etc. These people, who were chosen to serve the Germans in their administration of the Jewish population, never imagined the nature of the work inflicted upon them and when the 'blow struck' it was already too late. Fate befell them. The nature of these two organizations can be summarized in one sentence – the Jews themselves, willingly or unwillingly, helped the Nazis to destroy their brothers and lead them straight into the hands of their murderers.

With the enlistment of the chosen Jewish public into the service of the Judenrat it appeared when it was first established, to be an innocent Jewish organization. All perceived it as a substitute to the community institution which existed in the city before the war. In actual fact it was an enslaved organization directly subordinate to the Gestapo, which carried out its commands and directives with no right to appeal or resist in the name of the Jewish population.

The limitations in daily life and the roundups

The Jews under the Nazi German rule were lacking every civilian right and in fact had no rights at all. The life of the Jews was worthless. Every Aryan resident could in effect do as he wished to the Jews and there was nobody and nowhere to complain to.

The commands were passed directly from the Gestapo to the Judenrat and they had to be carried out to the letter, even the most threatening, which were in fact our daily portion. The decrees and declarations fell upon the Jewish population one after the other and struck with a force like thunder after lightning, with a growing frequency as Nazi rule became established in the city.

I will list here only a few of the main decrees in the order which I remember:

- a.** Forced labour without pay for all Jewish males from the age of 16 to 60. This was strenuous physical work, accompanied by severe whipping and humiliation.
- b.** Forced labour for all Jewish women from the age of 16 to 50. These labours accompanied by whipping and humiliation.
- c.** Every Jewish resident from the age of 10, with no distinction in gender, had to wear on his right forearm a 10-cm wide band displaying the sign of the Star of David.
- d.** It was forbidden to keep hands in the pockets.
- e.** Priority went to the Germans when crossing the street.
- f.** It was forbidden to enter public and municipal gardens.
- g.** It was forbidden to walk and cross main streets like Mickiewicz Street or the city square Rynek.
- h.** It was forbidden to own any kind of animal: horses, cows, dogs, etc.
- i.** It was forbidden to own a radio, and any such were obliged to be handed over to the government.
- j.** Electricity was cut off in Jewish homes.
- k.** It was forbidden to purchase from farmers of the neighbouring villages in the city markets, nor in villages nor in the central market square (Mały Rynek).
- l.** It was forbidden to trade with the urban Aryan population.
- m.** It was forbidden to eat meat.
- n.** It was forbidden to travel by train, bus, car, horse-harnessed carriage, to ride on a bicycle, etc.
- o.** It was forbidden to own reserves of provisions, furniture, clothes etc.
- p.** Residence was permitted only in the area stipulated by the regime – the Ghetto.

And so on and on - endless.

All these directives were nothing compared to the roundups. The roundup could only be compared to hunting, where the hunted were human beings, Jews, according to the quota decided upon by the Gestapo. The Jews caught in the roundups were transported by train to concentration camps or shot in the forest adjacent to the city, the Bronica Forest.

It was possible to classify these roundups as small and large roundups. A small roundup was one in which only some tens of Jews were caught and killed, in comparison to a large roundup like the roundup of 7-8/8/1942, in which 4000 people were caught and sent to their deaths, among them children, women and men with no regard to age or economic standing. Whoever was caught was beaten severely and taken to a cruel death. Whoever succeeded in finding a refuge – survived until the next roundup.

To each roundup there was a different pattern and method, so that it was difficult to predict what the day would bring, whether to prepare for the future or to defend ourselves accordingly.

Each roundup was preceded by anxiety, leading to rumours of a definite new impending roundup. The rumours were partly substantiated and partly only the fruit of imagination. The fear and the threat reached such dimensions that sometimes the waiting for a roundup was worse than the actual roundup and resembled waiting for death. In most of the cases it was not known when a roundup would commence and people sometimes hid a number of days in attics and basements without food or water. In the end they had to come out to find food and it was precisely then that they were caught and murdered. Tragedies of this kind and others happened very often. At the time of writing these lines, two years after the Nazi murderers entered the city, today there are not more than 1000 people left in Drohobycz out of all the Jewish population which had numbered 15,000 men and women before the war erupted.

I will now list details of roundups which were carried out in the city in the years 1941–1943. The details are general and include only the large roundups and events in which innumerable Jews lost their lives. The roundups and other disasters which dominated the lives of many Jews are listed here chronologically. How the roundups were conducted and what happened during these roundups I will describe in this diary.

By this method of roundups the Nazis succeeded in destroying, causing terrible suffering and unimaginable torment, over 95% of the entire Jewish population of Drohobycz.

Nbr.	Description of the roundup	Date	Nbr. of victims
1	Pogrom by the Ukrainian population	3.7.1941	100
2	Small roundups and imprisonments	2.11.41-2.7.42	250
3	Call to Arbeitsau declaring this as medical examinations. (they were taken to Bronica Forest and did not return)	22.11.1941	250
4	Imprisonment for unpunctuality to register for work	23.3. – 23.11.42	100
5	Died from cold and hunger	Winter between the years 41-42	600
6	First roundup. Transportation to Magierów	22.3.1942	1000
7	Large roundup. Transportation to Magierów	7-8.8.42	3500
8	Four-day roundup. Transportation to Magierów	21-24.10.42	1600
9	Four-week roundup. Transportation to Magierów	4-30.11.42	1000
10	One-day roundup. Transportation to Bronica Forest	15.2.1943	400
11	One-day roundup. Transportation to Magierów	21.5.43	600
12	Roundup for the destruction of the Dachowczarnia work camp	6.6.43	500
13	Roundup for the destruction of the Drohowernia work camp and transfer to Postamyt	9.6.43	300
14	Roundup for the destruction of the Ulmschlagstell and Trojhandstell work camps	20.6.43	200
15	Roundup for the destruction of the work camp in the village Hyrafka (sawmill), Aetefatterfoszem and the urban workshops	21.7.43	60
			14,000

Manning of part of the Organizations which acted against the Jews

The following list shows names of Germans and their assistants known to me from Drohobycz in revenge for what they did to us.

The Gestapo

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Block – commander | 13. Sokal |
| 2. Häckel – deputy | 14. Urban |
| 3. Hager | 15. Hibner |
| 4. Landau | 16. Gabriel |
| 5. Köss | 17. Krause |
| 6. Laufman | 18. Pawliszek |
| 7. Esch | 19. Ber |
| 8. Ginter (from Kat) | 20. Denk |
| 9. Menzel | 21. Joksz |
| 10. Wizner (from Sambor) | 22. Kutschman |
| 11. Hitler (from Stryj) | 23. Morlok |
| 12. Szenkel | |

The SS

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| 1. Wolf | 5. Mernlinger |
| 2. Prac | 6. Sobota |
| 3. Szuler | 7. Minkus |
| 4. Fryc | 8. Hildenbrand |

The Black Ukrainian Police (SS)

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Faranowicz | 8. Kosak |
| 2. Wowk | 9. Dumanski |
| 3. Huk | 10. Pyndre |
| 4. Kiszko | 11. Smiatyński |
| 5. Hrycaj | 12. Magier |
| 6. Semkil | 13. Mak |
| 7. Medwed | 14. Hyrerak |

The Red Ukrainian Police

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Mydryckij | 6. Drohobycki - informer |
| 2. Wasylko | 7. Junak Maciejko |
| 3. Postojko | 8. Bojczuk – commander |
| 4. Iwasyk | 9. Sendiak |
| 5. Turek | 10. Turski. |

KRIPO

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Lunek | 5. Jolaczek |
| 2. Kopestjanski (from Padlyz) | 6. Niemiłowicz |
| 3. Serczak | 7. Chodak Tadeusz |
| 4. Dumanski | |

SZUPO

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Echinger | 5. Kelner |
| 2. Neugebaner | 6. Jarosz |
| 3. Kauczyk | 7. Wergens |
| 4. Pefer | |

The names in brackets show the residence of the criminals.

Description of the process of a roundup

Collection of Jews and their transportation to camps during the roundups were similar to hunting whipped dogs. The hunters went from house to house by forced entry, breaking down doors and gates, with a precise search in attics and basements. The Jews who were discovered were dragged from their hiding places with brutal beatings, to the Samelstelle (assembly place). The assembly place was located in a large building called Sokol, which was used as a theatre, next to the fire department building. The pursuit of Jews continued until the quota decided by the Gestapo was attained. At the end of the hunt the victims were lead at a run like a death herd of cattle through Stryjska Street, by nonstop whipping, to the train station where they were loaded into cargo wagons, 100 people to one wagon. The congestion in the wagons was dreadful, liked packed sardines. The wagons were locked and the doors secured by wooden slats. The final destination of the train was the death camp Magierów next to the village Rawa Ruski. Because of the severe crowding in the wagons many people suffocated. Children died mainly from thirst. In Magierów the arrivals were ordered to strip so that they could wash and freshen up to go to work. When they were naked they were quickly confined in halls similar to showers and gassed to death.

A few words on the Samelstelle (assembly place) as told to us by one of the few lucky ones who succeeded in escaping and survived. In his words, it was a horrific place and in fact a hell on earth. The hunted were put into a large hall: 70-meters in length and 20-meters in width. They were packed into the large hall and sat on the floor one next to the other. It was forbidden to move and whoever tried to change their position or to get up was beaten on the head with a club by the Ukrainian police guarding the place. A blow like this usually caused unconsciousness, brain damage or even death. Bodily functions were made where they sat and people were forced to sit in them. The smell and the stench were unbearable. So they sat with no food or water until the end of the roundup, days on end and sometimes weeks. It is no wonder that at the conclusion of the roundup many dead bodies were removed from the hall.

The most unbelievable happened in a month-long roundup. The things that happened were beyond description and were classified as irrational, incomprehensible to a human mind. The roundup took place from the 4/11 - 30/11 of 1942. As a result of the long time people were left in the hall and because of the things which happened there, some of the people lost their minds. Nazis and Ukrainians used the circumstances and began to torment these wretched souls. They stripped them and forced them to fight each other to the death. Only death could free these poor souls from their horrible suffering.

The 30/6/1942 - the day the Germans entered the city and the Ukrainian Pogrom

The Soviets withdrew from the city on Sunday and the last train to leave the station was similar to a refugee train. People sat on the wagon roofs and hung on every part of the train that they could cling on to, in order to leave the area before the Germans entered. The city was pervaded with an atmosphere lacking in law and security. With the flight of the Soviet regime, large numbers of farmers from the neighbouring villages began to stream into the city by horse-drawn wagons and plundering of the general stores began quickly. Stores were broken into; the valuable products were looted, loaded onto the wagons and taken to the villages.

At approximately 17.00 the first German planes were seen in the skies as they dropped the German parachutists who conquered the area and at 21.00 the German patrols entered the city. With their arrival the Ukrainian population welcomed them with enthusiasm and cries of joy. To us, the Jews, this brought only bad tidings.

Our hearts were filled with grief and sorrow for what had been and were no more and we felt a torrent of threatening dread approaching. Already on the first night under German rule we were unable to sleep as rumours of the Germans' conduct towards the Jews were not unfamiliar to us. To our sorrow we were not mistaken and the consequences descended upon us already the next day.

The Ukrainians were not idle. On the same night they already requested that the local German authority permit them freedom to act against the Jewish population and the Germans permitted them to conduct a pogrom. On the next day, 1/7/1942, at 08.00 in the morning the pogrom began.

Like unleashed beasts of prey the Ukrainians, a number of them intoxicated, attacked the homes of the Jews, with crowbars, axes, iron bars, knives and every type of weapon that they could lay their hands on. The Jewish homes that were left in open areas with no protection whatsoever were easy targets for these wild hordes. The rioters broke, destroyed and killed everything that fell under their hands. The hoodlums murdered with no distinction between children, women and old people, barbarically and callously abusing their dead bodies.

They dragged the wounded victims towards the district courthouse in Drohobycz and there abused them again and again until their souls returned to their creator. The torture was in revenge for the killing of Ukrainian nationalists by the Soviet regime which fled the city. The rioting mob of Ukrainian rabble, which was mainly made up of farmers from the region amongst them many youth, dragged additional victims from all corners of the Jewish neighbourhood beating and brutalizing them in an inhuman manner and brought them to the fresh mass grave of the Ukrainians who had been killed by the Russians

There the abuse continued by beating the victims with dull instruments accompanied by shouts of 'this is for Stalin', 'this is for Lenin' 'this is for the communist party', 'this is for the Kolsumoi', 'this is for Chaj zyvei', and such.

Only people with extraordinary body strength succeeded in enduring this appalling ordeal and survived. From them we learnt what had happened there. RS, one of the survivors of this Pogrom told us: "we were lead through the streets towards the

courthouse. Beginning at the pharmacy Artzt crowds of Ukrainians, men and women, stood on both sides of the street, beating us with everything they could lay their hands on and threw stones at us. All this was accompanied by shouts and cries blaming us as collaborators of the Communists and Bolsheviks. Any of them who succeeded in beating one of us particularly severely was considered a success and lucky. So under a hail of blows, curses and cries of contempt we entered the gates of the courthouse. Our eyes saw a horrifying scene which froze the blood in our veins. Before us, lying on the ground were some tens of* torn, bleeding bodies of Jews impossible to recognize. Not far from there was a large mass grave of murdered Ukrainian political prisoners. We were lead to this grave and with blows and curses we were forced to cover it with our bare hands. This labor was accompanied throughout by shouts, dreadful wails of crying and the tremendous pain of Jews with no protection from being beaten to death. With my own eyes I saw a Ukrainian youth wrench a seven-month-old baby from his mother's arms, Lea Eidelman, tear him into two and throw each half to a different side. Victims who were lying on the ground and showed signs of life were treated with blows and kicks until their souls departed."

At 15.00 hours on command of the German authority, the pogrom was halted although not the thievery and plundering of Jewish homes. All the Jewish homes in the city were abandoned and whoever could find a shelter, hid away. The process of plunder by the Ukrainian hordes was therefore easy and swift. The plunderers went from house to house and apartment to apartment and methodically and completely emptied them of every item of value. What they could not take with them, they broke and destroyed and left behind them destruction and unimaginable devastation. There was not one Jewish home left with windows or doors intact, feathers from torn bedding blew in every direction. Not a Jewish soul was seen in the streets. What we succeeded in seeing from the height of our hiding place was only the Aryan citizen who passed through the streets and gazed with gloating upon the destruction which they had apparently long yearned for.

So was the first day in the lives of the Jewish community of Drohobycz under German rule.

* tens of – is Polish colloquial speech, where in English ‘dozens of’ would be used. We wanted however to adhere as much as possible to the authentic script.

The Judenrat, or according to its Polish name Komitet Żydowski (KŻ), – its duties, structure and manning.

On the 2/6/1942 a command was issued by the Nazi regime to establish a Jewish organization whose aim would be to arrange and direct the lives of the Jewish population. The Organization was established immediately and was located in a two-story house on 2 Czacki Street.

The Organization was active from June 1942 until March 1943. On its most active days the number of its members reached 1000 people, all Jews, collaborating with the Nazis.

The building in which the Judenrat was housed was like a state within a state in which the lives of the entire Jewish population in the city was administered. The organization which was established as an innocent corporation, a replacement for the community committee which had existed before the outbreak of war, was swiftly changed to a tool in the hands of the Nazis whose aim was the destruction of the entire Jewish population in the city. It seemed when it was first established, after matters concerning Jews were considered to be beyond any law, that the Judenrat would serve as the only lifeline. Indeed, when it began its functions leaders of the organization among the regime attempted to ease slightly the lives of the Jewish population. Food coupons were provided and distributed by the organization (each one was granted 70-gram of bread per day, 1-kg sour cabbage or sour cucumbers per month, 50-gram sugar per month, a box of matches, salt fish, etc). Later, the only help the Judenrat provided was the release of a few from detention, for a heavy ransom, information on dates of roundups and also this only to close associates.

The aim of the Germans in establishing the Judenrat was to make a separation between the German authority and the Jewish population and to transfer the planning of annihilation into the hands of the Jews themselves. The first deed of the Judenrat with regard to the Jewish population was to put up pacifying posters on the message boards, according to the directions of the German regime. These messages stated:

- a. The government would no longer allow anti-Jewish riots and injury to the Jewish population.
- b. Death sentence would be passed on looters and robbery with violence.
- c. The Jewish population was obligated to obey the Judenrat without question.

The first recruitment to the organization was general and later divided into departments and sub departments. The initial recruitment included the following people:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Dr. Rosenblat | 6. Dr. Fromer |
| 2. Dr. Rabin Avigdor | 7. Dr. Ruderfer |
| 3. Dr. Ruhberg | 8. Ruderman |
| 4. Dr. Szmer | 9. Dr. Liberman |
| 5. Halleman | 10. Dr. Barchasz |

The first task of the organization was to arrange the burial of victims of the pogrom who numbered 100 people. A few of the names of the victims are known to me and names and ages are listed below:

Ita Steinberg (17), Laizer Sznek (33), Machel Hopfinger (55), Israel Held (60), Zelcerowa (38), Klingerowa (53), Feldman (38), Abraham Landesman (65), LanGerman (42), Gotesman (70), Chaim Ratz (45), Lefelsztifowa (50), Grol (70), midwife Graumanowa (47).

The German authorities gave all their directions and commands pertaining to the Jewish population through the KŻ. The organization adapted them to daily existence and integrated them into daily life.

The second command which the German authorities proclaimed and which was carried out by the KŻ, was to arrange a list of Jewish males between the ages 16 – 60 for forced labour i.e. heavy physical labour.

Every Jew received a call by name to appear each morning in the courtyard of the KŻ at 06.00 with a spade, pick or pitchfork. Absence from work resulted in a death sentence.

The allotment of work was made in the following way. The authorities delivered to the KŻ each morning, the quota of workers needed for labour at the various sites dispersed throughout the city. Most of this labour was purposeless and included mainly the destruction of monuments and memorial posters, erasure of large wall-drawings, etc. The labourers were divided into groups and each one was assigned a different work site. The labourers marched to the work sites in single file and more than once earned beatings and humiliation on the way to the workplace and at the work site itself, by the Ukrainian guards but also at the hands of special Jewish overseers. The governments ensured that the work sites were not known to the labourers in advance and thereby all the more increased the distressing mood and insecurity. The wish of the forced labourers' group was for a permanent work site where they could occupy themselves and be tormented as little as possible in revenge for their hard work.

The functioning groups and their manning

The entire aspect of Jewish life centered around the KŻ and it divided its activities between the various departments that were established so that each of them handled a specific activity.

Following is the structure of the organization's manning, the various departments and those who headed them:

Presidency –	Dr. Maciek Ruhrberg, Dr. Rosenblat
Secretariat -	Engineer Bernfeld (changed his name after the war to Beninski)
Department of Work (Arbeitsamt) –	Dr. Lieberman
Treasury and Taxes Department –	Krell, Dr. Ruderfer
Credit Department –	Ruderman
Judiciary Department –	Dr. Lustig
Department of Statistics –	Dr. Gerstenfeld
Department of Economy –	M. Krigiel
Department of Medicine –	the physician Dr. Mendel
Department of Insurance –	Lieberman
Department of Inventory –	Dr. Hopfinger
Department of Housing –	Dr. Hefler
Department of Community Work –	Dr. Rabin Avigdor
Department of Social Assistance (Sozialefarzorgung) -	Tylehousman
Department of Central Supplies (CKŻ) –	Petrenkier
Department of Food Supplies –	Grunhaut
Department of Education –	Dr. Helze
Jewish Hospital –	Dr. Hoffman
Postal Department –	Luft
Mutual Assistance (Samopomoc Społeczna) –	JOINT – Dr. Tennenbaum
Jewish Police (Ordenugesdienst) –	Gallotki

Description of the function of some of the important departments

The Presidency - The Presidency of the KŻ, headed by Dr. Maciek Ruhrberg and Dr. Rosenblat who administered direct contacts with the Gestapo from whom they received 'requests' and instructions in the manner of commands which they were compelled to carry out immediately with no objection.

On the surface, the relationship between the heads of the KŻ and the Gestapo were good and even friendly, although this was an extremely clever German approach the aim of which was to gain the trust of the Jewish population while simultaneously exploiting the human Jewish resources for self-destruction.

The power of the Presidency was demonstrated by cancellation of part of the severe decrees against the Jewish population in general, and against separate private ones in exchange for a heavy ransom. They were the only ones who could try to influence the Germans in cases of imprisonment and punishment of private persons, daily occurrences in the Jewish street.

The Presidency exploited the high ransom monies collected and kept substantial amounts of the money for themselves. Particularly the Presidency member Dr. Maciek Ruhrberg. During a year and a half he made an enormous fortune (diamonds, foreign currency, and much gold) and strengthened his regime with the KŻ where he ruled without opposition. He was later murdered by the Germans when he was caught for not fulfilling orders. He was tied to a horse-drawn carriage and dragged through the streets of the city until he died. One of the most important functions and together with this the function which brought with it shame and disgrace to the Jewish people was the transfer of lists of people to the Gestapo in the name of 'resettlement'. The command for preparation of a list for the purpose of 'resettlement' was catalogued by the KŻ in innocence and swiftly. The Jewish Police Department collected 1000 people, according to the list, and arranged their transport to the collection point (Samelstelle) next to the Sokol Hall. From here the people were transported by the Gestapo soldiers to the railway station, loaded rapidly like cattle onto freight wagons and taken, to our sorrow, to Magierów the extermination camp next to Rawy Ruska.

In this camp buildings were specifically prepared for annihilation. The victims were stripped and put into 'showers' where they were tortured mercilessly to death by gassing. A similar fate awaited many more Jews at the hands of the Nazi troops. To this camp trains arrived every day from all over Poland and even from outside its borders containing helpless victims whose only crime was that they were Jews.

The KŻ regime was a dictatorial regime. They were masters of life and death and did everything that entered their heads. There was no authority above them besides the Gestapo. The law was always on their side, irrevocably and with no hope of appeal to any source besides the authorities. In fact the law was exploited by them in every respect and not always according to the scale of regular justice.

They imposed taxes on the Jewish population and other levies, imposed ransoms, confiscated possessions and equipment and when opposition arose, even the slightest opposition, they were threatened with being handed over to the Gestapo, with no concern whatsoever for the circumstances. Every move and step they took was unjustified and outrageous.

It can be said, without doubt, that the Presidency of the KŻ was governed by bribery, corruption and 'connections' (those who had influence with contacts able to grant favours). While they ruled, the level of poverty grew in the Jewish population and workers and professionals who had no money with which to bribe their 'representatives' had no right to live.

The Secretariat - The Engineer Bernfeld headed the Secretariat. The Secretary did not act and did not initiate independent activities but passed on commands to the various departments as they descended upon him from the Presidency. His deputy

was Dr. Fink who was the contact between the KŻ and the Ukrainian police. In the capacity of his duties he could intervene with the police on behalf of the Jews.

Department of Work (Arbeitsamt) - Dr. Liberman headed the department. The offices of the department were located at 2 Sudnicka Street in the home of the Fenerstein family. A German by the name of Gildener also worked in the department, and inspected the activities of the department. The department organized all the forced labour for the entire Jewish population, men and women. At the department were lists of all the Jews in the city and they were divided into the required work groups without the right to object. Every forced labour worker was equipped with a certificate with attached photograph and had to be present every day at 06:00 in the courtyard of the department and from there was sent to various work sites. The main executor of the department was a Jew by the name of Zecharia Herzig whose repulsive conduct to his brother Jews of Drohobycz was shown by his complete insensitivity to their physical condition and their health. The above fulfilled his tasks, which were given him directly by the German Gildener, with precision and such dedication that no German guard was needed at the scene. He terrified them, exposing many to murderous beatings, insulted them, informed upon them, and sent many Jews to their deaths. Just imagine one case which happened involving this brute. Eizig Former, a pharmacist whom I knew personally, presented himself every day for forced labour. One day he was made supervisor by one of the work department employees. Mr. Zacharja Herzig opposed this appointment as he had received no compensation for this appointment from Eizig Former and declared that he should continue with heavy forced labour also in the future. Eizig Former did not endure this heavy work for long and one day announced that he was sick and did not present himself for work. The next day Zecharia Herzig dispatched to the Gestapo a list of ill people who had not presented themselves for work and amongst them was the name of Eizig Former. The next day after a medical examination which was arranged by the German employed at the Work Department, the workers were surrounded by police, put into trucks and taken to Bronicki Forest where they were shot to death. This case and similar cases were daily occurrences at the Work Department.

Zecharia Herzig and Dr. Lieberman established methods for acquiring bribery on a wide scale. Those who had money and paid these two beasts did not have to present themselves at all for labour for an extended period. Both of them collected a large treasure by exploiting many Jews in the city.

A further case of exploitation occurred when arranging the departure for work camps in Synowozko Wyżne in March 1942. At this time only 200 labourers were required for implementing this work. The Judenrat provided 400 personal work permits with the prior knowledge that 200 people would bribe their way out of forced labour at the camp. As expected so it was. The wealthy paid a ransom and were discharged from going out to forced labour while the poor, dressed in rags were taken under heavy guard to the work camp. At this work camp it was customary to work for 10 hours a day digging underground tunnels. This heavy work overwhelmed many victims whose rations consisted of 200-gr. bread, watery soup and a cup of black coffee for a day's work. The work was always accompanied by beatings and insults. Many lost

their lives due to this work and others realizing they had nothing to lose began to escape.

Anyone caught escaping was tortured and executed by shooting. Some of the runaways succeeded despite all to escape and managed to join up with their families with their health broken. This was the 'purification' and strengthening of the Jewish population under German rule.

The Finance and Taxation Department - Heading the department were Dr. Krellem and Ruderfer. Jointly with the Presidency they consigned taxes on the Jewish population and burdened their daily lives. The types of taxes consigned were:

- a. 10% tax on financial turnover, monitored by putting a supervisor and inspector in every single shop
- b. general monthly tax
- c. additional tax at a later date, of 25% on the general tax
- d. hall tax
- e. tax per capita
- f. special tax
- g. social tax
- h. additional tax on provisions
- i. general tax

The taxes were high with absolutely no consideration taken for the financial condition of the families and collection was carried out with brutality and no pity. A large portion of the tax monies also found their way into the personal pockets of the Presidency and Secretariat members.

Credit Department - headed by Mr. Ruderman. The activities of the department included the establishment of a bank from which all Jews were compelled to buy shares which were to serve as a foundation for providing loans to the Jewish population. In fact not one single person received a loan and the invested money disappeared like a stone thrown into deep waters.

Justice Department - headed by Dr. Lustig. The department was the only judicial institute for absolving difficulties between Jews themselves. Here too, as in the other departments, corruption and 'connections' were rife.

Department of Statistics - headed by Dr. Gerstenfeld. The department handled the precise inventory of the entire Jewish population in the city including addresses, property, etc. These lists were from time to time sent to the Presidency and from there straight into the hands of the Gestapo.

Financial Department - headed by M. Krigel. Its job was to organize and develop the Jewish stores and canteens. This department, it must be noted, was administered with correctness. M. Krigel tried to obtain tens of permits from the government for the management of businesses amongst them permits for two bakeries, 15 grocery

stores, some tens of canteens and also permits for two hairdressers, a shoemaker, a store for sewing utensils, sewing and tailor shop, clothing store, photographers, a pawnbrokers, houseware store, etc.

These stores served an important purpose in the lives of the Jews as Jews were prohibited from trading with or buying from the Aryan population. It was possible to equip themselves at these stores, although at a very basic level, with fundamental goods and daily necessities. These stores were managed so efficiently that even the Aryan citizens risked monetary fines and came to trade at the Jewish stores. After a number of them were caught every type of trade was prohibited with the Aryan citizens. Despite this, the Aryan traders became the main suppliers to the stores, as they had driving permits to the neighbouring cities, which were prohibited to the Jews under punishment of death. The Aryan citizens drove westward, brought products which they sold to the Jews and made a lot of money. In time, with the help and advice of the Jews, the Aryans learnt to trade and under this training, attained the level of their Jewish teachers. The suppliers to the Jewish stores were Germans themselves who had stolen from the German warehouses and sold their stolen wares to any purchaser and to anyone who could pay the price, so there was also a trade connection with the Germans in addition to that with the Aryan population.

Even though these stores had an administrative permit from the German regime, it was prohibited for them to sell products except for daily use and this was done under threat of severe monetary fines and sometimes even punishment by death. Daily provisions included: bread, flour, butter, eggs, cheeses, grains, sugar, beans, artificial sweetener, tobacco, cigarettes, and even potatoes. Despite all, the privileged allowed themselves to buy and sell products in addition to those mentioned above, as with the Germans bribery took precedence over the law. Bribery was considered almost 'legal' from the lowest level policeman to high-ranking commanders in the Gestapo.

Police activities in the Jewish quarters were administered by the Ukrainian police, members of KRIPO, but mainly SZUPO people. The main task was to monitor the Jewish stores so that they did not sell prohibited products and that no trade would be made with the Aryan citizens. With their first appearance, they imposed terror on the Jewish store owners and on the Jewish population as a whole but with time they learnt to understand that with the help of bribery everything could be set up. All the police who were sent to the Ghetto were neutralized without delay and trade prospered greatly.

For example: Two KRIPO policemen in civilian clothes entered a store and identified themselves with permits issued to them officially by the Germans. They removed all customers from the store and made a search. They found in stock an item 'prohibited' for sale, artificial sweetener and immediately compiled an official report in which the shop owners were summoned to Gestapo Headquarters. The mention of Gestapo Headquarters was synonymous to a death penalty. As the Jewish tradesman had nothing to lose he took the risk and gave the policeman 300 zlotys. The policeman counted the money with no shame and demanded that at least another 200 zloty be added which he received with no argument. The protocol and summons to the Gestapo Headquarters was destroyed on the spot and the incident was closed very quickly and forgotten to the satisfaction of both sides. In this

manner, these police and others who were routine visitors to the Jewish stores received their unofficial 'wages'.

An additional example: At another store the owners bought 4 sacks of wheat from the farmers in the village. When they were being unpacked at night a SZUPO policeman appeared at the store with two Ukrainians who had informed on the Jews and brought the police. The policeman asked the store owners from whom they had bought the products and whether he knew where all this could lead. The merchant changed to German and at once offered the German coffee beans, a product in much demand by the Germans at that time. The fish was immediately caught in the net and, as the German did not want to share the bribe with the Ukrainians, the conversation changed to German, a language the Ukrainians could not understand. He demanded that the Jewish merchant immediately declare loudly into the ears of the Ukrainians that he knew that the product would be confiscated and that he would be taken the next day to Gestapo headquarters. Upon hearing the declaration of the Jewish merchant, the Ukrainians left the store and the German hastened to take his bribe, this time in the likes of butter, coffee beans, black pepper, eggs, flour and sugar.

To disclose cases of bribery there were also other cases described as follows. SZUPO police were routinely going into Jewish stores to 'buy' various products. The 'purchase' meant paying maximal prices for them (prices which were stipulated by the German regime), maintaining that these products were required for the kitchen of the German police. Although the maximal prices were valid, market prices in fact dominated.

Following is a comparison between maximal prices and market prices on the same days.

Product Item	Market price in zlotys	Maximal price in zlotys
1-kg sugar	1	80
1-kg flour	0.6	40
1-kg onions	0.07	20
1-kg soap	2	200
1-kg bread	0.3	10 and over

In another incident a price inspection committee came to Drohobycz from a city of the Lwow district. With their arrival all keys of the Jewish businesses were confiscated and the merchants were threatened with being sent to concentration camps if any irregularities were found. General apprehension enveloped all but with the intervention of the Financial Department which bribed the committee members with bottles of liquor and a few reels of material to sew suits, also this incident was resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

These incidents and others were seen in the streets and Jewish stores from time to time and were not the worst as they concluded with monetary costs only.

The merchants profited and although not badly, each profit was used mainly for bribery and payment of taxes to the KŻ. These costs resulted in the merchants slowly beginning to dispose of their businesses so that in the end, of all the stores which included also sweet shops and restaurants, only three stores remained.

Department of Medicine - headed by Dr. Mendel was divided into three sub-departments: the physical which contained a laboratory and clinic, and two hospitals. The laboratory was situated in the 'Talmud Torah' building and performed similarly to the health maintenance organization. The doctors worked there in the framework of medical possibilities which were allotted to them and did everything they could to assist those in need among the Jewish population only. Their work was done with devotion and their consciences can only be praised. Their work was very difficult as there was a lack of doctors. One hospital was a regular hospital. It was used as a first aid station and supplied death certificates. This hospital was at first full of Jews who became sick and bloated from hunger and later it was used as an orphanage for children whose parents had been taken to concentration camps during the roundups. The second hospital was used for epidemics. It was next to the Jewish orphanage, and was most of the time populated with typhus cases – an epidemic which flourished most of the time in the Jewish neighbourhoods.

Department of Inventory - headed by Dr. Hopfinger. This department handled storage and maintenance of all furniture and household stock which was confiscated from Jewish homes. This equipment was put into KŻ warehouses for German use. The Judenrat had been given a command by the German regime which was passed directly to the Jewish population, explicitly prohibiting the sale or trade of furniture. Every German who arrived in the city went to the KŻ and there chose for himself from the looted furniture in the warehouses. If the furniture did not meet the German's requirements members of the Department of Stock, accompanied by a German soldier were sent to obtain the requested furniture in the shortest time, of course from Jewish homes. The transport and supply was free of charge and the labourers and 'suppliers' were often accompanied by curses, malicious laughter, ridicule and sometimes also blows.

Housing Department - headed by Dr. Hefler. This department had an important task after the roundup of August 1942 when the Jews were commanded to assemble in one Jewish district. The idea was to concentrate all the Jews remaining in the city's neighbourhoods into one single area in a few days, so the remaining Jewish population was concentrated into two districts separate from the other parts of the city.

The first district included the following streets: Reich, part of Czackiego Sobieski Street, Stolarska, Tokarska, Kotnicka, Ślusarska, Kowalska, Brudna, part of Lasiewna Street, Kraszewski, Rybia, Szkolna, Sienkiewicz, and the right side of Mały Rynek.

The second district included the following streets: Jura, part of Szaszkiewicz Street, part of Garncarska Street, Zupna, Kominiarska, Boryslawska, and the left side of part of Jagiellońska. The period of dividing the living areas was a 'burning season' for

some of the Department workers, mainly for Mr. Fangier and Dr. Gotlieb. These two made an enormous fortune from bribery and ransom which they received for the assignment of better houses to richer people.

Department of Community Works - headed by Dr. Avigdor

The duty of the Department was concentrated only on matters of burial and taking care of graveyards as there were no births at all at this time.

Department of Social Assistance - headed by Mr. Tylehausman. The department was to our sorrow, a sign of the times or if possible to describe it with irony 'the hit of the Ghetto'. The department managed two kitchens for the poorest people: one for children and the other for the general citizens of the Ghetto. Many of the citizens used the kitchens and it was heartbreaking to see the long endless queues of the hungry, sick and dying who waited many hours in the rain, snow and frost, in worn out clothing and sometimes without shoes, for a plate of warm food. Besides the food, they also sometimes received a small cash gift.

Department of Central Supplies headed by Mr. Petrenkier.

The department complied with all the commands of the Gestapo as they were forwarded by the KŽ. The following products were the most frequently requested by the Germans for their daily use: wines, large amounts of vodka, coffee beans, black pepper, tea and fabrics for the sewing of clothes. The purchase of these products for the Germans was the main expenditure of the KŽ.

Department of Food Supplies (provisions) - headed by Mr. Grunhaut. The duty of the department was the dispersal of provisions, which were received from the German authorities for the Jewish population. The Germans provided minimal amounts of basic foods like bread, sugar, potatoes, etc. Despite the official supply, even these products did not reach the poor population as the staff of the department routinely filled their pockets with the money from the sale of these products on the black market to the disadvantage of the underprivileged.

For example, I saw an incident in which potatoes which had been sent officially by the German authorities, were distributed according to 5-kg per head. The department demanded from each one who wanted to receive the stipulated amount, a payment of ransom for the product. The result was that the first portion was received by those who had 'connections', after them this valuable product went to all those who could pay the highest price, and the remainder which should have been distributed to the needy citizens, was sold on the black market by members of the department.

Postal Department - headed by Mr. Luft. Already in the early days of the German occupation a decree was declared prohibiting all Jews from entering postal offices in the Aryan areas and later, the use of the postal services was explicitly prohibited in order to keep the Jewish population isolated from the outer surroundings. The KŽ established an internal post office through which all communications were handled and one of the officials received a permit from the government to enter the branch of

the government post office in order to receive and send post for the Jewish citizens. With time, not long before the general destruction, the Jews were prohibited any communication and the branch post office was closed. From this time on confidential correspondence was handled mainly through the Aryan citizens or through breakers of the German law who were migrant merchants or government officials and who did this for a substantial payment.

Mutual assistance (JOINT) - headed by Dr. Tennenboim. The department was established to assist the needy population with monetary donations. As the German regime prohibited communication with the outside, it was not possible to receive donations, and this department therefore had no function in the lives of the Jews in these difficult times.

The Jewish Police (Ordenugesdienst) – headed by Mr. Gallotki. The established Jewish police at first appeared to be an innocent executive body whose duty was to oversee order in the Jewish quarters, and did not appear to be group acting for the Judenrat. In the first roundup in March, the aim of which was apparently 'resettlement' of part of the Jewish population in another city, the Jewish police took part in assembling and concentrating the Jews in places decreed by the German authorities, but every single Jewish policeman was certain that those exported were not facing death, proof being the 25-kg luggage permitted to take along.

In two of the roundups in August and October, the Jewish police did not take active part but succeeded in assisting in saving some of the Jews. These two roundups were organized and directed by the Gestapo, the Ukrainian Militia, members of SZUPO and the Hitler Youth. On the 3rd November 1942 an additional roundup was carried out which surpassed everything known till then in its suffering and cruelty and in what the human mind was able to grasp. After some hours in which the Gestapo directed the roundup, direction was transferred to the Jewish police. The KZ 'undertook' the operation when the only force directing it was the Jewish police. This was the greatest and most despicable crime that the KZ perpetrated against its brothers. It was at this time well known that the roundup of Jews was not for transfer to 'resettlement' but to send them to a horrifying death accompanied by suffering and torment at the hands of Nazi killers lacking in conscience or human compassion. The help of the Judenrat was therefore a crime second to none.

The roundup which continued between the dates 3 – 30/11/1942 was a continuous chain of dread, terrible fear, torment and death to all Jews apart from the members of the Judenrat, the Jewish police and their families. The hunted Jews hid themselves in every possible hiding place while suffering from hunger, thirst and cold. The Jewish police who hunted them down with axes and truncheons, broke into the houses of Jews, searched for hiding places where Jews were concealed, and when they discovered the hiding places, dragged them out and congregated them at the assembly sites. The break-in, search and collection they had learnt from previous roundups in which they served only as escorts and observers to the Germans, and consequently adopted this appalling example. They moved through the Jewish neighbourhoods as murderers and executioners, in the search and pursuit of Jews in hiding. On finding hiding places they dragged the people out, with

no compassion or pity when they came out crying and begging for their lives, to the assembly site (Samenstalle).

In my whole life I never imagined that between brothers, there were people like this without character, heart, compassion or conscience. The roundup continued for some time, most of the day and night, without interval and was so devastating that many died inside their shelters as a result of hunger, cold and fear.

The depravity of the Jewish police was so infinite that they too began to take advantage of the 'law of bribery'. This illegal law permitted those discovered to escape and hide again. During the roundup no soul was seen in the streets except for the bands of Jewish police who wandered the neighbourhood. The Jewish police, divided into groups according to the search areas, broke into the houses and apartments and in their meticulous search for their concealed brother Jews, stole items of value found in the homes and filled their pockets. Their persistence was to be 'recommended'. The guidance they were given by the Germans and Ukrainians served as the fruits of their searches and almost every concealed place was discovered by them and in addition their pockets were filled with monetary bribes and much jewelry and valuables. Whoever hid well was not found in the searches and survived. Those who were discovered and paid bribes and remained in the same hiding places in which they had previously hidden, believing that they were safe until the end of the roundup, were bitterly mistaken and there were cases where already the next day the searchers returned and dragged them off to the assembly sites, as they had nothing left to pay additional bribes.

There were incidents of deception where search groups were sent to hiding places already known maintaining that they had come to save the people because of the payment they had already made the previous day. The people were concentrated in a certain place and then beaten and taken quickly to the assembly point.

During this roundup many policemen made an enormous fortune robbing and stealing gold, foreign currency and jewelry. The people, who had been caught and brought to the assembly sites, could be 'bought' at the Jewish police-station for money payments.

Following are the names of the Jews who operated as police during the roundup and excelled in their cruelty and oppression of their fellow Jews:

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| 1. Waldham | 15. Laybysz Szwartz |
| 2. the two brothers Galloti | 16. Rotenberg Izio |
| 3. Grünberg | 17. Maks Printz |
| 4. Szweitzer | 18. Erhenhalt Kantor |
| 5. J. Kamerman | 19. Goldsztein, J. Lang. |
| 6. the two brothers Kimelhem | 20. J. Lang. |
| 7. Felsen | 21. Abraham Fuks |
| 8. Wainberg | 22. Lonek Hidndel |
| 9. Lewenberg (also known as Aizik Katz) | 23. Senior Bernsztein |
| 10. Maciek Pomerantz | |
| 11. Szulem Wilf | |
| 12. Dr. Holzman (was a lawyer by profession) | |
| 13. Isko Helfer | |
| 14. Szwartz Szmuel | |

Nevertheless, among the Jewish police there were people with warm Jewish hearts and consciences that prevented them from carrying out this persecution for no reason. They fulfilled their tasks as policemen but at the same time they acted in an admirable manner with integrity. Their names are:

1. Jonek Hitter
2. Maks Reich
3. engineer Licht Feingold
4. Maks Zukerberg
5. Prof. Neimlich
6. Musi Shönfeld

Life of the Jews under the Nazi regime

In the poem called 'Akdamot' which was in fact a prayer which Jews prayed on 'Shavuot' the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), one could read some lines and summarize the life of the Jews under the Nazi regime. This is what is written:

“If all the people in the world could become writers, if all the trees in the forest could become pens, if all the seas and the oceans in the world could become ink and all the firmaments could become papyrus it would be impossible to describe the suffering and injustice caused the defenseless Jews under Nazi regime”

The first four months passed in fear and hunger. We lived from day to day. In daytime we feared the night and at night we feared the coming day. Life was grey and without hope. We passed the days, as I already described, waiting in lines for 70-gram bread and a bit of murky soup and at night when we succeeded in falling asleep we dreamt dreams of horror.

The first disaster occurred on the 1/8/1942. Seventeen Jews who worked in Gestapo headquarters broke a mirror and from fear of the punishment awaiting them, abandoned their work place and ran away. Retribution was swift and cruel. On the afternoon of that same day the Gestapo came to Reich and Brudna Streets and seized people indiscriminately. After they had taken 17 persons they lined them up against the wall and shot them. Amongst them were:

N. Horszofski, Moses Miller, Zisie Killeman, Benjamin Holzman, Wolf Schacht, Nechamja Gertenberg and Dr. Barchosz.

From this day, the fear which bordered on terror over every irregular incident that happened, dominated the entire neighbourhood of the Jewish population.

On 19/8/1942, for no reason, the Ukrainian police together with the Gestapo began a local roundup which was comparable to the hunting down of stray dogs. They dispersed in the living quarters and began to seize Jews. In this roundup 60 Jews were captured amongst them also me and my young brother. Of these 60, twenty were later released by the intervention of the Judenrat. All the rest were shot. We were taken to Gestapo headquarters and from there to the courthouse. In the courthouse we were lined up in a long corridor where they beat us without mercy and abused us morally with curses and cries like - communists, Stalinists, etc. After an hour of beatings until blood flowed, they locked us in cells. We sat in these cells, beaten and unknowing what fate awaited us. We waited for the moment when the cell gate would be opened and we would be taken out and shot. Our only wish was that it would be done quickly and without suffering as we did not believe that any of us would survive. In total 20 people from this roundup were released amongst them my brother and I. We should have been most grateful, if one could look at it this way,

but only for a short time of course as there were those amongst us who were later sorry that they had not been put into the wagons which lead to a death sentence, and would thereby have saved themselves great suffering and torment.*

On the 23/12/1942 the Judenrat presidents were taken hostage and jailed. Simultaneous to their incarceration, Gestapo headquarters decreed that every Jew would have to contribute to the German army fighting on the Russian front, every item of fur that they owned, from the smallest bits and including coats and fox fur scarves. The Jewish citizens quickly organized to fulfill the command in their innocent concern for the lives of the hostages.

After some days the wives of the Gestapo soldiers were seen in the fox fur scarves and fur coats which just a few days ago had belonged to Jewish women. This was the 'magnificent' German patriotism. The members of the Judenrat Presidency were freed from prison after a week.

The Judenrat often announced decrees prohibiting Jewish citizens from going out into the streets at certain times or sometimes for days. These decrees were proclaimed with the arrival of a German general to the city, the district governor and sometimes regular Gestapo soldiers according to the mood of the German rulers.

The period between the roundup organized on the 22/11/1941 and the roundup on the 22/3/1942 in which 1000 Jews were 'resettled' in Magierów was relatively quiet and disrupted occasionally by rumours causing great apprehension and fear. Also the period between 22/3/1942 and 7/8/1942 passed with no significant roundups, although in the relatively quiet period many Jews who had been imprisoned in the jail next to the courthouse for various 'violations' like tardiness in presenting themselves for forced labour, going outside without an armband, trade with the Aryan citizens, crossing streets which were prohibited to Jews, being outside after curfew (after 20.00) or transporting some k"g of smuggled food, were taken out of the prison and shot. Those who were caught were returned to prison and remained there until the moment they were taken out to be shot. Executions were carried out a number of times a month.

In June 1942 rumours spread of roundups of very great proportions in other cities, which at first seemed to us to be far away and irrational. The rumours, which were brought by word of mouth by Aryan citizens coming from those areas, referred to the cities of Lublin, Warszawa, and Kraków. They reported that in these roundups many Jews were caught and sent to the camps. At first no one wanted to believe this, or even recognize that the catastrophe could reach us too.

To our sorrow the news became more accurate and with it also came names of additional cities. The optimists amongst us said, and probably also believed, that these roundups related only to certain areas in Poland and not to the Galizia.

* The writer of the memoirs, her brother and the daughter of a local lawyer, were released the next day after they were ransomed off for a great sum of money to the Gestapo – the translator.

At the end of August, like thunder on a fine day, the news arrived that in Przemyśl an especially large roundup took place. Fear and great terror overcame us and the news was on everyone's mind. The daily conversation in the streets and homes was – what will the coming days bring? People walked around like shadows and their eyes asked each other – what will be? Our thoughts focused only in one direction how to be saved from the situation – those closest to me and myself. Plans were woven how and where to hide most efficiently even though we did not know how and when roundups like this would befall us.

To date all the roundups in the city were arranged according to lists made up by the Judenrat and conveyed to Gestapo headquarters. This time too, the Judenrat promised that, should a roundup be organized it would be organized according to lists prepared in advance and transferred to the Germans. So they managed to calm some of the frightened public.

On the 1/9 a roundup was organized in Samborz. Only now we began to understand and comprehend for the first time that we were in a trap with no exit, hope or any means of escape. From the news reaching us from this city we were made aware of terrible crimes carried out there during the roundup, rumours which shook us to our foundations. People began to hide wherever they could find a place: in the homes of Aryan citizens, in forests and fields. The city of Drohobycz looked like a ghost city.

The Germans, as they realized that they could not carry out the roundup as arranged, commanded the Judenrat to declare that the roundup would take place on the Monday and that all shops in the city were to be opened and normal life continued until then. Most of the population believed the Judenrat's declaration and returned to the city. Suddenly at 13.00 exactly the roundup took place. In order to organize the roundup, all Gestapo staff, the SS, members of SHUPO of the city and the city Lwow, the Ukrainian Red and Black police, all KRIPPO, the Hitler Youth (Hitlerjugend), Railway Police and the Jewish Police, were mobilized. Two Jewish neighbourhoods were surrounded by a tight ring of police so that no-one could escape. The division of police into groups permitted a controlled dispersion in the area and searches were made of every single house. Everyone who fell into their hands without regard to sex, age and financial standing was taken to the collection point. The roundup took 24 hours accompanied by terrible shouts, beatings and shots. From the collection point, 3500 defenseless, innocent people were taken on Saturday evening, to the railway station, loaded into wagons and taken to Magierów to their deaths in the gas chambers.

Only on Sunday morning, the hidden began to emerge from their hiding places. They were met with the sight of many bodies, which had not been removed after the roundup, lying in pools of blood. Weeping was heard on all sides and the shock was horrifying.

People could not look into each other's eyes for fear that they would burst into tears and heartbreaking wails were heard for their lost dear ones and relatives. In fact after every roundup people avoided meeting with others so as not to open wounds not yet healed, caused by the executioners and barbarous murderers as only the Nazis could be.

On the day after this horrific roundup the Germans gave an order to assemble the remainder of the Jewish population which was reduced to half, into one neighbourhood this with the aim of isolating them completely from any contact with the Aryan population, and to congregate them into one place so as to ease the organization of the roundup for destruction to be carried out in the future.

Simultaneous to the declaration for assembly of the remaining Jews in the quarter, an order was given by the German rulers that all possessions of Jews caught in the roundup belong to the regime. To this aim the Germans (the-SS) established the 'Furniture Committee' later called the 'Raubkomisja'*. This Committee was comprised mainly of Jews and German supervisors. These were contemptible Jews without conscience. They dealt with systematic robbery, burglary and shameful issues under the safeguard and protection of the Germans, and all this from us, from their brother Jews. They were accustomed to break into Jewish homes, steal something for themselves, pocket it and after this they would confiscate whatever caught their eye and pack it onto a wagon which they had previously ordered and was parked outside the looted house or apartment. There were cases in which for vengeance or the closing of personal accounts, they would empty out the home to its foundations, leaving after them a scene of 'scorched earth'. No pleas, entreaties, crying or threats helped, they carried out their dirty work effectively and without mercy. It seemed as if they were in collaboration with the Germans to make even more miserable the difficult lives of the Jewish citizens by acquiring personal riches. Associates of the 'Raubkomisja' were like princes, they dressed well, and they were always satiated and confident because they enjoyed the protection of the Germans. They lived together with their families, congregated in one building in 2B Sobieski Street which before the war was the home of family Shöchler. The living quarters there were very comfortable and appeared like life in paradise. They lacked nothing. The best foods which were possible to obtain in these hard times were daily on their tables. They included: fresh fruit and vegetables, vodka, choice liqueurs, sausage and of course plenty of butter, while those close to them who had been looted had nothing to eat. They indulged themselves in large meals with their German friends and served as their clowns. The parties which were planned sometimes continued until the light of day. Amongst the Jewish 'Raubkomisja' were:

- 1) Szuminski Lonek – the son of a well-known thief in the city
- 2) Zecharjasz Szmith – was a baker by profession
- 3) Meszko Weiss
- 4) Mojzesz Ribler
- 5) Samuel Heiblum
- 6) Mojzesz Gress – was the son of a cantor

* later renamed by the Jews, 'Commission of Robbery'

The people mentioned above were of the highest rank of the 'Raubkomisja' and there were also many other low-ranking personnel.

The Germans responsible for the 'Raubkomisja' associates were Wolf, Szuler, Izek Bier, and Fritz. An important individual in the 'Raubkomisja' was the policeman Sowiak who with the exploitation and help of the Jews made a large fortune.

The roundups took place more frequently and further demoralized the survivors each time. Four weeks after the August roundup concerns began again. Rumours broke out about a new roundup. On the 21st October a roundup took place which continued for 4 days. The process of this roundup was similar to the process of the August roundup however in this roundup workers were caught and evacuated also from work camps in the process of being closed.

A few days after the roundup the Judenrat distributed forearm ribbons with the letter A or as they were called by all " 'A' opaska". These forearm ribbons were to have guaranteed the fate of the workers who remained after the roundup as they were distributed only to the most trained and professional workers. With the start of the roundup it was immediately apparent that the distribution of the forearm ribbons was an additional deception of the German rulers and most of the victims were taken especially from those wearing the forearm ribbon with the letter A. These people were certain that no evil would befall them, they did not even bother to hide and appeared for work every day and also on this particular day.

In this roundup all the youth were also taken who worked in the local workshops of the workcamps Trajhandstelle and Dachowczarnia and also from other camps. In this roundup 1500 persons were collected of whom some remained in Lwow and were taken from there to the punishment camp in Janowska, a camp which was hell on earth.

On entering the camp the people were completely undressed and their clothes were taken from them after being thoroughly searched. The Germans were aware that the Jews would sew their money into the lapels and pleats of their clothes so as to minimize the harsh distress prevailing in the camp and therefore immediately on entering the camp their clothes were replaced by prison uniform. Work in the camp continued for 12 hours per day accompanied by beatings and physical and mental abuse. Food consisted of one daily meal made up of a plate of murky soup and a cup of black chicory coffee, with which it was of course impossible to persevere in this hard work. Whoever was listed as ill or unqualified for this hard work was 'examined' by the local doctor and immediately shot or hung. In one of the camp buildings a case of typhus was diagnosed and all 1200 inmates of the camp were taken out and shot on that same day.

In the punishment camp Janowska Jews from all parts of Poland were congregated after they were sorted on the way to the death camp Magierów. From this camp except for a few cases of escape no-one came out alive.

After the October roundup, which took 4 days, the quiet did not continue for long. After 10 days an additional roundup was organized that took 4 weeks, which I have already previously described. It continued until the 30th November and ended with the transfer to Magierów of an additional 1000 Jews from those remaining in the city.

On the day after the end of the roundup a tragic rumour circulated that there would soon be a further roundup, and this time final, to wipe out all the remaining Jews. This time, unlike previous rumours, this one came from an authorized source, the Judenrat, and was based on information from the Gestapo. In the greatest secrecy all loved ones were advised to find hiding places to save themselves in any way they could. According to them the roundup for destruction would take place on the 8/12. Many Jews abandoned their homes and took refuge with the Aryan citizens after making various agreements with them based upon the guess that the war would continue for not more than 3 to 6 months. In some cases it was agreed between them that the Jews would relinquish to the Aryans all their possessions in exchange for shelter. Either they would make monthly payments or pay an agreed upon sum in advance until the end of the war. Many Jews trusted in the advice of Munia Badian about whom I will write later, to seek shelter with farmers in the villages. On the 6/12 all members of the Judenrat disappeared leaving the remaining Jewish population to its fate. Later on it became clear that some of the members of the Judenrat left the city with forged Aryan papers which were provided to them in exchange for significant sums of money and some hid in places which they had previously prepared. The wealthy section of the Jewish population followed them. There were isolated incidents in which the Aryan citizens agreed to hide Jews without any compensation but these were few and far between and exceptional. To our luck this time the rumours of an extermination roundup passed and this roundup did not take place.

After a number of quiet days life in the neighbourhood returned to normal and the Judenrat reopened headed by Dr. Kriegel, Dr. Gerstenfeld, Dr. Borgman and Mr. Kowalek. The situation in the neighbourhood was dangerous and many who had hidden did not hurry to return as they believed that the extermination roundup would nevertheless take place as promised.

Finding shelter or hiding places with the Christian citizens produced many victims. Several Aryan citizens, mainly the Ukrainians amongst them, planned in advance to bring Jews to hiding places which they had prepared, take their money and after a short time, drive them out into the street for various reasons - like there were informers and their hiding place had been discovered and the Germans were about to come. It is sufficient to point out that many of these returned to their homes without a penny in their pockets, robbed to the foundations. Perhaps these were the lucky ones as many were relinquished into German hands by 'the good-hearted' after their money had been taken. Of the Jews who were enticed to hide in places further away, in villages, almost no-one remained alive. The majority of them were handed over to different branches of the Ukrainian police and the rest were murdered brutally by the farmers who hid them. One of the farmers by the name of Paraszcauk of the community Rolów amazingly operated together with a German SS man by the name of Shneider murdering many Jews who had found refuge with this farmer after he took all their possessions from them.

In this manner the following Jews were murdered: S. Tepper with his entire family, Józef Komerman, Solomon Komerman his wife and daughter Alysia, Freiwel Glasberg and his wife and also Szepsia Rychler his wife and two children. An additional man by the name of Swirniak from the community of Górká next to Puc,

would promise highly-ranked Jewish families to shelter them until the end of the war. He would meet with them a day before they were to leave for their hideout and collect from them all their clothes, jewelry and valuables which they would be bringing to the hideout and which would remain their possessions, and pack them into special cartons which he had prepared previously for this purpose. A day later he would come to collect the people and hide them in the shelter he had prepared for them. He would feed them and give them a feeling of trust so that if they brought more valuables they would give them to him to add to the containers which were taken the previous day. After a number of days he would drive them out into the street for various reasons, of course without a single part of the possessions they had given him. Such things and similar events repeated themselves because people hung onto every bit of hope that they could save themselves and this was exploited in the most shameful manner by the locals.

At the same time the Nazi government sealed the Ghetto and accumulated there the remaining Jewish population which was only a small handful of the original population which had lived in the city before the entrance of the hostile Nazis. These remaining cast-outs congregated in a number of streets some tens of people in each apartment. The Ghetto was surrounded by a wall built of wooden planks on which large notices were pasted forbidding leaving the Ghetto and crossing to Aryan neighbourhoods and forbidding the entrance of Aryan citizens to the Ghetto. Workers whose occupation was outside of the Ghetto boundaries would assemble every morning at 06.00, next to the Ghetto walls and accompanied by an Aryan guard, were taken to their place of work. From the early hours of the morning until 16.00, the period of forced labor, no people were seen in the Ghetto streets. People over the age of 50 had no right at all to live as they did not work which immediately lead to a death sentence. Also no youth under the age of 16 were seen in the streets, for the same reason. Only after 16.00 the Ghetto began to come to life.

The task of administering and presiding over Ghetto issues was in the hands of SZUPO people and the Ukrainian police who would seize Jews who had 'transgressed', for example: they discovered a cookie bakery in a corner hide-out in one of the apartments or discovered a place where religious ceremonies took place. While carrying out their searches they would loot the apartments and take everything which appealed to them. The law was in their hands and they could therefore do to the Jews anything that entered their minds without limits. They could loot, beat and even kill with no consequences. But more than anything, as I already mentioned, they could apply 'the law of bribery', an unwritten law which always worked. Whoever had money in his pocket could redeem himself and his loved ones from the hands of the Ukrainian police and even from the hands of the German clerks.

Life in the Ghetto was miserable, with no spark of hope in continuous tragic incidents. In the work camps they began to shoot at Jews for no reason, simply for the fun of it, so that the life of every Jew was suspended by a thin strand and was conditional upon the benevolence of each policeman in the Ghetto. At every step between the walls of the Ghetto, the guards and death waited in ambush and outside the Ghetto boundaries the death camps threatened. We lived in horrendous fear that cannot be described in words.

The work camps were supervised by SS people who would abuse the workers until their death. A Polish SS member from Śląsk by the name of Sobota would circulate amongst the workers with a drawn pistol in his hand and whoever did not appeal to him or in his opinion whose work was slipshod, was shot on the spot in full view of the others. Such incidents occurred almost every day. In one of the camps for instance 200 Jews guarded by Gestapo people, regularly worked. Here there was the most brutal murderer Ginter who would abuse workers monstrously. He would beat, strike and shoot to kill. One fine day, with no reason whatsoever, he chose from the workers three pretty girls age of 18 and shot them to death accompanied by loud rippling laughter. They were Zukerman, Kupferberg, and Sternbach.

In another incident a Gestapo member by the name of Landau would sit on the apartment balcony and watch the labourers working in the yard. One fine day he took a gun in his hands and trying to impress his girlfriend, shot a number of workers to death. One of the workers murdered named Flugler was known to me, and lived in Górna Brama.

In another camp named Dahowczarnia a Jew was caught buying 11 cherries from a Polish farmer. The Jew was shot to death on the spot.

Surrounding the town were a number of work camps. They are listed below, with the task and number of Jewish workers employed there.

Number	Name of work camp	Type of work	Number of workers
1	Dahowczarnia	Roof-tile industry	800
2	Hyrawka – Gartnerai	Gardening	300
3	Hyrawka	Sawmill	70
4	Kumerker	Sawmill	40
5	SIPO	Military headquarters and Land Work	200
6	Liegenschaft	Real-estate Maintenance	50
7	Beskidy	Refinery and Oil Industry	500
8	Stätische Werkstätte	Urban Workshops	140
9	Umschlagstelle	Product Loading point	50
10	Treibradstelle	Metal Industry	50
			2200

Destruction of the Ghetto

Now that all the Jews were congregated in the Ghetto, organizing the roundups was simple. On the 15/2 the Ukrainians and Germans suddenly appeared and like wild animals they forced their way into the Ghetto and within some hours captured 100 Jews. The victims were lead to the courthouse and some days thereafter taken to Bronica and shot to death.

An additional roundup, similar to the previous one, was implemented on the 21/5 but this time the victims were lead to Magierów and died there in the gas chambers.

On the 3/6/1943 the worst roundup was implemented - **the roundup of annihilation**. Now no shelter sufficed and no refuge with Aryan citizens. Everyone who was a Jew had to disappear from the face of the earth. However as there is no rule without exception, also here there was a specific escape. As there was also a death sentence hanging over the heads of the Aryan citizens for hiding Jews, for large amounts of money they risked hiding Jews who were able to pay. Not many were prepared to risk their lives for a long period and slowly but surely they began to eject the Jews for various reasons as I already mentioned. However, here they came up against a situation where they linked their fate to the fate of the ejected Jews, as the Jews who were captured and tortured confessed to where they had been hidden until then and by whom. Those who had hidden them paid for this with their lives. After the roundup to destroy the Ghetto, Jews had no right of existence in the city or its surroundings.

The last roundup began at 03.00 before dawn after the small Ghetto was surrounded by a densely linked chain of SZUPO, SIPO and the Ukrainian police. The search was methodical and most thorough. The searchers were assisted by a SZUPO member by the name of Stanislawski who was brought specifically for this purpose and was known to be an expert in searching for and discovering many Jews for annihilation. He had experience in searching and uncovering underground shelters and hiding places in general. With these special and strengthened forces most of the shelters were discovered. It can be said that from the German point of view this annihilation roundup was carried out excellently and with great efficiency. The searchers, drunk and wild with hate, broke into houses and apartments with drawn guns in their hands and with rage and the lust to kill destroyed everything in their paths. No hiding place was left uncovered and people were also dragged out from underground. Towards evening the roundup stopped until Sunday morning. On Saturday a small number of Jews mainly youth began to escape from the Ghetto to the Aryan neighbourhoods, to Aryan friends and to labour camps. The Gestapo declared the complete destruction of the Ghetto the significance being that every Jew in sight would be shot to death. The proverb customary on their lips to this aim was Judenfrei i.e. 'free of Jews'.

The city of Drohobycz was declared a city pure of Jews and was entered into the list of cities which were categorized as such.

On Sunday morning the Judenrat and the Jewish Police-force were also destroyed with great cunning. The Germans gave each a forearm ribbon with the letter R printed on it and installed everyone in the most superior and beautiful building in Beskidy. The Jewish Policeforce numbered 60. Thirty of them were nominated to

work in another work camp named Lagierwach and the remainders were commanded to bring their families to the building with the object of providing each one of them with an apartment. The police performed the commands rapidly and quickly brought their wives, children and parents to the Judenrat. With the arrival of all the families the Gestapo quickly separated the families from the police and took the families to the collection point, Samelsztelle, in the courthouse. The Gestapo surrounded the Jewish police with a dense ring of Black Ukrainian police and SIPO police, with whom the Jewish Policeforce was accustomed to patrol and eat and suppress their Jewish brothers, and brought them to the Old Jewish Cemetery. At the cemetery it was made clear to the Jewish police that because they had been so loyal to the Germans in fulfilling their duties they would not die like the others but would die a military death. They were shot, one by one, (according to their rank) by their German and Ukrainian 'friends' and buried in a mass grave.

The list of Jewish Policemen shot on that day (07/06/1943):

1. Edek Galloti – Commander of Police
2. Rosner – Vice-commander of Police
3. Shönfeld Munisch
4. Dovidman Herman
5. Maurer
6. Eng. Efraim Licht
7. Reich Moses
8. Paniz Maks
9. Rosen Szulko/Berlinczyk
10. Schweitzer
11. Kamerman Josko
12. Selinger
13. Schwarz Samuel
14. Schwarz Lajbaly
15. Wilf Salomon
16. Wilf - son of Wilf, Solomon
17. Halberstein Heniek
18. Bortfeld Zallel
19. Höndel Leon (the elder)
20. Goldstein
21. Apfeldorf
22. Nemlich Leon
23. Ehrenholt
24. Hanser Mendzie
25. Lang Józef
26. Fuchs (Msc),
27. Benkendorf Isac
28. Segal Hersh

The organizer Józef Waldhorn who was responsible for Dahowczarnia was informed upon because he knew about many bunkers and underground hideouts in the

Ghetto. He was taken in the late afternoon to Gestapo headquarters and was told that he had until the next morning to make a list of all bunkers. He was put into a cell in the local prison and held for the night. This man preferred death to surrendering the list of shelters of his brothers and in the morning they found his body suspended from the rafters of the cell, hanging by the belt of his trousers. Waldhorn had the deaths of many Jewish souls on his conscience, mainly from the fourth roundup, and his act of suicide was to make amends for these transgressions.

After the elimination of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police, the Germans and their allies continued the roundup of annihilation. They systematically demolished the Jewish homes and at the same time sold the parts that could be re-used at very low prices to the Aryan citizens. During the demolition, bunkers and shelters were discovered and those hidden were taken to the courthouse and from there to their destruction.

In this manner of brutality and pain, Ghetto Drohobycz was destroyed and the lives of its Jewish citizens were in fact terminated. Some 2000 Jews were left who were congregated in the work camp of the city and its surroundings.

Destruction of the work camps

After the destruction of the Ghetto, with an interval of some days, preparation for the demolition of the work camps began. The first camps demolished were Hyrawka Gartnerei, Trajhandstelle, and also part of the camps Unschlagstelle, and Dahowczarnia. On the 21/7/1943 the camps Statische and Lipo, Ginberg, Raubkomisja Werkstelle, Ligenschaft, Hyrawka Tartak and part of the camp Beskidy were demolished.

On the 28/8/1943 the camp in Dachowcayna in which 500 people worked was conclusively demolished. A portion of the tiling factory had already previously been transferred to Postomit where 300 workers were killed after a few weeks.

Today 15/9/43, I am sitting in a bunker belonging to a catholic Ukranian after the Ghetto has been destroyed and am writing these lines.

A single work camp is left in the city in which 500 trained Jews work, professionals, doctors and engineers. They are accompanied by Ukrainian and Werkszuc police in their daily work. They are guarded all the time at their work and in the camp. Constant fear by day and by night and uncertainty are their lot, while they are prepared for the worst, for a fate their brothers already met, death. Their lives have no meaning, as though they are already dead, and their pain is great because of losing their loved ones and families. The knowledge that they have nothing to lose tempts many to escape. The escapes are made every night from the work camp, despite the close guard. The fugitives hide with the Aryan citizens, flee in groups to Hungary or to forests and shelters which had previously been prepared.

It is possible to write more and more of the unspeakable tragedy which befell us and of the organized murder of citizens whose only crime was that they were Jews. It is impossible to better describe what happened than by repeating the prayer/poem, which I have previously mentioned and which is read by the Jews on the 'Green Festival' the festival of Shavuot (Pentacost) - '**Akdamot**'.

"If all the people in the world could become writers, if all the trees in the forest could become pens, if all the seas and the oceans in the world could become ink and all the firmaments could become papyrus it would be impossible to describe the suffering and injustice caused the defenseless Jews under Nazi rule".

'Death to the German occupiers!!!'

Personalities in the Ghetto

To give a fuller description of the lives of the Jews in the Drohobycz Ghetto, it is impossible not to describe some of the exceptional personalities. Although life in the Ghetto was administered by the Judenrat, these people filled an important part of Jewish daily life. To these people:

Engineer Naftali Bakenrot, Munia Badian and Aron Shapira, I dedicate the following lines.

Of all the Jews who worked in SIPO and carried out their duties, we can already from the beginning pay tribute to the engineer Naftali Bakenrot, for his professional conduct and his fearless ethics. He was commended for his special characteristics also by the Germans, who were murderers and hated by the entire Jewish population. As an ideal and humane man in his unique way he achieved a special relationship with the Germans who responded to his every request on different matters in the affirmative.

Obviously, in these most terrible of times ever in the history of the world, there was no lack of requests to the German regime to save Jewish lives which were also lives of suffering and poverty. This man intervened to save the lives of many Jews while risking his own life. It is no wonder that the mention of his name in our proximity always brought with it hope and consolation.

When the Germans commanded that all Jews wear a band with the Star of David on their right forearm, indicating that the wearer is a Jew and that the refusal to carry out this order would bring about the death penalty, he was exempt from wearing this band despite his being a Jew. This great privilege was granted him by the Germans for his trustworthy work, his many accomplishments, his conscience, his humanity and many capabilities in his work and life. Bakenrot chose to link his fate to that of his oppressed brothers as he felt in his heart their suffering and pain and as a proud Jew did not want to be different. As a sign of brotherhood and on the other hand as a sign of protest, he too wore the band on his forearm. The wearing of the band on his forearm endangered his life at all times. When they assembled all the Jews in the Ghetto, Bakenrot was entitled to live in an attractive apartment outside the Ghetto borders, but here too he did not utilize this privilege and came to live in the Ghetto in a small apartment even with some other families. At a time when some people, who had connections to the government, were taking bribes left, right and center by utilizing their superior position, this man did not once sully his hands and ensured that he also remain untainted in this situation, earning our endless admiration.

It is difficult to believe, but this is a fact, that at a time when there was a potential to make a huge fortune, he lived modestly and it can even be said that he lived his life in a certain poverty.

Today, after the destruction of the camp in Lipo, he is living in the crude oil distillation factory, in a gloomy little room in the attic.

The complete opposite of Bakenrot was a man who gained the praise of the Gestapo, and was named Munia Badian from the city of Woloszczy. He survived on the basis of constant flattery to the Germans and was accustomed to bribing them with gifts. He took advantage of the privilege bestowed on him by the Germans to go

without a forearm band and to exploit his private matters. He could intervene with the Government on daily life, for instance release from prison, and all this by taking bribes from those who turned to him. He was happy to help people but demanded large sums of money in return so that his help was in fact only for those who could afford it. He was at times seen in the company of members of the Gestapo contrary to other collaborators. This was a great privilege for him which was granted to only a few. He was seen in their company in outings of special activities and accompanied them on horseback riding trips and excursions to entertainment and to villages in the area. To a certain extent he therefore became a source of credible information on future events in the Ghetto and on his arrival was always surrounded by people who wanted to have information from him on what is happening and on future roundups, etc. Sometimes he would pass on information directly and sometimes through agents, on the pending future and imminent dangers. To our sorrow we received the message in our bunker that he had already been shot by his 'friends' the Gestapo.

Apart from those well-known from daily life in the Ghetto there was an additional Jew whose name was not familiar to many. He was Aron Shapira who was jokingly nicknamed El-Capone. He was born in Podbuże to his father who was a rabbi and ritual slayer. Until the age of 18 he studied in various religious colleges and after this went for professional training to prepare himself for immigration to Palestine. In this training he learnt diverse kinds of artistic skills and handicrafts. He was a 29-year-old man with an athletic body and 'with the help of God' very talented in everything that he touched. He was outstanding in carpentry, ironwork, electricity and an exceptional radio technician. He was a builder, an engraver, building carpenter and a source of original ideas in every area of work that came to mind.

The first roundup 'caught' him in Drohobych. He lived there together with his brother-in-law Schlager, at 4 Kowalska Street. Already at the time of the roundup while lying in the cellar, he thought about building a special shelter with the aim of concealment and survival, as he foresaw that such events would be carried out by the Germans. As soon as the roundup was over he began to build a shelter and succeeded in establishing in the city a unique shelter. It was a valuable creation.

The bunker was built 3 meters under a home. On the roof of the bunker was a 1-meter layer of earth. The entrance and exit of the bunker was through the floor of one of the rooms, through an opening made of parquet slats. A ladder from the opening went straight down to the bunker opening which was covered by a layer of earth. The square of parquet which was used as the opening to the bunker was positioned in such a perfect way that it was impossible to detect even if one knew of its existence. The cellar of the house was separated from the bunker by a 2.5-meter thick wall, with the aim of confusing possible searchers, thus a tunnel was dug leading from it in the opposite direction. The bunker was built from two rooms, kitchen and bathroom. The length of the bunker was 13 meters, its width 4 meters and its height 2 meters. Along the length of the two walls of the room were beds for sleeping, the length of each bed being 160-cm and the width 40-cm. Over the beds were shelves and under them was storage place for food.

Electricity, water and gas lines were connected illegally and in a sophisticated manner to the bunker, all these channeled off from the city networks which are routed through the street and not from private users. This prevented two things:

inspection of a private user thereby discovering the excessive use of the above services and consequently the detection and identification of the bunker and thus preventing the severing of gas, electricity and water when these were severed from the Jewish homes.

The bathroom included a bath, shower stall and hot and cold water taps. The bunker therefore had electrical appliances for the function of daily life like an electric stove for cooking and heating, iron, fans, radio and even a sewing machine – all these on two electrical phases. A gas stove was used for baking and air to the bunker was supplied through sewage channels and through chimneys by especially ingenious arrangements. The escape route from this refuge was a tunnel that connected the bunker to the main sewage canal of the city.

This bunker in contrast to many other bunkers, was not designed for short periods for example during the roundups, but designed for long periods of living. It was used by its occupants from October 1942 until June 1943, until its destruction.

In this bunker 60 people lived and continued their normal lives: they slept, cooked, washed, listened to the radio, had parties, etc. They did not know the fear before a roundup and were not shocked by rumours that a roundup had erupted. One who entered this bunker for the first time was under the impression that he is on another planet, isolated from the daily surroundings, immersed in solace, while in the Ghetto overhead the most terrible things happened like roundups, the fear that preceded them and death waiting in every corner. In this bunker a person lived in freedom without dread. People who were there sang, played a violin or listened to concerts on the radio. Those who lived in the bunker saved themselves much suffering and terror which were the daily fare of the Ghetto inhabitants.

Despite all the advantages that I have mentioned, this bunker had one disadvantage - its existence was known in the Ghetto despite Shapira's great attempts to preserve secrecy. For this reason the bunker lost much of its efficiency. The bunker became a search target for Jewish informers who were accustomed to pass on to the Gestapo information on the Ghetto in return for pleasurable favours. A large portion of these informers were members of the Raubkomisja and the Jewish Police Ordumgstrenstin. The fact that the Gestapo knew of the bunker was proof that information of its existence was passed to them by Jewish agents who drew their information from the Jewish community in the Ghetto. In roundups that took place in October, November 1941, February 1942 and the month of May, intensive searches were made by comprehensive excavations but with no results.

This bunker was built by Aron Shapira with his own hands, acting as the engineer, the builder, the designer and architect of all the work required in the building of the bunker. He was helped in this labour only by his brother who was a ritual slayer by profession, named Szymon Shapira who also had the appropriate skills. After finalizing the building of this bunker, Aron Shapira took on the building of additional bunkers in the Ghetto in complete secrecy.

The bunkers and shelters became a popular and necessary requirement for saving lives in the Ghetto and everyone imagined that a shelter or refuge could save his life. Lamentably the hiding places were discovered by Jewish members of the Raubkomisja and the Jewish Police Ordumgstrenstin and thus the German rulers. Aron Shapira's bunker was discovered on the first day of the demolition of the

Ghetto. Rumours of the existence of a bunker in the home of Schlagier, Aron Shapira's brother-in-law, were already widespread for a long time in the Ghetto and in Gestapo corridors. The Germans blew up the house with hand-grenades and other means and caused the collapse of portion of the bunker roof. The discovery of the bunker, the entry to it, discovery of all its electrical equipment and the totally professional connection to the city networks, left the Germans standing with gaping mouths and fury at the success in deceiving them so absolutely. In addition they were left with the riddle of where the bunker's inhabitants had vanished as the bunker was found to be empty. As I already mentioned, this bunker was connected by a tunnel to the main sewage canal of the city and through this the inhabitants of the bunker had escaped. In the sewage canals a completely different type of tragedy developed. The escapees from the bunker met in the sewage canals many citizens of the Ghetto who had managed to survive the destruction roundup and tried to escape through canals to the Aryan neighbourhoods. However, also these sewage canals were reached by the Jewish Police, the Ukrainians and the Germans. They waited at the openings of the sewage canals and hunted down those emerging. Many collapsed and died in the canals from hunger, the stench and weakness. The disappointment of the fugitives in the sewage canals was dreadful as they had nowhere to flee: on the one hand death in the canals awaited them from the anguish of hunger and stench and on the other hand waiting for them outside were the Nazi assassins with drawn rifles and guns in their hands.

People died in unimaginable suffering. Although also here, as in other instances, there were exceptions. The first was of Aron Shapira, after the bunker was discovered by the Germans he, his friends and family escaped to the sewage canals. He gathered the most courageous of those in the sewers who rallied their remaining strength and health as they had nothing to lose, found an opening in the sewage network which was not guarded and escaped to the light of day in Shrajerówka Street. Also then Aron Shapira did not lose his nerve. He gathered his family, which included his wife and two children, and his brother Szymon with his family which included five people and another brother named Josio Shapira and also three additional youths, in total 12 people, and with their understanding that they had nothing to lose, emerged to liberty to find themselves a refuge. The children were so worn out from 14 days in the sewage canals with no food or water that they could hardly breathe. They had to leave them somewhere so that they could revive. They arrived at our bunker, which was also the fruit of Aron Shapira's work. Here the women and children stayed. The rest of the men left to look for a new hiding place. They went in the direction of the forests. After two days of walking they reached a place which appeared very safe. Aron Shapira told us later that the place looked safe as no man had walked there or would walk there. They dug and built a bunker on the slope of a hill for 12 people and while building, lived in a temporary camp which they built for themselves in the forest. After 14 days the bunker was finished. With a little food and money which they collected from friends the group established a collective. Their contact man to the outside world was the forester and his wife who, because of her good nature, was nicknamed 'the golden wife'. These people were very reliable.

Aron Shapira's wife was with us in the bunker all this time and her only dream was to see her husband without whom, according to her, life had no meaning. Her dream and appeals were fulfilled after a short time when a letter arrived from him in which he wrote that everything was in order and that they would soon see each other. After two weeks he himself appeared, bearded and strong as Tarzen of the Jungle, to collect the women and children to the hiding place in the forest which was safer. He stayed with us in the bunker for 5 weeks and this delay according to him, was due to personal arrangements. I had the opportunity to meet this genius of a man and to wonder at his courage of heart to be out of hiding and working in the forest. He knew how to treat sickness, something that is most important in a forgotten place like this. Today he left and took with him the women and children, my cousin Leizer Shönfeld (the brother of Aizik). I too wanted very much to leave this 'grave' but Aron Shapira refused, maintaining that we had no money and it would be impossible to supply all of us with food contrary to the condition in the bunker where we are currently staying. He promised that he would keep in touch with us by letter and divulged to us the secret writing he invented by the name of Gaderipoluty. It was known that it was impossible to arrange any contact that did not go through Government channels and especially now contact that was discovered could imprison all of us. But also this important point did not escape the fruitful mind of Aron Shapira or his genius and the awe we held him in.

With great impatience we await any word from him on what is happening with them and how they reached their secret bunker whose position was known only to God and Aron Shapira. Here I must mention something that was told to us by the engineer Backenroth who visited us here, as he is party to our secret and supplies us with food. He told us that the Gestapo photographed all the bunkers that Aron Shapira built and wanted to catch him alive and meet this talented engineer.

We waited more than 7 weeks for information from Aron Shapira but did not receive any letter from him or from the inhabitants of their bunker. On the 9/11/1943 we received dreadful news. The owner of our house informed us, through the chimney, that Aron Shapira's bunker was discovered and he apparently succeeded in escaping but all the rest were caught and brought to the courthouse in Drohobycz for questioning. We too now assume that we are in great danger if one of the captives lets slip something about our bunker. We immediately requested that engineer Backenroth try to find out what is happening. There were two reasons for turning to him. One was that he was very familiar with the story of Aron Shapira. The second was that the family of Munia Badjan, who was an office worker of his, was with us in the bunker. From the information that he supplied we learnt that 5 people were brought to the courthouse from that bunker. Some hours later 4 survivors from the bunker of Aron Shapira arrived at our bunker, two of his brothers and two of his nephews. They told us the complete truth of what happened there and it froze the blood in our veins. The bunker apparently was under watch and the first victim was Leizer Shönfeld who was immediately shot as he emerged from the bunker.

The second victim was Aron Shapira himself who tried to escape and was immediately shot. With great heartache, broken and traumatized after 3 days of endless flight and concealment in the forest the survivors reached our bunker. They looked terrible: dirty, starving and pathetic. We gave them food and also water and

soap to wash. The soap began to be the most necessary item in demand in the bunker and was now very hard to obtain. There was an atmosphere of great pain in the bunker over the loss of our brothers. The bitter information left a harsh impression and we all were crushed for many days.
May their memory be blessed.

The Second Notebook

On the 30/6/1942 the Germans entered Drohobycz. I felt the same grief felt by all the Jews. We felt that the deluge is nearing. This was a feeling of intuition which to my sorrow did not disappoint. Already on the next day an extensive pogrom was carried out against the Jews. The Ukrainians demanded our blood and the Germans provided it on a silver platter without blinking an eyelid. They brutally murdered and massacred the Jewish population without mercy.

To me personally, nothing happened as we went to visit in Skotnicka Street, a place these wild animals did not reach that day. However in the house where I was born in 15 Leon Reich Street, previously known as Szpitalna Street, terrible scenes took place of destruction, devastation and murder. The murderers broke into the houses and dragged the people, with beatings and abuse, directly to the courthouse. Some of the lucky ones managed to free themselves and escape. The trails left behind by the murderers were terrible.

For us pure hell began. Orders, commands and decrees fell upon us one after the other like thunder on a fine day and struck us systematically day after day, hour after hour. The frequency of the decrees imposed upon us was so intense that it was impossible to recover. Disaster after disaster fell upon us with its full weight.

A week after the pogrom every Jew was compelled to wear on his forearm a white armband with the Star of David. These armbands played an important role in our lives as being (outside) in the street without the white armband entailed an immediate death sentence. The armband was in fact a notification that the wearer is devoid of any human rights and has been charged with punishment by death, which could be carried out at any moment upon the shifting wish of the conquering Nazi regime. Our lives were in danger as every Gestapo member could pass by, pull out his gun and shoot at any one who was wearing an armband and was 'by chance' also a Jew. No law protected us and we were in fact devoid of rights. Our situation was without any hope. We lived like beaten animals who, at any attempt to raise our heads and regain our strength, were beaten again and again with a whip. It was prohibited to raise our heads and ask why we deserved this. There was no-one to complain to or turn to. Already in the first months under the regime of the Nazi hangmen we were filled with bitterness and sorrow. We waited for help and anticipated miracles which to our sorrow were too late in coming. We lived with delusions and occupied ourselves with the hope that perhaps this is only a dream and that soon all this would end. However the support and help did not come instead the disasters only grew larger.

On the 19/8/1942 like thunder on a fine day, without any reason even the smallest, the Germans jointly with the Ukrainian police began to capture Jews as if they were hunting whipped dogs. On this day 60 Jews were captured, amongst them also my young brother and myself. They brought us to Gestapo headquarters, recorded our names and brought us to the courthouse under the guard of the Ukrainian police. At the courthouse they lined us up in a long corridor and began to beat us with whips in the most brutal and inhumane manner. We stood at attention with our eyes locked to the floor for one long hour and whoever dared to move was beaten most severely.

After this we were 'rewarded' with a visit from the Gestapo, who had ordered the beatings, and they beat us even more until the blood flowed and so humiliated us that every one of us wished for a quick escape from this situation by a fatal bullet. After one hour of terrible beatings they locked us in the courthouse prison cells. We sat there beaten and frightened with no idea of what they would do to us and when. So we sat for three days and three nights waiting for death. Each one of us had the wish that they would shoot us as quickly as possible as there was no hope that a miracle would happen in our lives after all we had gone through and witnessed.

After the intervention of the Judenrat, 20 people were freed and the rest were shot to death by groups of shooters against the courthouse walls. Amongst the happy 20 were my brother and I. It later became clear to us that as we had not come home the suspicion arose that something had happened and after further inspection it was found that we had been captured. The law of bribery was used to free us.

In the meantime many more large and small roundups were carried out. On the 7/8 and 8/8 of 1942, 4000 Jews were captured and sent to their deaths: the aged, men, women, children and infants. Whoever was captured in these days, their sentence was – death. Nothing helped. Whoever was captured, was headed for destruction, whoever succeeded in hiding, survived....until the next roundup.

Each roundup was of a different character and was administered in a different manner, so that it was impossible to predict the event or to defend ourselves. Sometimes they were systematically administered and sometimes at random, sometimes strongly and with a brutality that cannot be imagined and sometimes gradually and unhurriedly. The roundups were preceded by such dread that at times it was worse than the roundups themselves. The fear reached such proportions that people became paralyzed and awaited the coming death which would rescue them from the horrors of this world. Tragedies like this occurred under the German regime every day and were the fate of all the Jews.

The roundup which began unexpectedly and continued for 4 weeks, 4/11 – 30/11, was one of the worst of its kind. During the administration of this roundup a rumour was spread that by the civilian New Year all the Jews in the city would be obliterated and in fact that no Jew would have the right to live. This message was legitimate as it had come from the Judenrat who relied on its source at the Gestapo. We knew of course that similar actions had already taken place in cities and towns throughout Poland and outside its borders.

Members of the Judenrat advised their loved ones in secret, their acquaintances and friends and those close to them to escape and hide as only this would save their lives. The roundup of annihilation was to begin on the 8/12. The dread was horrific and many Jews hid with Aryans. In compensation they made various contracts with the Aryan citizens as the war was expected to continue for another 3 to 6 months. The contracts were mainly monetary. In return for a hiding place they would transfer into the hands of the Aryans all their hidden possessions and payment for the time of their stay would be made in monthly payments or in one advance payment for each anticipated period of shelter. There were also many Jews who went to hide in the surrounding villages with farmers they knew. On the 6/12/42 all members of the Judenrat disappeared leaving the Jewish population to its fate, without leadership. Every one who could, after taking an example from the leadership, fled as one and

hid. I too, frightened, looked for shelter without account to anyone and with no shame, above all to hide and survive. It is interesting that when faced with death, life has a twofold and double worth. Only one who experienced this terror on his own body and soul, can value the meaning of life. The desire to live, and particularly in these times, was limitless. The main thing was to endure and get through this period and its incidents and to survive. There was an inexplicable hope in my heart and yearning for a miracle that would end all this and I would be saved and live a normal life.

With the assistance of the engineer Backenrot I was introduced to a farmer named Bereski of the village Meduczka next to Uniatycz. This farmer was to hide us after the destruction of the Ghetto until the end of the war. I trusted this farmer totally as he had been recommended by the person I most trusted, the engineer Backenrot. After some weeks of packing and preparation for the journey, I was the first to leave on the condition that I write a letter home describing the bunker and the conditions in it and only after this would the remainders come. On Sunday 26.12.1942 in the evening a farm cart arrived from the village packed with the luggage which I was to take to the shelter. They dressed me like a farm girl and I was to wait in a specific place and only then to get onto the wagon and join my luggage. These commands were given by the farmer Bereski, for the safety of all. The farm-cart with the luggage continued straight to the village where I was supposed to hide and I was taken to an Ukrainian, the sister of one of the farmers from whom Bereski was to take me to shelter. The house of the Ukrainian was almost at the end of the city and I reached it endangering my life as I went there with no armband. There I was told, again for the sake of safety and security, to wait in the room next door. After a number of hours of waiting, while I heard from the next room whispers and parts of sentences which I could not understand, they came in and told me that now was the best time to leave and that we would go through the fields and forest because this was the safest way as at this hour no-one was outside and we would therefore not encounter a soul.

Without any suspicion and with the best intentions in my heart to be saved and to be reconciled later with my family and most dear ones, and with real danger to life, we left with me being reliant upon the benevolence of the people who had been recommended by those most trusted by me. We left at about midnight, the two farmers and I. One of them was Bereski, who was the contact man who was familiar with the village Uniatycz and Hrynie Gorski who had the shelter. The second farmer who went with us was the brother of Gorski and he was the trail guide. On our route we went through fields, crossed a river and passed through the Uniatycki forest. The night was dark and the fear tremendous. Every movement of a branch in the forest of trees caused the hair on my head to stand up. I felt all the time that someone is approaching, listening, following us or waiting to ambush us. The route itself was exhausting and slippery. There were places where I stumbled and fell into crevices while the branches slapped my face and tore my headscarf. After about an hour and a half of walking, exhausted sweating and frightened, we emerged from the forest and entered plowed fields with lumps of frozen earth. I was terribly tired, simply exhausted, as I was not accustomed to this type of walking through unpaved paths of potholes and obstacles. I was so exhausted from the walk that my legs actually folded up. I hoped every moment that we would arrive at our destination.

The barking of dogs, after further hours of walking, informed me that the village was already not far away. When we arrived at last at our destination they left me outside next to the hayloft and all the others went into the house. I stood alone outside, shivering from cold and fear. In my mind many and varied thoughts quickly flew, one after the other. Eventually Bereski came out and signed for me to enter the house. Immediately on entering I was told to pay the trail guide. Like a flash message the thought entered my mind that something here is not right and that apparently I had fallen into a trap. As I had nothing to lose, I took a chance and said to the farmers that I had no cash money in hand and that already in the morning I would send with them a letter to my family requesting that they pay them. Luckily the farmers believed that I had no money with me and at the same time explained to me that they could not shelter me due to fear of the Germans. Suddenly all became clear to me. They had planned to take the money and kill me in some way. They advised me to get out and go home as quickly as possible. I was in despair. I did not know the way back and I had no place to hide. The only thought in my mind was how to reach home. What could I do? I begged them to take me home and swore to them in the names of all the sainted to protect me and to take me back. I spoke again and again of their conscience and simultaneously promised them the entire amount of money they wanted. Eventually they were persuaded and we left for the return journey. I have already described the way to the village. I was so tired but because of the new situation, it was as though I grew wings and my hidden strength stimulated my legs and cold sweat washed over me. The fear on the return trip was much greater than the fear on the trip to the village. It is pointless to point out that the return trip was different from the trip to the village. The two who were leading me home walked ahead whispering between themselves all the way. I knew they were talking about me and my fear grew even greater. I was unsure that I would reach home alive or whether I would be murdered in the forest. A hidden instinct pushed me onward and whispered to me to take to my heels and run, but I did not have the courage. I beseeched the farmers as much as I could and flattered them on their good heartedness. I tried to be as friendly with them as I could and spend as much time as I could with them in order to detach their thoughts from myself. I explained their position to myself out loud as if I understood them and I in fact did not expect them to endanger their lives by saving mine. I promised them mountains of gold in return for their bringing me home. My voice croaked from the amount of speaking. They walked very quietly most of the time, not answering me at all or giving unrelated replies. At last dawn began to approach and the macabre night came to its end. We began to draw near to the city and I then knew that I was saved. My confidence began to return. I began to burn with a growing fury at their plan to harm me mentally and physically but stopped myself until we reached the city. On our arrival at Samborska Street I could no longer keep quiet. I took out my armband which I had concealed on my person and exploded with shouting. I made it clear to them that I knew what they had planned for me after receiving the money and then also drew out the packet of money I had on me and showed it to them. I also threatened them with the warning that they would have to account for what they had intended to do to me. I ran home while I could and left them in the street with open mouths like two statues, when they saw the sums of money I had on me. I

could not really revenge myself totally as no law existed to protect Jews and they were therefore not concerned that they would be informed upon or that someone would complain. Despite this they came to our house, apologized and tried in various ways to excuse what had happened and in addition promised to return the luggage they had taken, a promise which they never fulfilled.

To be saved from the hands of these wild animals, and in fact to be saved from death, to return home and again be with my dear ones was for me a great miracle. The incident was also a warning to other Jews who wanted and hoped to escape and hide with the farmers.

I was again in a quandary as I had no place to hide from the predicted devastating roundup which was ever nearing.

There was a further opportunity which did not risk my life but did not pass quietly. A man by the name of Swirniak who lived in Drohobycz in a district called Górká next to the pub Puca took advantage of the times and made a business of hiding Jews. I went to him at the recommendation of the sister of Hesio Köning, whose name was Pnina. While I was there my new coat which had \$400 sewn in the hem was stolen. After argument and dispute which brought no results I threatened that I would go to the government and inform upon him that he is hiding Jews. From fear that I would carry out this threat they returned only \$300 to me and kept the rest. These kind of incidents happened to many other people. After roundups of four weeks the area quietened down and the terror that accompanied each roundup also lessened. The rumours about future roundups seemed untrue even when they came direct from the leaders of the Judenrat.

After the 4-week roundup the closed Ghetto was established. The remaining Jews who had survived the roundups and the remnants of the hounding were just a small handful of what was in the past known as the Jews of the city Drohobycz. They gathered in a few streets while a few families lived in each apartment. Life in the Ghetto areas was lived in an atmosphere of fear, threat, misery, hunger and a forlorn hope that they would survive.

The month of March 1943 was filled with scant hope that the allied forces that we saw as our liberators, would succeed in the war against the German army. The month passed with no specific events. At this point the stage of delusion came to an end and we became completely apathetic, filled with doubt as to who would remain alive in this horrible all-encompassing war. A peculiar peace and quiet reigned over us and nothing disturbed our lives which crept along somehow with difficulty, painfully, miserably and without hope. Even the sun, which had always been a source of joy, upset us now and beat down upon our demoralized nerves reminding us that nothing in this world changed and nature was not influenced by what was befalling us.

The will to live, even for a short moment, was strong and incomprehensible. This will could suddenly evaporate and leave behind it a limitless void, large, empty and bitter which burdened and depressed us. Even hope was torn from us and only the thoughts carried us forward with the crucial question - What was to come?

The dark horizon could not light up for us a glimmer or spark of hope. It was hard for us in these moments. Different and fearsome thoughts often brought us back to the terrible reality from which we tried to escape in any way possible. Difficult, very

difficult, but we must look into the eyes of reality and hope for the best, the world is nevertheless beautiful and full of promise. It was sad for us to 'leave' all this.

But why?

Also the month of April passes. Days of sunshine appeared, beautiful days in which nature woke up to spring and the smell of greenery reminded us of similar springs which had passed not to return. The awakening of nature awakened in us emotion, and strong desire for life which cannot be explained. But reality was not like this and even the suffering of Tantalus was dwarfed compared to what we suffered in the Ghetto.

The Judenrat prohibited us from leaving the house during the day, so that the rulers would not see that there were too many Jews in the Ghetto. We sat in the filthy homes of the deprived Ghetto and looked out of the windows where the sun smiled upon us and the greenery invited us to the embrace of nature. We sat like this aimlessly, counting the hours. The time crawled slowly by and did not bring with it hope. All information, including political information, did not bring with it a message that pointed to the slightest hope but only again and again wrenched at our pain and changed the plans we had woven.

Only the pleasant and particularly agreeable weather led us to positive thoughts that the coming months would bring more promising news and changes for the better. We were satisfied that they let us live in peace as there had been no reports of roundups for a very long time. This grey and boring life in the Ghetto we accepted as a blessing from above, the main thing was to have tranquility and to be left in peace. We were prepared to pray to God to preserve the situation and we were also prepared to make sacrifices to this end.

The roundup that took place at Sambor, a city not far from Drohobycz, fell suddenly upon its inhabitants and left a heavy atmosphere after a long period of quiet. Again heavy black clouds hung above. Depression, misery and despair filled the hearts of all the Jews. In this city, 1200 innocent victims fell, without any judgment or protection whatsoever, at the hands of barbaric murderers of the German nation. The fulfillment of the commands of one person, to satiate his wishes to satisfy his barbaric sinister desires, produced rivers of blood and tears of Jews: fathers, mothers and little children. There are no words to describe the terrible cruelty with which they were murdered and our feelings of agony, our participation in the grief of those remaining and the emotions of vengeance that pulsed in us.

The rumours of a wave of pogroms, which washed over the towns of the area, hung over us like a threatening burden during approximately two weeks and brought a wave of apprehension. Only on the first day of the Pessach holiday, the anxiety passed and we went back to living our daily lives. We tried not to think and not to speak of our great tragedy; we wanted to believe that things would not change and in spite of this God would pity us and free us from this terrible chain of captivity.

The days of Spring Holidays (Passover) passed, long and beautiful days. The weather was again on our side and dispersed the sorrow, and created a peculiar delusion that conveyed with it hope and added energy to fight for life and at the same time strengthened the hope for vengeance against those who had harmed our loved ones and those who had caused this great injustice.

In the last days of the month of April information reached us from Warszawa that in the Ghetto there, for two weeks war was being waged and that the Jews were fighting the Germans. This self-defense, which was instigated partly by the Poles, positioned an active Jewish defense opposite the Germans, ready to fight to the last man. On the one hand we were proud of our brothers who were revenging themselves against the Germans but on the other hand the reports on the destruction of the Ghetto opened an additional wound in all our hearts.

Today it is the 5/5/1943 and nothing has happened. In the first days of May, nothing changed. Rumours reached our ears of attacks by the Germans and also the Russian and English forces. The situation in the Ghetto was despondent and filled with depression. The reports on suppression of the revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto and the annihilation of the remaining Jews there weakened our morale.

We were promised quiet until the end of the month but it was difficult to believe it. As one does not believe that a thief will not steal again so it was impossible to believe that the murderers had spilt enough of our blood but the desire and the thirst for quiet made the people believe that it would be so. The weather improved and days of sunshine followed. I sunned myself, closed my dreamer's eyes and in my mind pictures of the years passed like in a film. Everything seemed so far away, strange, and hard to believe that we are the heroes of this tragedy.

Instead of looking forward to the coming spring and finding joy in the profusion of greenery and flowers and enjoying the smells of the wonderful blossoming, we sat, we the sentenced to death, in our small homes and prayed for our lives as if the command to obliterate us from the face of the earth depended upon the weather and could descend upon us at any moment.

On the 8/5 notification reached us on the overthrow of the city Bizerta and the city Tunisia by the English and the Americans. It was also said that the Russians advanced to the outskirts of the city of Noworosyjska. On the 21/5, like a clap of thunder on a clear day, the tragedy descended upon us. Like a herd of wild men the drunken Gestapo fell upon us together with various militias and removed from the Ghetto 600 victims for no reason whatsoever. The victims were driven to the outskirts of the city to a place called Branicy and then to the Magierów camp and slaughtered in a horrifying manner in the gas chambers.

The persecution, lack of freedom and lack of confidence to walk around freely was nothing compared to the fear of the horrific death which awaited each one of us by way of 'transportation' to the Bronizki Forest. In this forest it was customary to bury in large mass graves which were dug a few days before the massacre, those who had been chosen for execution by machine-guns, amongst them many wounded.

On the 5/6/1943 the most terrible roundup broke out, the roundup of annihilation, which we had expected for a long time. No hiding place or refuge helped. Everyone who was a Jew had to disappear from the face of the earth.

However, despite the punishment by death which hovered over their heads, there were Aryan citizens, who in return for a lot of money or simply from good-heartedness, gave shelter and refuge to Jews. Not all of those who took upon themselves this great effort persevered. There were those who, after some time began to fear for their lives and showed the refugee the door. The reasons given

were various and strange but the purpose was one. The situation of the Aryans was in this case similar to that of the Jews, as in the event of the Jews being caught they usually divulged after torture, who had hidden them.

The roundup began before dawn, at 03.00, the Ghetto being surrounded by a densely linked chain of Shupo, SIPO and the Ukrainian police. For the purpose of extermination Shupo people from the city of Stanislawsk who were known for their brutality, for the murder of masses and the execution of Jews, were also conscripted. Their vast experience in exposing hideouts and underground bunkers and their methodical manner of searching for fugitives, lead to the exposure of many hiding places. The roundup was halted towards evening and renewed Monday morning. During the night and Sunday a few, mainly youth, managed to save themselves by escaping from the Ghetto to work camps and to Aryans they knew. The Gestapo proclaimed the total destruction of the Ghetto the significance being that every Jew found would be executed. The city of Drohobyca was declared a city 'free of Jews' or in the language of the government 'Judenfrei'.

We were already considered very lucky as until that day not one of our family had been harmed. Very seldom could one find in the Ghetto families like this. But on this black day the long arm of Hitler found us.

The Ghetto burned and whoever could do so, escaped the inferno. We were lost and without purpose or hope. Father was old and ill and mother old and so it was left to us only to wait till they came to take us to the Bronica Forest. Our parents understood the tragic situation and begged us and made us swear in the name of all the holy ones and with terrible curses, to save ourselves and they would be left behind with belief in God and what would be would be. All my brothers and sisters and I, with an indescribable pain in our hearts, were in despair. We wanted to die together. We wanted them to take us all and not be separated. It was unbearable to abandon our most dearly loved ones to the murderous hands of the Nazis. Nothing helped us. Our parents, faced with this terrible tragedy in desperate despair, begged us to save ourselves like others had. They sat and explained to us that their youth was already past and for their remaining days, in these circumstances, there was no purpose. The greatest relief for them would be the knowledge that we had survived and would take our revenge in the future.

They had only one request from us which we have also fulfilled, as we believed it to be important and true. The only request of those most dear to us in the world, those ill-fated ones, was that we would give them a Jewish burial and not let them be buried in the mass grave in the Bronica Forest. They requested that we find them poison which they would take only at the critical moment, when they realized that there was absolutely no hope left for them and would thereby save themselves great physical and mental suffering.

We fulfilled their request with unbearable grief and pain. We did this for our dearest ones and asked the essential question – where is justice? If the heavens exist and within them a God or a higher power then may he take revenge for this terrible, this inhuman injustice, which cannot be described nor comprehended by the human mind. We bought two bottles of the lethal liquid and with averted eyes gave one to father and one to mother. We were choked with pain and could not utter a word, only stifled sobs shook our bodies without interruption.

This image will remain with me throughout my life. It left me with such a deep impression and such great pain and opened a wound in my heart that will not heal. We left with aching hearts, in anguish and pain we left the home of our parents. Numb and with broken hearts we left there with only one thought, to fight our miserable lives with only one purpose - revenge for the abuse and injustice done to us.

Here we were - but where to go???

We decided that each one of us would go in a different direction as only in this manner could at least one of us survive. And so it was.

My big brother, Icik, turned to an Aryan merchant, my little sister Andzia and I went with my young brother, Laibale, to the work camp Ginsberg, and from there after two days, my sister and I left, to an Aryan acquaintance. My young brother at this stage stayed in the work camp.

As I already mentioned, there were Aryan citizens who took Jews in to hide them but very quickly got 'cold feet' from fear of the Germans and began to cast the Jews out for various reasons. This also happened to me more than once but I would not give in and fought to remain alive.

I went to a Catholic acquaintance named Karol Niemilowicz. This man lived in a small house far from the city, in a most desolate place next to the work camp Dachowczarnia. This was a few days after the extermination roundup and bullets were still flying over our heads. Another hunt was made for the remaining Jews and the walk to the Aryan acquaintance was at a risk of life. The aim before us was to find a hiding place until the end of the war. With beating hearts and unimaginable fear we arrived at the house. First, I established the conditions with him and arranged all the formal and material matters. After this we were taken to the shelter which had already been prepared for this purpose and already contained some Jews we knew. These people had been there for a few weeks and the conditions were terrible. The shelter was built below the floor in the shape of a square hole and half a meter in height. It was necessary to either sit with head and shoulders bowed or to lie down all the time.

The place was dirty, damp; there was lack of air and terrible smells from the buckets of discharge. It was a great hardship. In these conditions, at normal times, no man would have been able to bear it for a long time and it was enough to be in this place for a week to begin preparations for separation from this miserable life. The great advantage of this abominable hole was its remarkable camouflage, so that we all kept silent and submissively accepted the terrible conditions. Confronted with death and terrible fear we were prepared to jump into the most reeking sewage canals and here we had a thoroughly camouflaged 'hole' and we therefore did not think for a moment to look for another hiding place in the light of the threatening tragedy.

The bunker was very specially disguised. The entrance to the bunker was through the kitchen, through an oven that was built from stone blocks. From the oven the top panel was removed and thereafter the lower panel on which ash rested. After this a ladder led down to the shelter which was in fact a large grave. No one could imagine to himself that under the actively burning oven, Jews were hidden – living people.

We were not allowed to speak or move so as not to be discovered. Here we needed to pass the most critical time, the period of searching for Jews hiding in houses of Aryan citizens who were suspected of sheltering Jews.

Also here the owner of the house 'broke down', fearing for his life and showed us the door. We left the shelter, this hell on earth at mid-day, straight to the field in the clear knowledge that searches would be made in the area. Despite the great danger we ran, my sister and I, wherever our legs took us and hid in the wheat field until the late hours of the night. For me, so it seemed, this was the longest day of my life. Every hour that passed seemed like a year. The waiting was exhausting and pervaded our nerves. We waited for evening to look for a new place to hide. This was a difficult and dangerous time. In the city and its surroundings searches were made without break for escaping Jews and each one found was shot to death. All existing organizations subordinate to the government were recruited with one sole aim and that was to erase all memory of Jews from the face of the earth.

Evening fell at last and after a further wait we were about to leave but undecided as to where we would go. I again felt despair as I did not know where to turn. I found myself once again facing death as we had no place to hide. With no home, surrounded by enemies who wanted to eliminate us and with no contact with my brother, which was the worst of all in my eyes, despite all I decided to continue the fight - not to give up and not to lose hope. I chose, even with the danger to my own life and that of my sister, to enter the Ginsberg camp where my younger brother had remained before we parted. In the streets of the city, German patrols made rounds and there were many informers who did their dirty work for the Germans. They chased and shot at Jews who fled from their disclosed shelters. This time too I succeeded in fleeing from them and together with my sister reached the camp where we were received with warmth and surprise that we had survived and succeeded in returning unlike others who had been caught and taken to the Bronica forest and shot. It was impossible for us to remain in the camp and we wanted to leave, but where to? We were afraid to stay in the camp as we had no privileges there and feared discovery by inspection. In addition we also endangered the camp directors, who would be risking a death sentence by hiding us. With an indescribable fear, we stayed in the camp for a few days and nights. Every little thing grated on our nerves and the fear in the camp was terrible. In addition to all this, the sorrow and pain tore at us endlessly, that we had abandoned to the barbaric hands of the Nazis that most dear to us – our mother and father. Thoughts of them pursued us day and night, gave us not a moment of rest and drove the sleep from our eyes. The apathy which had fallen upon me due to the different events I had endured brought me to the threshold of madness. In these weak moments I wanted to return to the home of my parents, even if it would cost me my life and see once again their dear faces and fall onto my mother's breast and weep, to purge all the bitterness and sorrow dammed up in my heart. My conscience tormented me and my heart was filled with such unimaginable grief that I had to be watched so that I would not leave the camp and flee to them. In my eyes my life had lost its meaning.

One day a youth who had hidden in the Ghetto together with us and my parents, arrived at the camp. He was 10 years old and the son of our neighbour Rózia Richter, whose husband succeeded in leaving with the Soviets. She remained with

two children, a girl of 14 named Pepe and the son named Milek. They fought for their survival with an indescribable courage. They endured all the roundups together with us in the small hiding place in our home. It would be possible to write much about this woman and her fight for life. She fought like a tiger and also reached moments of despair in which she and her children were swollen with hunger and almost decided to end her life and those of her children and shorten their dreadful suffering. The only thing sustaining her and preventing the execution of her plans was the hope that one day the nightmare would end and she and her children would once again be reunited with their husband and father. To him they would pour out their hearts, and he, the husband and father, would comfort them for the injustice and suffering caused them.

The boy, endangering his young life, arrived at the camp with a letter from my parents. The letter he had brought with him, like a message from another world, brought me great joy. At last I had a sign of life from my parents. I kissed the boy and asked him many questions, like: what are my parents doing? How are they feeling: whether they need something: He told us that everything was the same as when we had left and nothing had changed. Our parents wanted to know what is happening to us and whether we are in a safe place. He told us that the stock of food was running out, there sometimes was nothing to drink and that it was very hot and stifling in the shelter. I immediately packed all the food and drink available to me and sent it with the boy together with many wishes. I asked the boy to come in another two days and I would send with him additional food. He returned after two days and so it continued for quite a long time. After this, the visits stopped suddenly, a sign of bad tidings. We sent a Catholic to the Ghetto who brought us the bitter message that the shelter had been discovered. The Germans had discovered the shelter after explicit house to house searches. My parents had poisoned themselves and the people who remained in the shelter were taken out and brought to the Courthouse and later shot.

It is futile to write and describe the sorrow and pain that filled my aching heart. It seemed to me that the summer of my world had ended and the tragedy for me was over. But it was not so. To my sorrow fate had inscribed for me more and more suffering in fighting this endless war – the fight for survival. As I already wrote I was not entitled to live in the camp. I asked the Aryans that came to the camp whether they would help me and hide me even though I knew that I would not get a confirmative reply to these questions. But as one says ‘a drowning man will cling to any straw’, so too did I. One day a Ukrainian known to me came to the camp, the owner of a farm in Wreblewic. His name was Malinowski and I arranged with him that he would hide me. I also arranged with him terms of payment. I was to pay him 40,000 zlotys during a period of half a year, that is until January 1944. Our agreement included the supply of food and maintenance for two people, myself and my sister. He did not want to take us to his home himself, for safety reasons, and we therefore agreed on a meeting place at 11 at night where he was to wait for us. At 9.30 a wagon I had ordered arrived at the camp. My heart was beating like a hammer. The surrounding field was dark and at each step danger of a different kind awaited us. I had nothing to lose then and only felt badly for my little sister. While the wagon waited, only one thought was going like a bolt of lightning through my mind,

that I would go alone and if something happened would only endanger myself and if everything worked as planned and I reached safety I would repeat the same procedure with my sister. This time too my suspicions did not disappoint me.

I left the camp without the band on my forearm expecting death at any moment from a bullet from the murderers. I got on the wagon and drove in the direction of the large train station. On reaching the turn, a little before the station from where we would have to continue by foot to the specified meeting place, I was surrounded on all sides by undercover agents and a Ukrainian policeman by the name of Miedrycki. They shone a torch in my eyes and demanded identity papers. It was clear that they had been following me from the moment I left the camp as they had apparently seen the wagon waiting at the camp entrance. In those days everything was under the most stringent surveillance, so that also the wagon was under surveillance and so I fell into the trap. They followed me with the idea that they would succeed in reaching the place where I would hide. They apparently lost patience as the route was long and the hour late. I climbed down from the wagon and went with them to an unfamiliar location. I did not know but suspected that I was approaching my end. I was only happy that I had not taken my little sister and that she would have the chance to survive.

Like in a kaleidoscope thousands of tragic pictures that I had recently seen, passed before my eyes. An additional thought came to my mind, to take a risk as I had nothing to lose. I decided to try and tempt at least one of the 'hunters' with a bribe, to permit me to go on my way. The 'hunter' broke into laughter which froze the blood in my veins. He began to ridicule me and said that they are taking me to Gestapo Headquarters and there I would not only talk but sing like a canary and tell them everything I knew, where I was going, where I was going to hide and where I had hidden until then.

After these words I no longer cared about anything and I decided to be unyielding and not to reply to any question even if they gave me the harshest punishment. I told them what I had decided in an aggressive tone. Despite all I began to explain to them with much daring and in cold blood, that they would gain nothing for me, nor gain any distinction or reward from the Gestapo, using all of four policemen to bring me, one single Jewish woman to them. This line of reasoning worked well and was fruitful. They began to look at each other weighing whether it would be preferable for them to free me and divide the ransom between themselves instead of bringing ridicule upon themselves for the 'catch' they had brought to Gestapo Headquarters. I saw that the iron was still hot and that they had apparently reached the conclusion that I had expected and I therefore again put forward my proposal – and the miracle was realized.

They demanded 10,000 zloty from me. From experience I was already familiar with all their dirty dealings. They would first take the money and jewelry from the victims and would then deliver them to the Gestapo. I explained to them that I had no money with me and if they would take me to the camp where my brother is, they would receive the requested amount. They believed me. They accompanied me to the camp with the image of the high ransom they had demanded. As we neared the entrance of the camp I succeeded in persuading one of them to enter the camp and to call my brother and demand that he pay 10,000 zloty and then let me go, and if

not they would take me back with them. My brother knew this gang and their brand of threats. My brother pinched me and signed to me to be prepared to run and meanwhile entered into discussions with them on the amount of ransom. He gave them 2000 zloty to let me go and promised them that he would immediately go in and bring them the remainder of the money. They would not agree but I took advantage of the opportunity and quickly ran off to the camp. My brother stayed with them as there was no threat to him from them, he was working legally in the camp and they had no power over him. The fact that they had not taken me to the Gestapo and had tried instead to collect ransom for letting me go could bring about the most severe punishment upon themselves. In fear of endangering their own skins they took the 2000 zloty and bolted.

Again my luck which had been granted me by the heavens had held and I was certain that I would come through this hell. My confidence came from the fact that I could survive and endure these events and be saved from death in the Branicy forest – I, one of thousands to whom this has happened and stayed alive.

I myself did not see any miracle in this event or hope for the future as life did not smile upon me and again I was without help and without a shelter for survival.

Again I was in the camp, without permission, and was endangering its administrators. After two days of despair, fortune again ironically smiled upon me. A house owner arrived with a letter from my older brother saying that he is hiding out with him. He walked around the camp asking where we were and how we were doing. I was delighted by the letter and saw it as the only hope. I replied to my brother and told him what had happened to us and of the recent tragedies which had befallen us and all in the camp and whether he could arrange for us place in the bunker where he is hiding. This slight spark of hope did not disappoint me and two days later a reply came from my brother. In the letter he wrote that although there was no place in his bunker and the manager of the bunker, if one can call him so, was not prepared to accept more new people, he would however try to speak with a Ukrainian house owner and persuade him to hide my sister and me. My brother did not reach agreement with the bunker manager. The name of this manager was J. Mayer, who before the war was a salesman at Landesman. There is no point in expanding the discussion on this man but it was impossible not to mention him as he was a builder of the bunker and tried to save our lives.

We left on the 22/6/1943 with the house owner to his home where the bunker was located. He brought us into the bunker through a secret entrance.

We pressed into the bunker which had been built by 'Al Capone'. The bunker was 8-meter in length, 4-meter in width and 2-meter in height. On one side beds were lined up and on them lay pale people whose sickly looks showed that no sunlight reached them. Their appearance made a distressing impression on me. At first glance it appeared to me that one could not endure the situation here for an extended time as living conditions were not normal. Air was supplied to the bunker through the toilet and water for personal use came from the tank that collected only rainwater, so that water was plentiful only on days when rain fell or the snow melted. There was a brick-built kitchen stove and also an oven. Hygienic conditions were poor. The toilet was clean only when there was a lot of water in the tank. Only then was it possible to rinse out the toilet bowl and the pure air could then reach us. People had large lice

as washing requires plentiful water and this was lacking. In the bunker was an opening for the chimney of the home owners' kitchen stove. This chimney had a special significance as it was used as a device of connection between us and the home owner using agreed upon signs to make the connection, for instance:

- a. one ring - a sign of danger. A situation in which we had to sit in complete silence and almost prohibiting us to breathe hard but to my sorrow this command was not always fully carried out.
- b. two rings – an indication that the owner or his wife wanted to speak to us. In the upstairs flat in one of the rooms, in the oven was an opening through which the owner spoke to us and we answered him from the bunker. Through this opening the owner supplied us with diverse news.
- c. three rings - indicated that we could light fire on the stove and cook as the owner's wife was then also cooking

Al Capone took care of all these details up to the smallest of elements, he incorporated them into accepted practice in the bunkers he had built, as he did with us.

In the bunker we had electricity which was a great advantage underground. We also had a radio which was our only contact with the outside world.

It seems that no-one valued the invention of the radio as much as we did, we the buried alive below the earth. With the help of this brilliant and magical invention we knew what was happening in the wide and more important world, the world knew and was aware of the calamity which had befallen us, the Jews, and sent many messages of encouragement which were so essential in our continuing fight for survival. We listened a number of times a day to world programs, heard speeches by world leaders and to stations which told the bare truth about the calamity that had befallen the Jews of Europe. In the bunker we had a large wall map of the Ukraine which helped us to observe and follow the measured successes of the Red Army on the front which was approaching us, to the west. They advanced by sections of 20 to 30 km per day. The advance of the army, reported on the radio, was measured by us on the map with the help of a network coordinating the ratio to neighbouring towns. We calculated the front line approaching our region in ratio to the towns of Drohobycz – Stryj – Lwow. Our hearts again filled with hope with every advance reported. We also heard the words of our people the Jews, who were situated outside the occupied German lines and who encouraged us. They were with us in our great pain on the loss of our dear ones who died such a terrible death at the hands of the Nazi murderers. They knew of the massive murders and of the gas chambers, of the train wagons transporting people to the death camps and of the huge mass graves which could be seen at every step of the occupied territory. They also reported that the Nazis were recently less sure of themselves and less confident of their success and in order to erase every imprint of their great sin, for which they will have to be judged, they are now opening the mass graves and burning the bodies.

We were living in the hope that we would endure this difficult and dreadful period, which has no comparison of events throughout time, and hoped that justice would not pardon those who had subjected us to this terrible crime. In the reports they

promised that the day of retribution and salvation was approaching. They explained that the period in which we are living under Nazi occupation is a return to barbarism and the victims of this war are the highest number of victims ever to be sacrificed on the altar of war. To our sorrow we knew that not only the front produced victims but that also countless innocent citizens who were exterminated in the many roundups were part of these victims.

Life in the bunker can be divided into periods each of which is connected to the seasons of the year and the different effects of nature which caused us great and indescribable suffering.

The four months of summer which began in June and continued until September of 1943, assailed us with waves of oppressive and stifling heat. The heat drew from our damp bodies the remaining life fluids in rivulets of sweat. The poor food which did not include vegetables, fruit or oils brought us to daily dehydration. The hot days brought in their wake stifling nights which we endured in indescribable suffering without sleep. It was possible to sleep only towards morning when cooler air penetrated from the toilet and cooled the bunker. The worst hardship was the lack of water in this period of dryness. It is unnecessary to describe the significance of lack of water in this burning surrounding and the sensation of thirst. The greatest pleasure in this place was a bucket of water with which to cool down our burning and sweating bodies. We received this pleasure only on days of rain. When this happened we thanked God for the wonderful gift he had bestowed upon us and we could also breathe in comfort. We looked forward to water like wanderers in the desert and when rain fell throughout the entire night and until the next day without stop, and without satiation we washed our clothes and our bodies and played in the rain waters.

In the days without water the situation in the bunker was unbearable as hygienic conditions were unbearable because of the sweat and dirt and the smells from the toilet. Very soon lice and fleas appeared in frightening sizes. In these days we sipped from water drums almost empty, remains of yellow liquid which was meant in these difficult days for cooking only. Washing was not even in the cards. Weak people fainted occasionally and became dehydrated from lack of drinking water.

In these difficult days the men in the bunker made a sort of large crane and with its help we would lift the top of the bunker leading to the basement, and with the knowledge that we had nothing to lose and without the knowledge of the owner of the house, we would climb out to the basement to breathe a bit of clear air. We filled our lungs with the nectar as much as we could and drank of the cold fresh water from the kitchen taps. We could not move around too much in the basement, but while there we could peep out through cracks like prisoners, and see the beautiful life being lived outside, which would be a death sentence for us if we went out.

The suspicion that people would come to visit the house owners and one of the visitors would hear a noise or even the smallest rustle, made us run like mice to the bunker whose opening was immediately covered with a layer of soil for camouflage.

The sound of closing the top of the cover over the opening of the bunker was similar to the sound of a gravestone* or closure of a coffin lid and the sound of soil being thrown onto it. At this moment we were again without hope. Each one of us wanted to know how much longer we would have to suffer here and perhaps the wonderful world we had seen outside was not for us at all and that there was nothing left to suffer for or be tormented. Each one of us would have been happy to give up this hard life underground in these unbearable conditions.

In addition were the fear and the anxiety that filled us each time the owner of the house would ring the bell. There were different reasons for the warning ringing and we never knew the actual reason. Sometimes visitors to the family would come, sometimes searches would be made for Jews hiding and sometimes the owner would ring for no reason but only to frighten us. Each time our hearts stopped with the approaching fear and anxiety.

The shared existence was particularly complex. In the bunker strangers of different natures were packed together nonetheless with a shared aim: to get through the very worst and survive. Some did not know each other before the war and their economic background and culture was also different. From necessity all were compressed together into one void in which they had to share and live together. No wonder that instances of jealousy, hate and bitterness emerged. The different natures: kind and patient against inconsiderate and cruel resulted in wracked nerves, and the use of bad language and callous remarks that were insulting, sometimes in a brutal way, even ended in threats and blows. In many cases the bunker leader would raise his hand to the people as this was in his eyes the most inhumane of consequences.

It is difficult to understand the hate which prevailed between people despite the shared aim of all which was to save their unhappy lives. Life in the bunker was an excellent school from all aspects. There were people in the bunker of different cultural and economical backgrounds who competed with each other to prove which of them belonged to a more distinguished status, the aristocratic status, from which they maintained each of them came, or to which they would have liked to belong. Each person boasted of his distinguished background, described who his family were, in which beautiful rooms they had lived before the war and in which stores they had bought their clothes in Lwow**, and of course with whom they would not have been seen.

*in ancient times graves were located in caves and the gravestone was then rolled in place to cover the entrance to the cave

** Lwow – the largest city in the area

An additional note

Remark: This note was found between the pages of my mother's diary and written in secret so that the occupants of the bunker would not see them

"From the beginning of our stay in the bunker, shared life was run like life in a commune, everyone shared everything. From when the family Badian arrived there was a great change. They had money from a source known to us all and this was the ransom money that Moniek Badian had exacted as a policeman in the Jewish police force. His final fate was the fate of all the Jewish police who were shot in the cemetery. The engineer Bakenroth, who moves around freely outside, cared for this family. He also provided the commune with food supplies. However I was certain, to my sorrow, that he did not know the fate of the food supplies. Our commune received very little as the cook Rosa Bergwerk takes all for herself and explains to us that Mr. Engineer buys everything only for them. I already mentioned that since their arrival the situation changed and great demoralization exists in the bunker. The commune does not work satisfactorily. After debate they began to pay their share to the commune so that in the end I too benefited.

Later there was no more significance to the commune as they initiated a practice of private cooking into the bunker and so were cut off from the rest ".



My mother in Drohobycz in 1939



Laibale (my mother younger brother) in Drohobycz in 1939 with two of his friends



Icik (my mother older brother) in Drohobycz in 1939

Appendix

Akdamot

Akdamot is a liturgical poem extolling the greatness of God, the Torah and Israel that is read publicly in the synagogue right before the morning reading of the Torah on the first day of Shavuot. It was composed by Rabbi Meir of Vermaiza-Worms in Germany, whose son was murdered during the Crusade of 1096. Rabbi Meir was forced to defend the Torah and his Jewish faith in a debate with local priests, and successfully conveyed his certainty of God's power, His love for the Jewish people, and the excellence of Torah. In the aftermath of his victory in the debate, he wrote the 'Akdamot' a 90-line poem in Aramaic which stresses these themes.