I SURVIVED THE GERMAN HOLOCAUST AGAINST ALL ODDS

A Unique and Unforgettable Story of a Struggle for Life

By Jack Glotzer

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IN MEMORY OF MY BELOVED MOTHER TOBA GLOTZER, MY BROTHERS SAMUEL AND MOSHE EMANUEL, AND MY RELATIVES WHO WERE BRUTALLY MURDERED IN THE GERMAN HOLOCAUST.

I SHALL NOT FORGIVE, AND I SHALL NOT FORGET YOU.

לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ, דּוֹר אַחֲרוֹן--בָּנִים יִוָּלֵדוּ; יָקֻמוּ, וִיסַפְּרוּ לִבְנֵיהֶם

So that the last generation may know - sons yet to be born - they will arise and tell their own sons.

(Tehillim 78:6)

שִׁמְעוּ-זֹאת, הַזְּקֵנִים, וְהַאֲזִינוּ, כֹּל יוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ; הֲהָיְתָה זֹּאת בִּימֵיכֶם, וְאִם בִּימֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם

עָלֶיהָ, לִבְנֵיכֶם סַפֵּרוּ; וּבְנֵיכֶם, לִבְנֵיהֶם, וּבְנֵיהֶם, לְדוֹר אַחֵר

Hear this, ye old men,
And give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land.
Hath this been in your days,
Or in the days of your fathers?

Tell ye your children of it,
And let your children tell their children,
And their children another generation.

(Joel 1:2,3)

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FOREWORD

As the children of Jack Glotzer, we were always aware that his childhood and adolescence was unlike that of any of our contemporaries. He was a warm, fun-loving and devoted father. As we grew older we began to fully comprehend the painful events that he and his family had endured during the Holocaust. Although it was difficult for him to recount all of the atrocities that he had borne and witnessed, he told us his experiences with explicit instructions for us to pass these truths down to subsequent generations.

“We must never forget” was his wish for the generations to come. Despite the pain of recalling his past, he finally agreed to allow our mother, Beatrice Glotzer, with the help of her brother, Alexander Walzer, to record his personal history. We feel strongly that as first-generation children of Holocaust survivors, it is our responsibility to share our father's memoir. We are also aware that history tends to repeat itself. It is thus also our responsibility and the responsibility of children like us to do everything we can to prevent these horrific events from ever happening again.

In helping us to bring our father's memoir to publication and to the world, we will be forever grateful to Marla and Jay Osborn. Their tireless efforts in preserving the memories and history of those who survived and those who perished are nothing short of heroic, and we remain in their debt.

It is poignant that as we finished preparing this edition of our father's memoir, we reached the 75th anniversary of the liquidation of the Rohatyn Jewish ghetto, when our father's mother Toba and his brother Moshe Emanuel were killed along with so many others before his eyes. May their memory be a blessing, now and forever.

Mitchell Glotzer and Terry Glotzer Arons
June 2018

I SURVIVED THE GERMAN HOLOCAUST AGAINST ALL ODDS

Early Childhood Years (until the outbreak of World War II, September 1, 1939)

I was born in the town of Rohatyn (Poland before World War II, now Ukraine) on January 12, 1925. Rohatyn is situated on the Lwów-Stanisławów highway, approximately 70 km (43 miles) southeast of Lwów. Before the war the total population of Rohatyn was 9,000; one third (3,000) were Jews.

I was the oldest son of Toba (née Barban) and Mayer Glotzer. I was named after my mother's father Jacob Barban, who was called Yankel. My nickname was Kuba because the Ukrainian anti-semites made fun of my name Yankel; Kuba sounded more like a Ukrainian name.

We lived in our house on the outskirts of Rohatyn on Cerkiewna street No. 20. We had several horses, cows and a barn for them. Adjacent to our house was a big garden. The house was surrounded by orchards of fruit trees, currant bushes and lots of greenery. The scenery was magnificent. Close to our house was a river called Gniła Lipa (meaning *rotten linden*) where I learned to swim. My father owned a butcher store at the *rynek* (the market place, in Polish).

I had two brothers: Samuel (Shmul) who was a year younger than I. My youngest brother Moshe Emanuel was born in April 1930. I adored my little brother; he used to follow me everywhere which was somewhat bothersome. However, in as much as I loved him very much, I did not object to his following me.

One incident stays in my memory. One time when my little brother was following me, we had to cross railroad tracks. The crossing gate was down and my brother ran across the tracks; the train was approaching, but he made it in time. I was in shock and hardly made it back home. After this episode I had nightmares.

My grandfather Kalmen Glotzer built our house exclusively for his children. My father's sister Malkah Altman[1] and her three sons, my grandfather's son Iser Glotzer with his wife and two sons, and our family (my parents, I and my two brothers) lived in this house. Because we lived so close together, I played with my cousins very often and I enjoyed it very much. My father had another four sisters who lived in the USA and a brother Jacob who lived in Bielsko (Poland) with his wife and three daughters: Tonia (Tosia), Clara and Adela. Tosia was a big disappointment to the whole family. She converted to Catholicism and married (in church) a Polish man, Joseph Czekay. Tosia was very talented; she finished music conservatory and became an accomplished pianist. Tosia's father sat *Shivah*[2] for her; nobody in the family was allowed to mention her name. Jacob and his family used to come to us during vacation time; but, since this episode they stopped coming to us which made me very unhappy.

My father's cousin Shiye Glotzer also had a butcher store at the rynek; his wife's name was Malkah. They had three daughters: Lusia, Rózia and Gittl. We were very close to them.

I had many friends with whom I played and spent a lot of time. Since the river Gniła Lipa was so close to our house, I learned to swim early. As I think now, we gave our parents much aggravation

[1] Her husband Max Altman went to the USA before the war with the intention of bringing his family to the USA.

[2] A Hebrew term meaning "seven" which refers to the first seven days of mourning after burial. It is customary for the closest relatives of the deceased to "sit Shivah".

by going alone to the river. My best friends were Shlomo Laufer (he lived with his family very close to us), Buszko Kleinwaks and Izie Huber. Having had so many cousins and friends nearby, I was never lonely. I enjoyed my life as a youngster.

My mother's mother Leah Barban and my grandfather Yankel Barban were very loving grandparents. My mother's side of the family was considered more aristocratic than my father's. My grandfather was a mailman; it was unusual for a Jew to have a government position. My grandmother Leah was a midwife; she delivered almost every baby in Rohatyn. She was very respected, even by the gentiles[3]. They always took off their hats when greeting my grandmother. She was very generous to us. Every Passover, we three boys used to receive from her new suits and shoes.

My mother had a sister Zissl. Zissl emigrated to the USA long before the war. She married Joseph Loew (who was Rosette Faust Halpern's uncle). They lived in the Bronx.

My mother had also a brother, Zev Barban. Zev was a very talented actor. He left for Israel (Palestine at that time) and became a famous actor in the Tel Aviv theater Ohel. He married Dvora Kostelanetz who was an actress and sang professionally. He used to come to Rohatyn with his troupe and perform there.

My mother had also another brother Morris Barban who was a lawyer.

My mother was a beautiful woman. She was very talented with her hands. She used to make beautiful needlepoints and to crochet curtains. She sent some of her needlework to the USA which is now in my possession. I remember her always doing something and singing. She was a very devoted mother.

I attended the grammar school named "Marszałka Piłsudskiego" (after the Polish Marshal Józef Piłsudski). We called it "Czerwona Szkoła" (Red School) because of the brick trimming. I did not enjoy my school years; we, the Jewish students, constantly fought with the anti-semitic boys. The Jewish boys were always blamed for starting the fights. My favorite school subjects were history and geography. I hated to memorize poems. I was more preoccupied going along with our workers in the wagon pulled by our horse. I finished seven years of elementary school. My grades were average; I never had a failing grade.

As was the custom, when I reached my 13th birthday, I became *Bar Mitzvah*.[4] I did not like to study with the Rebbies (Jewish teachers) because they used to beat me and other Jewish children. (It is to be noted that Jewish boys who attended Hebrew schools, private or public, were often subjected to bodily abuse at the teacher's discretion.)

My life changed considerably in 1937 when my father left for the USA. The reason for his decision to go to the USA was the refusal by the local government to permit ritual slaughtering of cows and calves. This regulation was called *obrót rytualny* (ritual turn). Our business started to deteriorate because of this situation. My father had four sisters in the United States: Chane Kuperman, Rose Altman, Jeni Hecht and Charne Schwartz. They sent proper documents to my father so that he could go to the USA. My father went to the USA with the expectation that he would bring over his family

[3] People of non-Jewish faiths.
[4] A Hebrew term meaning "son of commandment" applied to a Jewish boy who reaches his thirteenth birthday and attains the age of religious duty and responsibility.

when he had established himself in the USA. My life changed considerably when my father left. I became the head of the family. My mother's family helped us financially. My mother was depressed and suffered very much. I still have in my possession postcards written by my mother and my brothers to my father.

We had very active Zionist organizations in our town. Among them was *Hanoar Haivri* and *Hashomer Hatzair*. These organizations prepared their members for emigration to Palestine (today Israel) using spiritual and physical (*Hakhshara*[5]) methods. I was too young to be actively involved in any particular organization. I and my friends used to attend their meetings where we met the prettiest girls. My favorite organization was *Gordonia* because the prettiest girls were members there.

Rohatyn was famous for its young Jewish people. There were two *gimnazjums*[6] in Rohatyn. Jewish people were not admitted to pursue higher education; they had to go to Italy or other countries to continue. We had a famous soccer team named Maccabi.

The situation before the outbreak of the war was tense. We were aware of Hitler's activities in Germany. We were still hoping that my father would be able to send us the documents for our emigration to the USA.

My brother Shmul was very bright. He worked for my mother's brother Morris Barban who was a lawyer: this helped us financially. Life was very difficult. My mother developed arthritis; she had extreme headaches. She did her best under very difficult circumstances to be a good mother to us. She kept a very clean house and we were always well dressed. Our lives were "put in limbo". We missed our father and waited for his letters which were scarce. This made my mother very depressed.

I remember a Jewish doctor from our town, Dr. Leventer and his wife. They left for New York in 1939 before the outbreak of the war to visit the world exhibition there. Dr. Leventer promised that he would speak to our father. He left his only son Marcel with his family in Rohatyn. Dr. and Mrs. Leventer could not return to Rohatyn because the war broke out. They never saw their son again.

We envied everyone who was leaving for the USA. We were hoping every day to receive the letter from my father and the visas which would have permitted us to emigrate to the USA. My father was very disappointed in the USA; he missed us very much. I always had a feeling that his sisters in the USA were not too eager for my father to bring over another four persons to the USA. My father talked about returning to Rohatyn. I really do not know exactly the whole story. The visas from my father never came.

[5] Physical training of Jewish youth to prepare them for emigration to Palestine.
[6] A high school in Poland.

Life Under Soviet Occupation, September 1939 - June 1941

I remember that the weather during the summer of 1939 was the nicest we ever had. There were many Jewish people from nearby big towns vacationing in Rohatyn. The markets were filled with an abundance of fruits and vegetables. People were preoccupied with the political situation at that time: Hitler demanded *Lebensraum* (room to live) and the first land that he wanted was the "Polish Corridor" (the narrow strip of land between Germany and Prussia) and the free city of Danzig which was at that time an international port (today this city, Gdańsk, belongs to Poland).

Our hopes to emigrate to the United States were fading with each day. We were depressed reading the newspapers; Hitler claimed that the Jews were responsible for the deplorable economic situation in Germany. When Czechoslovakia and Austria were invaded by the Germans (1938) we knew that Hitler's threats had to be taken seriously. Some of the wealthy Jewish people were thinking of escaping to Palestine, but by then the roads to Palestine were closed and it was impossible to obtain a passport. Unrest grew from day to day. The Poles were very hopeful; they believed that the Polish army was strong and would defeat Hitler. The Ukrainians were expecting the Germans with great joy; they believed that the Germans would defeat Poland which would result in the formation of an independent Ukrainian government. In the meantime the whole town was in a panic; we did not know what to expect. In the middle of September 1939 the situation in town became critical; there was anarchy. The Polish government officials and the Polish army ran away. The neighboring peasants, realizing this, began to massively flow into the town.

Then suddenly something unexpected happened. On September 17, 1939 instead of the German army, the town was occupied by the Soviet army (Red Army[7]). Apparently, most of the people were not aware of the German-Soviet pact whereby Poland was to be divided; the Soviets were to occupy the eastern part of Poland and the Germans were to occupy the western part of Poland. Thus Rohatyn found itself under Soviet occupation. The Jews believed that they were saved (from German destruction). The Poles looked at the Red Army as invaders; they would have preferred the Germans (they believed that they could defeat the Germans). The Ukrainians were devastated: their hope for an independent Ukrainian government was shattered. The Ukrainian property owners escaped to Lwów; they were afraid of the Russians.[8] Their property was confiscated. The property of the Jewish merchants was also confiscated except for the merchants who were in the food business; they had to stay in their stores to supply food for the Red Army.

I finished my elementary education (7 classes[9]) before the Red Army marched into Rohatyn. My younger brother Samuel worked in a bar as a waiter. My youngest brother Edmund (Moshe Emanuel) went to school. It was very difficult to get a job. I helped my uncle (my father's brother, Isidore) in his butcher store. He helped us financially and supplied us with meat. It was extremely hard for my mother; she was a very proud person and now she had to depend on the family to support her and her children. I remember, she was in tears very often. I learned how to do some electrical work, but I did not get paid for it. However, in retrospect the work with electrical equipment helped me a great deal during the German occupation.

First, we were happy that the Red Army had occupied our town instead of the Germans; but later we

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[7] The terms *Soviet Army*, *Red Army*, and *Russian Army* are used interchangeably in this memoir.
[8] The terms *Soviets* and *Russians* are used interchangeably in this memoir.
[9] A *class* in Poland was a one-year course of study in elementary school.

were very disillusioned with the Soviet system. I do not remember being hungry because as I mentioned before, the relatives helped us. We were receiving postcards from our father, but we gave up all hope of emigrating to United States. The anti-semitism decreased during the Russian occupation of Rohatyn; the anti-semites were themselves oppressed by the Russians. The Russians decided to demolish some empty stores at the rynek and to build a park there with statues of Stalin and Lenin. They took all the young men to dig for this park. I had to work there twice a week without any pay. My hands were full of blisters and calluses. When I came home after this work, I noticed that my mother was looking at my hands; she was crying.

I remember one big event in town during the Russian occupation. The family Grad were very prominent citizens of our town. They owned a very successful textile business. They were very charitable to Jewish and other organizations. When the Russians occupied our town they confiscated all merchandise from the wealthy business people. Somebody reported to the Russian authority that the Grads were hiding merchandise in their home. The Grads were arrested and a very lengthy public trial took place. The public attended the court proceedings every day. This trial was a big sensation in the town. In the end, the Grads were found guilty and they were deported to Siberia. The irony of life is that they survived the war because of this event.

During the Russian occupation the Jewish population in Rohatyn almost doubled. A large number of Jewish refugees from German-occupied towns settled in Rohatyn. We felt sorry for them because they lived in total poverty; we were, after all, living in our homes.

Under German Occupation - Life in the Rohatyn Ghetto: End of 1941 - March 20, 1942

On Wednesday, July 6, 1941[10] at six o'clock in the evening, the Soviet Army left Rohatyn without firing a shot. The German army marched in their place. The Soviet army left behind heavy ammunition and miscellaneous bullets at the railroad station.

The non-Jewish population went to the streets to welcome the long-awaited German army. Of course no Jews were to be seen. The first thing that the Germans did was to take a bath in the municipal bath house (being such "clean" people). Since our house was located not far from the municipal bath house (*Łaźnia*), we could hear in our house the whole night their drunken shouting and laughter. We were very scared as there was no adult male in our house. The four of us huddled in my mother's bed clinging to each other and shaking. This is how we spent the first night under the German occupation.

The next day it quieted down but the fear did not leave us. On Saturday, July 9, 1941[11] (the first black Saturday) the Christian youth began to gather in the market place; from there they went to the new parts of the market place where most of the Jews lived. Terrible shouts and cries were heard when the attackers pulled the Jews from their homes. Everybody was panic-stricken. There was no place to escape to, as most of the roads were closed. The Jewish males were forcibly taken by the Germans to the synagogue (*Beis Hamidrash*). The plan was to set the synagogue on fire (with the Jewish people in it) after taking all their valuables. The plan did not materialize at this time. Many rumors circulated as to the reason for aborting this plan by the Germans. Some people speculated that a refugee from Kraków accidentally met a colleague from a German university who was now a doctor in the German army in Rohatyn. This doctor, upon prodding and begging by his colleague (the refugee from Kraków), intervened with the Germans on behalf of the Jews - so this plan did not materialize. I heard another rumor that a beautiful local woman went to the Germans and sold her body in exchange for the freedom of the imprisoned Jews.

We started to suffer from hunger. The Germans confiscated food for their army. Even the local peasants had to give them their cattle. The Germans caught Jews on the streets and ordered them to clean government buildings. Since we were young, they did not bother us. Nevertheless, they took me and some other Jewish boys to the railroad station to gather all that heavy ammunition (which the Russian army left behind, as I mentioned before). This work was very hard and dangerous in as much as there was some live ammunition. In addition to the fact that we were very hungry, this work was also very tiresome.

By the end of 1941, a ghetto was established in Rohatyn with prominent Jewish citizens of Rohatyn appointed to the Judenrat (Jewish Council). Only the head of the Judenrat (Shlomo Amarant) had direct contact with the Germans. For instance, when the Germans needed workers, they notified the

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[10] [Jewish survivors of the German occupation of Rohatyn recorded conflicting dates for the entry of the Wehrmacht into town, and several subsequent events. The day/date listed here is not possible, because July 6 was not a Wednesday in 1941 - it was a Sunday. Some other survivors remember July 2 instead (which was a Wednesday). Because "Wednesday" appears in several of the recollections, regardless of the numerical date, probably the actual date was July 2. -Ed.]

[11] [This day/date combination is also mistaken. From other survivor accounts, probably the actual date was July 12, a Saturday. -Ed.]

head of the Judenrat to supply the people, who were ordered to report immediately to the Germans. The members of the Judenrat believed that they and their families would be spared when the Jews were sent to concentration camps. The ghetto area started at the market place and extended to the river Gniła Lipa. Our house was within the ghetto area, so we did not have to move. The entrance to the ghetto was closed with gates, guarded by Jewish policemen. The Jewish policemen had armbands on their left sleeves with the insignia "Jewish Auxiliary Policeman". The ghetto was crowded; some houses had several families living together in one room (Jews who lived outside of the boundary of the ghetto were brought to live inside of the ghetto area). Jews suffered from hunger in the ghetto starting from the first month. The Germans forbade the peasants to supply food to the Jews in the ghetto. You could see on the streets in the ghetto people swollen from hunger. People with money somehow managed to get some food from daring peasants. In the months September and October 1941, the Germans brought some heavy equipment and dug ditches for defense purposes, as we thought (but these ditches were for graves, as we found later). In the early spring and during harvest time 1942, more food was available in the ghetto; the peasants found ways to bring food to the ghetto in exchange for clothing, jewelry and money.

March 20, 1942 - 1st Aktion[12]

On March 19, 1942, my cousin Chaim Blaustein, who was a butcher, asked me to come to his house early the next day. He had acquired some meat which he wanted me to distribute to his good paying customers; as a reward for my efforts he would also give me some meat. On the 20th of March 1942, I went to my cousin at 6:00 A.M. His house was located across the street where butcher stores used to be. He gave me the packages of meat and told me where to deliver them. By that time it was 7:00 A.M. As I came out of the house, I glanced to my left, which was facing the Ukrainian church (*cerkwia*). All of a sudden I noticed approximately 5 Gestapo[13] men (normally Gestapo men did not come into the ghetto; they were stationed in Stanisławów); they were taking rifles from their shoulders and started to shoot people around them. It was still early in the morning so there were not too many people on the streets. I ran back into the Blaustein's house. In their building there was a passage which led to another street. I thought that from this street I would be able to make it to my house and inform my family what was going on. But when I came to the other end of the passage, I saw Gestapo men also in this vicinity shooting people as well. I realized that I could not run any further because I would get shot. I ran into the closest house. The people in this house were still asleep; I knocked hard on their door. The name of the people who lived in that house was Cytryn. Finally they opened the door; when I told them what was happening, they did not believe me, they ignored me. They did not believe that something like this could happen. But when they looked out of the window, they realized that what I told them was true. By that time the Gestapo men were approaching their house. We locked the door. The Gestapo men started to scream "Verfluchte Juden, Raus!" (Damned Jews, Out!). They ripped the door open and barged into the house. They started to take 5 or 6 people out of the house, lining them against the fence and shooting them. There were approximately 30 people in that house; there were small children, old people and pregnant women. I still hear their screams, when I cannot sleep at night. Somehow I managed to be the last in the line to be dragged out. Finally I noticed that I was next in line. When I saw that they were coming closer to me, I noticed a closet (wardrobe) nearby. I crawled and jumped into this closet. (When I think now about it, I felt like something pulled me into this closet.) I hung on with all my strength in that closet. When it quieted down and the screams stopped, I knew that everybody was shot. Two Gestapo men came into the room where I was in the closet. One Gestapo man said to the other: "There was a young fellow here" (ein junger Bursch). But the other Gestapo man replied: "I finished him off". Then they left. After approximately two hours, I came out of the closet. A woman with a baby in a bed (she recently gave birth to the baby) was sitting up in the bed. Her eyes were open. I walked over to talk to her. When she did not answer, I touched her and she fell; her blood was streaming out. They shot her and the baby in bed. Her husband was an assistant chief of the Jewish police; he was not home at that time. Their name was Halpern (no relation to Rosette). All of

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[12] Expulsion or annihilation of Jews in ghettos or other concentration points by Germans. [*Aktion* is a German-language word retained in other languages for this specific usage. The Polish-language equivalent is *akcja*. -Ed.]

[13] [Jewish and other survivors of the German occupation of Rohatyn usually refer to the Nazi paramilitary death squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) which led the aktions as "Gestapo". However, overlapping responsibilities and a shortage of staff within the German security services in Distrikt Galizien, especially in the Stanisławów area, meant that mixed groups of armed men from the Gestapo, SD, Orpo, Kripo, Waffen-SS, and/or local auxiliary police probably took part in the Rohatyn aktions. -Ed.]

a sudden the woman's brother came out from under the covers of a nearby bed. He became hysterical; I quieted him down. I asked him whether there was a cellar in the house. He told me that there was no cellar in the house but there was an attic. The access to the attic was from outside; there was a ladder outside. We waited to be sure that it was quiet outside. He said that he would go first and I should follow him. As I was about to follow him, I heard a shot. I saw him fall down from the ladder. I backed up into the house. I tore up the pillows and the down quilts. I made a mess all over and crawled under the bed. Two Gestapo men came back to the house. But when they saw the feathers all around, they did not walk into the room (being such "clean" people). They did not want Jewish feathers on their uniforms. But they did not mind Jewish blood on their uniforms which splattered on them during their murders. I stayed under the bed for another few hours. When it became quiet, I crawled out from under the bed. I looked out of the window; I did not see a living person. But what I saw, I will never forget as long as I will live. There were dead people scattered in the front yards of every house; there were little children, women and old people. The blood was all over the yards. When I came out of the house, I could still hear shots from the distance. My house was quite far from where I was. I was afraid to run toward my house because I was all alone. I went back in the direction of the Blaustein's house; but then I realized that I was all alone and I did not see anyone alive. I was then near the house where my school friend lived. His family[14] lived in the basement of this house. There was no father there. I did not know whether the father died or left his family. They were very poor. I walked into the basement apartment. The family was hiding under the down quilt. At first they did not move but when they heard me calling their names, they came out from under the quilt.

When they saw me, they cried from joy. I told them that I still heard shots and that we had to stay hidden. I was very relieved that at least I was not alone. Their apartment consisted of one room; the bed took almost the whole space in the room. There was hardly any room for me. I saw a closet (my favorite hiding place). Since they were so poor, there was not too much stuff in that closet. I went into that closet. I was tired and scared but I dozed off. I stayed in that closet until dawn. Then we heard voices outside.

Jewish policemen knocked at each door. They told everybody that the Aktion was over and that the Gestapo had left the ghetto. I was very anxious to go home. I did not know whether my family was alive. On the way to my house I saw dead people all around. First I looked at their faces and I recognized the people I knew. As I was coming closer to my house, I stopped looking at the dead faces for fear that I might see somebody from my family. As I came closer to my house, my mother and my brothers ran out of the house with joy and tears in their eyes; they were sure that I had been killed.

When the Germans came to our town, my mother had an idea to move a big closet to an opening leading to a big attic. She indicated that since we did not have a male adult, we could hide in the attic. She told us that during the pogroms when the Kozaks (the Russian band) had come to rape the women, this had been their hiding place. So this was the place where my mother, my brothers and all our relatives (who lived in this house) were hiding on March 20, 1942. I was sorry that in the morning of March 20, 1942 I had left my house. But in retrospect, this day gave me experience for what was in store for me in the coming months. I learned a lesson of survival - which was to take

[14] A mother and three children.

chances in order to survive. I also learned to look at blood and dead people without being afraid.

On March 21, 1942, the Judenrat received an order to recruit about ten young people (I was among them) to go to the outskirts of the town (the area where the Germans had previously brought in equipment and dug ditches, as I mentioned before). Some older people came along to observe and to help out. This place was about 4 km (2-1/2 miles) from our town. The Germans gave us shovels and told us that we were going to bury the people who were taken to this place alive and were shot there on March 20, 1942. On the way to this place (where the ditches were) we had to gather the dead people who were shot in the ghetto (on March 20, 1942) and put them on sleds driven by horses. It was a very cold day. We saw frozen bodies scattered all around. Some old people could not walk, so they had shot them. We had to gather them on sleds and bring them to the ditches. When we finally came to the area where the ditches were, we could not believe our eyes at what we saw. First, we started to vomit and we blacked out. There were about 3,000 people dead, frozen one to another. In order to bury them, we had to separate them. Children were holding on to their mothers; their fingers were frozen and we were unable to separate them. We had to throw them into the ditches (there were two ditches). We kept burying them. The soil was frozen. Hands, arms and legs were protruding from under the soil. It was impossible to cover them completely. Most of them had open eyes. I recognized some of them. Fortunately there was nobody from my immediate family. We had to take breaks. It was impossible to do it continuously. It was very cold but I did not feel it. We were numb. We worked for a few hours. After this experience I was never the same. A Jewish policeman came with us. He told us that it was enough for one day. For the next two weeks we had to go back there. As the soil started to thaw, the bodies started to rise to the top of the ditches. We had to cover them over and over. As the time progressed, we became completely numb; we did not have any feelings.

The ghetto became almost empty after March 20, 1942. Over 3,000 Jews were murdered. Some 100-110 families survived. Everybody was walking around like zombies. It seemed as if everybody was in mourning. The Germans started to bring into the ghetto Jewish people from surrounding towns and villages (Bursztyn, Bołszowce, Bukaczowce and others). Everybody lived in fear. The survivors were trying to build hiding places.

Now we realized what the Germans were capable of doing (incidentally the head of Gestapo in Stanisławów, responsible for the massacre of Jewish people in Rohatyn ghetto, was a murderer by the name of Krüger). Everyday there were rumors that the Gestapo would return. At night we took turns to be on the look-out. In order for others to sleep, one person was always on guard. Luckily, in our house we were all alive after the 20th of March 1942 Aktion.

After the March 20, 1942 Aktion, life was not the same. We lived in constant fear. Everybody was trying to build hiding places. When a truck passed by the ghetto, we ran into hiding places. Even the children, when playing, were trained to stay close to the hiding places.

I was assigned by the Judenrat to do some electrical work in the police station (this building belonged once to a lawyer by the name of Zlatkes). Each time, when I did not do a good job (I was not a professional electrician), the Germans beat and kicked me. But in spite of this, I was glad to be there. The workers in the kitchen in this building, where I used to go to, took pity on me; they gave me some bread and other food which I took home for my family.

Death of My Grandmother Leah Barban

One day in July 1942 my mother left me to watch my grandmother, Leah Barban (she lived with us in the ghetto). My grandmother was sick with typhus. She was holding my hand. I kept looking at her; she opened her eyes, looked at me and stopped breathing. She expired. We had a problem burying her. Some people came to pray and to wash her. But nobody was willing to help us bury her. So, my brothers, two of my cousins and I, carried her to the cemetery. The cemetery was far from the ghetto. It was a hot day. We had difficulties carrying her. Then we had to dig the grave; the soil was hard. We took turns as we had only one shovel.

As I previously indicated, I loved my grandmother very much. She was very respected, even by the gentiles. She was a midwife; she delivered about 90% of the babies in town.

We were grieving for her, but on the other hand we were grateful to God that she died a natural death (although from a sickness).

2nd Aktion[15] - Yom Kippur Day 1942

On the eve of Yom Kippur[16] (September 20, 1942) we went to Kol Nidre[17] services which took place in a neighbor's house (the third house from us). The neighbor's name was Leibel Podhorcer. There was a big kitchen in that house where the services took place. Women were praying in an adjacent room. After the services we went home. The following morning we went back to the same house for Yom Kippur services. All of a sudden, just as the men were putting on their tallithim[18], we heard shots. (I and other males of my age, did not put on tallithim; in those days a male did not wear a tallith until his wedding day. I do not know whether this was a custom only in our part of Poland.) We looked out of the window. We saw Gestapo men shooting people around them (I noticed a young woman being shot; her name was Rothenberg). The men dropped their tallithim; everybody started to run to their hiding places. Since there were only a few Gestapo men in the ghetto at that time, we managed to get safely to our house. I was with my middle brother Samuel (Miko); my mother stayed home with my youngest brother Emanuel (Munio). When we arrived at home, we moved the closet and went to the attic (our hiding place). Shortly afterwards we heard Gestapo men entering our house. We were very quiet. Unfortunately my aunt Malkah Altman, being sick with typhus, was moaning loudly. We held a rag to her mouth; we almost choked her. At night, at about 2:00 A.M. I took my mother, my brothers and my two cousins and we escaped to the police station. While I was working there previously, I had prepared a very good hiding place in the cellar. I assumed that nobody would look for Jews in a German police station. We stayed in the cellar throughout the night. We were very hungry. Since I was familiar with every corner there, I knew where they stored food. I left the cellar. The Germans did not pay attention to me because they were used to seeing me there. I went to the kitchen and other places and I got some bread and other food. I brought the food down to my mother, brothers and cousins. I even dared to take my middle brother (Miko) with me so that he could carry some food too, right under the noses of the Germans. I knew that there was a good view of the ghetto from the attic of this building. I wanted to see what was going on; so I went to the attic. I found in the attic two men and one man's wife. They were tailors. They used to come to the police station to sew clothing for the Germans. Their name was Freiwald. They were very good friends of our family. They had the same idea as I had; that they could hide there too. They were considered the best tailors in town. Around 2:00 P.M. we noticed that the Gestapo men were packing to leave the ghetto. All of a sudden we saw the Gestapo men capturing three men. One of them was a school-mate of mine by the name Schnaps. The other man's name was Rothenberg[19] and the third man's name I do not remember. From the attic window we saw that the three men were ordered to kneel down. As the Gestapo men were taking off their rifles, my friend Schnaps and the other man escaped. The Gestapo men shot Rothenberg and ran after my friend and the other man. They captured the two men, brought them back and shot them. There was a Catholic church in the vicinity; we saw Catholic priests observing this incident and laughing.

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[15] [The counting of aktions in Rohatyn varies among Jewish survivors and researchers, depending on the severity of the aggression and the number of people injured, deported, or killed. -Ed.]
[16] The holiest Jewish holiday, the Day of Atonement, observed with fasting and prayers.
[17] A holy prayer chanted in the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur.
[18] A *tallith* (plural *tallithim* or *tallithot*) is a shawl with fringed corners traditionally worn over the shoulders by Jewish men during prayers.
[19] He was a brother of a young woman who was killed before, as I mentioned.

The Gestapo men finally left the ghetto. I do not remember whether the Gestapo men came that day from Stanisławów or Tarnopol. At night we went back to our house. The next day we were informed that the people who were caught during the Yom Kippur Aktion were taken to the railroad station and deported to Bełżec death camp.

Fortunately, our family survived in our original hiding place.

3rd Aktion - December 1942

After the Yom Kippur Aktion, life went on in fear. Every day there was a rumor that the Gestapo were coming back. Several times during the day we ran to the hiding places. I still continued to work in the police station as an electrician.

In the middle of October 1942, the ghetto area was reduced. We had to move to another house. This house belonged to a family by the name of Schnekrutz.[20] This house was not big enough for our entire family; some members of our family moved to a house owned by Dr. Melnik who had two houses located in the ghetto area.

I contracted typhus and developed a very high temperature. Most of the time I was unconscious.

On the morning of Tuesday, December 8, 1942, Gestapo from Tarnopol entered our ghetto. (The head of the Gestapo in Tarnopol was a murderer by the name of Müller.) The Gestapo closed all exits from the ghetto. Everything happened very fast. My mother and my brothers dragged me to the hiding place in the Schnekrutz's house. There were two hiding places in this house. There was an attic and a cellar. I had helped to dig a hiding place in the cellar. I did not know that an Aktion was in progress; I also did not know that I was being dragged to the attic. The people present in the house decided that the adults should hide in the attic and the young children with their mothers should hide in the cellar (basement). Since young children cannot sit quietly and tend to be noisy, it was thought that it was less likely to hear them from outside when they were in the cellar. My aunt Malkah Altman and her daughter Clara hid in the cellar together with other women and children of our family.

I regained consciousness in the attic; my fever broke. First, I did not know where I was. My lips were dry; I needed water. But when I saw what was happening and when I saw my mother and my two brothers, I kept quiet. All of a sudden we saw from the cracks in the floor, Gestapo men dragging people out of the cellar. There was a rumor that a Jewish policeman pointed out to the Germans the hiding place in the cellar where mothers and children including members of our family were hiding. The Gestapo took them to the railroad station, put them in cattle cars and deported them to Bełżec death camp. The Gestapo thought that the cellar was the only place in the house used for hiding, so they did not search the house anymore.

In other houses the hiding places were so crowded that many little children suffocated; there was not enough air in some of these places (bunkers). In one instance a mother attempted to stop her baby from crying when Gestapo men were in the house - as a result the baby suffocated.

At the end of the day, over 1000 Jews were captured and deported to Bełżec death camp.

[20] [This is likely the Schneekraut family of Rohatyn. -Ed.]

The Liquidation of the Rohatyn Ghetto - June 6, 1943

After the December 1942 Aktion, the mood in the ghetto was gloomy. We heard that there were no Jews left in the surrounding towns. We felt that our end was near. In May 1943 we heard that the Gestapo had surrounded the ghetto in Przemyślany (a town approximately 30 km north of Rohatyn) and had slaughtered all Jews in the Przemyślany ghetto. The Jews in the Przemyślany ghetto were less prepared than we were. Therefore the Gestapo were very successful there and liquidated the ghetto in one day. We thought that after the Przemyślany massacre we would be next. Przemyślany belonged to the *oblast* (region) of Lwów. We belonged to the oblast (region) of Stanisławów (today Ivano-Frankivsk) which was under a different administration. This was the reason why we were spared for a few weeks. After the Przemyślany massacre we sat in our hiding places day and night. There were many false alarms.

In the morning of June 6, 1943, which fell on the first day of Shavuot[21], at six o'clock in the morning, our ghetto was surrounded by Gestapo. We heard shots. We knew that our end had come. The liquidation of the Rohatyn ghetto had begun. Somehow I had always planned that when this time would come, I would take my family and run to the hiding place of Shiye Glotzer (Luci's family); but when I started, I knew that we could not make it. The Gestapo were all over the ghetto. I, my mother, my brothers and a few of my cousins ran back into our hiding place (in the attic of our house). This hiding place (I called it a bunker) could not accommodate so many people since there were people from all over the ghetto. Some people came from outside - they were already shot. They were screaming from pain; blood was all over. It was difficult to breathe. There was total chaos.

I knew that if we stayed there, we would die. There was another hiding place in a barn; there was also an attic on top of that barn. I ran up to that attic with my middle brother and my cousin. We wanted to see whether we could hide there. When we went up, there were already people hiding there. There were a lot of people from the surrounding towns. I wanted to bring up my mother and my youngest brother who at that time were in the hiding place in the barn. Unfortunately the Gestapo were already downstairs, so I could not get to them. I was looking down from the attic to see what was happening. The Gestapo were accompanied by a Ukrainian by the name of Melnik[22]. This Ukrainian spoke fluent Yiddish. He shouted out in Yiddish: "Jews, come out, the Aktion is over". They all came out including my mother, my youngest brother Moshe Emanuel and my cousins. They were all shot by the Gestapo, as I watched from the attic.

My mother Toba Glotzer was 45 years old and my brother Moshe Emanuel was 13 years old when they were so brutally murdered by the Germans. My mother was a very loving person; she was a devoted wife and mother who in spite of many problems and difficulties maintained a clean home and always made sure that her sons were well fed and dressed. She was very talented with her hands - she used to make beautiful needlepoints and to crotchet curtains. She came from an aristocratic family; she was truly a remarkable woman, a woman of valor (*eishes chayil*). I adored my little

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[21] Shavuot is the Jewish holiday commemorating the revelation of the Law at Mount Sinai. [June 6 is reported as the first day of this aktion in most memoirs and histories, but the first day of Shavuot in 1943 was Wednesday, June 9. Several other survivors also recalled the action as coinciding with Shavuot, perhaps because it lasted three days. -Ed.]

[22] After the war he disappeared and was never found.

brother Moshe Emanuel. He was a very bright boy and a very good student in school. We sent some of his report cards to our father in the USA. These report cards are now in the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. As I mentioned earlier, he used to follow me everywhere but I did not mind it because I loved him so much. It was very shocking and extremely painful for me when they were murdered in front of my eyes.

My middle brother who was with me questioned me why we were not going to bring over my mother and my brother. He did not see what I saw. When I did not answer, he understood. He became hysterical; I had to quiet him down.

We sat in that attic for the next few days without any food. I could not go down to retrieve the bodies of my mother and my brother because the Gestapo were all over. I noticed when I looked around and as far as I could see there were bodies everywhere. One day when it was raining very hard, we came down from the attic at night and sneaked into a house to find some food. It was quiet. We decided to look whether there were still some people in the ghetto. We walked into a house. The house was full of smoke. The name of the family in this house was Mailmen. We started to shout that there was a fire but the father of that family said that he himself put the house on fire. He said that he and his family would rather burn than be shot by the Gestapo. This house was owned by an egg merchant by the name of Schors. There was a hiding place in the basement of this house. We went down; I knocked on the door but nobody answered. The people there did not want the smoke to enter the basement. When I called out my name, they opened the door. My cousin Clara Glotzer (sister of Tonia Czekay) was there. There were other people whom I knew. I remember a girl by the name of Stryjer who was also there. The place started to fill up with smoke.

We knew that we had to get out of this house. At night when it was raining very hard I took all of them with me to the attic hiding place above the barn.

During the next night we left the ghetto.

Hiding Out After the Liquidation of the Rohatyn Ghetto, June 1943

We kept going on to the outskirts of the town avoiding places where we could be seen. We came to the part of Rohatyn which was called Babińce; we then separated. The girl by the name of Stryjer and a doctor with his wife by the name of Kudish went to some gentiles whom they knew. I, my brother and my two cousins Clara Glotzer and Josie Altman went to a Polak[23] by the name of Sikorski on the suggestion of Clara Glotzer. Clara told us that she was supposed to meet her boyfriend Chaim Blaustein at that Polak's house. This was prearranged before the liquidation of the ghetto (I did not know about it). Chaim Blaustein never made it there; he was most probably murdered during the liquidation of the ghetto. Clara Glotzer told us that there was a hiding place in Sikorski's house; so we headed in that direction. When we came there, Clara was very distraught because Chaim Blaustein was not there. A man by the name of Yankel Ouster was there; he was waiting there for his girlfriend. She also did not make it. He presumed that she was also murdered during the ghetto liquidation.

We stayed in Sikorski's house in a hiding place which he prepared. He gave us some food. After five days he told us that his wife was very scared to keep Jews under her roof since Germans were all around the house. The most that he was willing to keep was three people. So it was decided that Clara Glotzer, my brother Samuel (Miko) and Yankel Ouster would remain at Sikorski's. I told them that I and my cousin Josie would be going to look for another hiding place in the woods nearby. When I found a place, I would come for them or I would send somebody to bring them to me. I remembered the surrounding area; I used to go there with our help to buy cattle. I saw very dense woods. I realized that perhaps these woods would be a good place to hide. I remembered that some of my very good school friends (Ukrainians) lived on the way to the woods. When we came to the house of these friends it was one o'clock at night. We knocked on their door and when they saw us they started to shout: "Get out of here or we will call the Germans to get you". And I had considered them my best friends.

I then realized that nobody would help us; we had to get to the woods. It was dark but somehow I knew that we were going in the direction of the woods. When we came to the outskirts of the town, we met some people from the ghetto; they also had the same idea to go to the woods. We kept going together. We tried to avoid the centers of the villages. We came to the outskirts of a village called Puków. One young Ukrainian on a bicycle came toward us. We asked him for directions; he put his fingers in his mouth and started to whistle and to scream: "Jews are here". We started to run in different directions.

All of a sudden I realized that I was all alone; I could not see anyone from the group. I went around the village Puków and I noticed that I was on the right road leading towards the woods. I was very scared because I was alone. There was a hill; I climbed up. I was very tired and I fell asleep under a tree. When I woke up it was daylight; I was in the village of Cześniki. I realized that I could be very easily seen from the village since I was on a hill. I started to think in what direction I should go next. All of a sudden as I looked around I saw my cousin Josie Altman and a young man coming towards me. I was very happy. We had to be very careful since it was daylight. The Germans often

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[23] [The neutral term *Polak* is used in the Polish language to identify a person of Polish origin or ethnicity; in English the current neutral term is *Pole*, with the earlier English term *Polack* now considered derogatory. -Ed.]

used this road; this road led to Russia.

We went into the bushes and we sat there through the daylight. When it started to get dark, we tried to decide where to go next. Since the young man who was with us was from the village Lipica Górna, we decided to go in that direction. When we came to the outskirts of Lipica Górna we were hungry, tired and scared. We were also very thirsty; we drank water from dirty puddles. I believed that if we waited longer, we would die from hunger. I decided that as long as I had some strength left, I would go down to the village to look for food. I was so weak that I could hardly walk. I approached the first house of the village. A woman was cooking in the kitchen. She was taking out "pałynechi" (a kind of Ukrainian bread) from the oven. There was a pot full of boiled potatoes and beets. I started to eat. The woman did not turn around from the oven. I took a pillow case from off of her pillow and I filled it with food. She still did not say a word. I took that food to my cousin and the young man. I felt bad that I did not have any money to pay that woman for the food. My cousin and the young man started to eat very fast; I was afraid that they would get sick. Somehow I had a very good feeling about that woman. I saw in her eyes, when she looked at me, that she was sorry for me and that she would not harm me. The next day I went back to the same house for some more food. When I came in, the kitchen was full of food, as if the woman knew that I would come back. She even handed me another pillow case so that I could pack some more food. In retrospect, this woman saved three lives. Before I came to her house, the three of us were thinking of surrendering ourselves to the Germans to be shot.

Before I left that woman's house, she told me that a man by the name of Suchar Hauser, his daughter Dziunia and his son Lonek were hiding in the village of Lipica Górna. I knew Suchar and his family from the ghetto. They were sent from Lipica Górna where they used to live before the war, to the Rohatyn ghetto. When I came back with the food and I told my cousin and the young man what the woman told me, the young man got all excited and started to scream with joy: "Suchar Hauser is my uncle". So we decided, when it got dark, to go to the place where Suchar and his family were hiding. The Germans were all over the village. We were very scared, not only of the Germans but of the Ukrainians as well. We had to crawl most of the way. Fortunately, the woman gave me a detailed description of the place where these people were hiding. They were in a barn hiding under hay and straw. First, when we called them, they did not answer. Then the young man called out: "Uncle Suchar" and told him his name (I do not remember the name of this young man); they looked out from under the hay and told us to come under the hay as well. All of a sudden the owner of that barn walked in. His name was Dubski. He knew that Suchar and his family were hiding in his barn. But when he saw us he could not believe that we could make it to his barn. Right away he brought in some food. We could see his kindness; we could feel that he wanted to help us. We felt sorry for him because we put him in a predicament. The Germans were all over the village. He had a big family. I told Suchar about the woman who gave us food and told us where they were hiding; Suchar told us that this woman was of a different religion. She belonged to Jehovah's Witnesses (in Polish, Sobotnicy)[24]. Suchar told us that Dubski was also of the same religious faith

[24] [This note may confuse different Christian Protestant pacifist and conscientious objector groups in the region: Jehovah's Witnesses (*Świadkowie Jehowy* in Polish) vs. seventh-day Sabbatarian movements such as Seventh-Day Adventist and Seventh-Day Church of God followers (*Kościół Chrześcijan Dnia Sobotniego* in Polish, sometimes categorized as *sobotnicy* in Polish language). It may refer to Subbotniks, Christians who accepted Mosaic Law and the Saturday Sabbath, and had some affinity for Judaism, but we are not aware of Subbotnik presence in eastern Poland. -Ed.]

as this woman. I feel, even today, that I owe my life to these kind people. They made my survival possible in my darkest hours.

We stayed in Dubski's barn two weeks. As much as he wanted to help us, he was very afraid. We felt that we were jeopardizing his and his family's lives. He told us he found out that there were Jewish people from the Rohatyn ghetto hiding out in the woods of the village of Łopuszna. The Hausers stayed behind, but I, my cousin and the young man (Hauser's nephew) started to go in the direction of Łopuszna. The Germans were all around. We believed that we could not make it alive to Łopuszna. We noticed a corn field with very tall corn stalks, so we decided to stay in the corn field. At night we went down to the village. We stole some food from the farmers while they were sleeping. We even killed chickens and we made a fire at night to cook the chickens. We sat in the corn field until one day we heard voices and noise coming toward us. We realized that the farmers were coming to cut the corn. Nearby was a very small wooded area; we ran there to hide. We stayed there a few days. One day we saw a Polish peasant not far from the place where we were. Somehow we knew that the peasant was not going to betray us. We asked him for the directions to get safely to Łopuszna. He told us how to get there. He also told us that Jewish people were hiding there. It took us the whole night to get to the woods of Łopuszna.

Hiding Out in the Łopuszna and Cześniki Woods, July 1943

We reached the woods of Łopuszna at daylight; adjoining were the woods of Cześniki. The village of Łopuszna was inhabited mainly by Polish farmers, contrary to the village of Cześniki where Ukrainians were the sole inhabitants. When we arrived at the woods, we were amazed; about 180 people from the Rohatyn ghetto were there. I looked around and somehow I felt safe there. The woods were dense and we were quite deep in them. It was not easy to obtain food, but somehow, at night we managed to get to the fields, adjacent to the woods, where the farmers stored potatoes and vegetables. Close-by where we were hiding, was a small waterfall which supplied us with water for drinking and washing ourselves. Nevertheless, it was very hard to preserve our hygienic requirements. Day and night we were plagued with lice.

However our "peaceful existence" did not last too long. Somehow the Ukrainians from the village of Cześniki found out that Jews were hiding in the woods; they informed the Germans. Sometime during the month of July 1943 at 7 o'clock in the morning, the Ukrainians from Cześniki together with Germans surrounded us and started to scream: "Verfluchte Juden" (damned Jews) and were shooting in all directions. I started to run. My cousin Josie Altman followed me. My school friend, Hune Wohl was also running behind us. I turned around: Ukrainians were chasing us. I heard shots, I did not see my cousin, but I saw people falling being shot. My school friend Hune Wohl fell; he was shot. At that time I tripped on a branch, I fell and I did not move. I felt somebody kick me. I did not know whether it was a Ukrainian or a German. They thought that I was shot. I was just lying there; my eyes were closed and I did not move. I heard that they were moving away from me. Not moving, I opened my eyes. Dead people were all around me. I did not hear any more shooting. It was around 2 o’clock in the afternoon. When I was sure that the Germans and the Ukrainians had left, I ran out of the woods into the nearby fields. There was a ditch and I jumped into it.

All of a sudden I saw farmers, who were working in the fields, approaching me. They most probably saw me running from the woods and jumping into the ditch. They were aware what had taken place in the woods. When they got close to me, they told me that they were going to kill me. I said to them: "I am sure that if you have God in your heart, you will not kill me; and if you do not have God in your heart, you can kill me; but before you kill me, please give me some water". I noticed that they had on their belts, canteens with water and a stone for sharpening their tools (sickles and scythes). They took off the canteens from their belts and gave me some to drink; the water was black but I drank it. I was sure that my end had come. Somehow I was not scared; I resigned myself to die. To my amazement after I drank the water, they left me and continued their work in the fields. I remained lying in the ditch. I noticed that they were ready to go home because they were packing their stuff. Then I saw them coming in my direction. I was sure that they were coming to kill me. To my amazement they brought me food and they left.

I waited until it got dark and then I slowly started to go back into the woods. Prior to these killings in the woods, we established among ourselves a kind of a whistle, so we could acknowledge one another. So, coming back into the woods, I kept making that sound. I heard that someone was answering me with the same sound. They asked for my name and I answered. They came out from under the bushes. There were six people and among them was my cousin Josie Altman. Josie told me that he saw Suchar Hauser's nephew, who was with us all the time, being shot.

Hiding Out in the Woods of Podwysokie - End of July 1943

When we came back to the woods, we were afraid to go to our previous hiding place where the killings by the Germans and Ukrainians took place. We decided to cross over to the other side of Łopuszna where the woods of Podwysokie were. The village of Podwysokie was inhabited mainly by Polish farmers. There was one house close to the woods. We took a chance and knocked on the door. A Polish farmer (I have forgotten his name) opened the door. First, when he saw us, he was very scared to let us in. Then he looked at us, crossed himself and let us in. He gave us some bread and milk. That bread and milk revived us. We kissed his hands and he started to cry with us. We told him that we would be hiding in the woods of Podwysokie for a few days. The woods of Podwysokie were not as dense as the woods of Łopuszna. We knew that eventually we would have to leave. Every evening he brought us food. One evening when he came, he told us that the next day he would be going to Rohatyn on some business, so we should not expect him to come with food. But he brought us enough bread, sufficient for the next day. When I heard that he was going to Rohatyn, I begged him to go to the house where I left my brother Samuel (Miko) and my cousin Clara Glotzer (Toni Czekay's sister). When I told him that they were in Sikorski's house, he knew how to get there. I begged him to tell my brother to come with him to join me in the woods of Podwysokie.

When that Polish farmer came back on the next day, he told me that he saw my brother and my cousin. My brother told him that he would come and join me shortly. I was under the impression that my brother did not trust the Polish farmer. I kept waiting for my brother but he never came. I even told the Polish farmer that if I left the woods of Podwysokie, I would always let him know of my whereabouts in case my brother came. After the liberation I found out that two weeks prior to the liberation my brother and my cousin were betrayed by a man who was hiding them in his house after they left Sikorski. My brother Samuel (Miko) and my cousin Clara Glotzer were killed by the Germans two weeks before the liberation. Some people who knew my brother told me that he always talked about having a brother in the woods of Podwysokie and he was planning to join him. Unfortunately he never did.

My brother Samuel (Miko) was 17 years old when he was murdered. He was a very bright boy. I looked up to him even though he was younger than I. He was a brilliant student. When my father left for the USA, he was working for my mother's brother, Morris Barban, who was a lawyer. My uncle used to tell my mother that my brother was a born lawyer. My mother was very proud of him. I was always hoping until the liberation that he would survive. But this was not the case. When I found out after the liberation what happened to him, I reported to the Soviet authority the name of the Ukrainian who betrayed my brother to the Germans (I do not remember his name). The Soviet authority deported the traitor to Siberia.

We were hiding in the Podwysokie woods for about two weeks. Finally the Polish farmer told us with regret that it was very hard for him to help us. We never knew that he was sheltering a Jewish family in his house. Their name was Acht; they had an infant. I was in touch with the Achts after the war. They emigrated to Israel. Last year Mr. Acht died.

Hiding Out Again in the Woods of Łopuszna, Autumn and Winter 1943

After hiding in the woods of Podwysokie, we found out that a family by the name of Wohl was still hiding in the woods of Łopuszna; so we figured that if they were still there, it must be safe to go back there. The woods of Łopuszna were dense; so we would be much safer there. We came back to the same place where the massacre took place before. We did not see any corpses. We found out that the people who were killed there were buried in the woods after the killings. We lived in fear, but we were more cautious than before. At night we went to the fields for potatoes. We caught some rabbits; they provided very good nourishment.

Sometime in August 1943 in the morning I woke up in my hiding spot. All of a sudden I felt that something was touching my foot. I opened my eyes and I saw a rifle near my foot. I looked up and I saw a German soldier. I was silently saying a prayer. I heard people saying this prayer before they were shot. If I remember correctly it was "Shma Yisrael" (Hear, O Israel)[25]. All of a sudden the German soldier said to us: "Do not be afraid of me (*Hab keine Angst*), I am the same as you." First I thought that he was a Jew in a German uniform. When I came out from my hiding spot I started to talk to him. I realized that he was indeed a German soldier. He told us that he and some other German soldiers deserted the German army near Kiev. They all went in different directions. He found out that Jews were hiding in the woods, so he decided to go to the woods to hide with them. His name was Carl. He said that Hitler was a madman; he could never win the war. So Carl wanted to stay with us; we let him. We felt safe with him because there was a rifle present. In the meantime Carl fell in love with a Jewish girl who was hiding with us. Her name was Sunia. Her family came to Rohatyn during the Soviet occupation. The members of her family were strictly orthodox Jews. Her father and grandfather were rabbis; her mother wore a wig. Sunia was a beautiful girl.

We stayed together until winter of 1944. In February of 1944 there was a rumor that Germans were supposed to come to the woods of Łopuszna. Carl and Sunia left; they went to the village of Podwysokie. We stayed in the woods of Łopuszna. It was snowing very hard; everything was covered in deep snow. We knew that the Germans were not able to come to the woods of Łopuszna. Unfortunately the Germans were able to go to the woods of Podwysokie where Sunia and Carl were hiding; they thought that the Germans would go to the woods of Łopuszna but not to the woods of Podwysokie.

We found out that the Germans spotted Carl and Sunia. The Germans opened fire. Carl kept shooting back (he took his rifle with him). Sunia was shot first. The farmers told us (at a later date) that Carl was very brave. He shot and killed many German soldiers. When he was wounded, Sunia was barely alive. Carl shot Sunia and then shot himself.

Sunia and her family used to live in the Rohatyn ghetto, in the house next to my cousins, Lusia and Rózia Glotzer. I used to see Sunia and her family in the ghetto. She was not allowed to look at a boy; this is how orthodox they were. The German soldier, Carl was very handsome and highly educated. Sunia knew that her parents were not alive anymore. She viewed Carl as her protector; she fell deeply in love with him and died with him.

As I predicted, the Germans did not come to the woods of Łopuszna. Everything was covered in deep snow. On one side, the falling snow was an advantage to us; when we went down to the village

[25] The first words of a Jewish confession of faith proclaiming the absolute unity of God. Recited at daily prayers and before death.

for food, our foot prints were immediately covered with falling snow. Surviving was very hard; we did not have warm clothing. My cousin Josie Altman and I shared one pair of shoes. When I went for food, he stayed behind. We took turns wearing the shoes. There was a man hiding with us; his name was Greenberg. He had a wife. Since he had shoes, he used to go with me to the village for food.

Tragedy in Our Hiding Place in the Woods of Łopuszna, March 1944; Return to the Woods, April 1944

One morning in the beginning of March 1944 I woke up and I reminded myself that our sack, which we used for carrying potatoes, was torn. We did not have a needle or thread in our hiding place. Since we had only one pair of shoes, Greenberg and I left our hiding place; my cousin and Greenberg's wife stayed in the hiding place. We went to the Wohls' hiding place; we knew that there was a needle and thread. The Wohls' place was approximately 2 km from us. We started to sew the sack. Suddenly we heard shots. It was very hard to distinguish in the woods from what direction the shots were coming because of the echo in the woods. Somehow I had a feeling that the shots were coming from the direction of our hiding place.

We started to go back, but we were very cautious. As we came closer to our hiding place, we saw a Ukrainian; he wore a uniform. These Ukrainians called themselves "Banderowce"[26] after their leader Bandera. Their mission was to destroy Poles and Jews. He noticed us and started to shoot. We were running. He just kept shooting but he did not run after us. We knew that there were more of them inside our hiding place. The snow around our hiding place was stained with blood.

We ran back to the Wohls; we told them what was happening. I looked at my coat which I was wearing; it was pierced with burned bullet holes. The bullets did not get to me because the coat was too large for my size. We ran out with the Wohls into a ditch. Deep down in my heart I knew that all the others were dead including my cousin Josie Altman, Greenberg's wife and approximately 14 people who were hiding with us.

Josie Altman was 18 years old. We were very close. All our lives we lived in the same house. His mother Malkah Altman was my father's sister. His father Max Altman emigrated to the USA together with my father. Josie was a very good student. Being with him I still felt that I had a family. After this tragedy I found myself completely alone.

When it got dark we ran out of the woods to the outskirts of a village. We noticed a house: we knocked on the door. Nobody answered. We walked in. The house was not occupied. We hid there for about 2 weeks. One day the owner returned; he was a Polish man. When he saw us, he was more scared than we were. He told us that we could stay in the house, because he lived in Łopuszna; once in a while he came to that house.

Around April 1944, when the snow started to melt, we went back to the woods. Somehow we felt safer in the woods in spite of all the happenings there. Food was constantly a problem. We ate one meal a day, some bread and a potato. What kept us going was the good news about the war which we heard from the Polish people. They told us that the Russian army was as close as Tarnopol, some 70 km from us. That news gave us hope that perhaps we would survive.

One night, at the end of April 1944, we attempted to go down to the village. The village inhabitants were Polish people. One Pole in particular (I do not remember his name), helped us with food. If not for him, we would have died of hunger. There were other Poles in that village who helped us

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[26] [*Banderowce* (or more commonly *Banderowcy*) is the Polish spelling of the Ukrainian word *Banderivtsi* - or *Banderites* in English - named for Stepan Bandera, leader of the generally younger and more radical faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) from 1940. The term was used by both opponents and supporters of the OUN-B/OUN-R. -Ed.]

with a good word about the war, which gave us hope. On this particular night, as we were going down, we heard shots, all of a sudden we saw flames of fire. The Ukrainians found out that the Polish people were helping the Jews. They shot the Polish people and burned their homes. There were children and older people who were shot. It was very shocking to us. Since these people lost their lives because of us, we felt guilty. When we saw them shot around their burned homes, we felt rage and disgust. We had a feeling that our ordeal was coming to an end. The people who helped us to survive should not have been punished. Somehow I knew in my heart that I would have to take revenge for all what happened. I felt that I had nothing to lose. At that time I was still hoping that my brother Samuel was alive.

We went back to the woods. One day while baking potatoes, we heard the noise of planes above us. The planes started to shoot (evidently when they saw the smoke), but to our big joy we noticed Russian star on the planes. We knew that the end of our lives as animals on the run was close. We waited from day to day to hear from the Polish people that the Soviet army was near us. We had to be very careful, since we knew that the Banderowce were on a rampage. They knew that their days were numbered, so they were trying to do as much carnage as they could. Approximately at the end of May 1944, the Soviet army started to advance very fast in our direction from Tarnopol. We were still hiding, hoping that the Soviets would get to us before the Banderowce could. We went from place to place, trying to keep safe.

The Soviet Army Arrival at the Village of Łopuszna, June 6, 1944[27]

On June 4 and 5, 1944 we heard shots. We presumed that the fighting was going on very close to us. On June 6, 1944 the shooting subsided. We sent a young boy down to the village. He was 10 years old. His name was Kimmel. (In 1970 when I went to Canada to attend the Bar Mitzvah ceremony of my cousin Lusia Glotzer's son Philip, Kimmel came to see me. Surprisingly he did not remember or he blocked out of his mind what had happened to us during those times.) He was very young, so he was not afraid to go down. We were eagerly waiting for him to come back.

All of a sudden we saw him running and shouting to us to come out of our hiding place. We could hardly comprehend what he was saying. But seeing his joyful face, we knew that he was coming with good news. When he calmed down, he told us that the Russian soldiers liberated the village of Łopuszna. We all started to cry, not believing that we were free. We started to run very fast towards the village. We still had to be very careful not to be caught by the Banderowce.

When we finally went down to the village of Łopuszna, we approached the Russian soldiers. We told them that we were Jewish and what had happened to us. Somehow they did not seem to be much impressed or surprised by what we were telling them. When we were sitting in the woods, very often we were talking among ourselves that if by any chance we would survive, we presumed that people would put us on a pedestal, pity us and would try to help us. But now, when we were free, we related our story to the soldiers who were our liberators - and they just stared at us with blank looks.

Later we learned the reason for their response to us. They had also lost most of their loved ones to the claws of German barbarians. They told us about their experience of a village with people being burned alive before their eyes, about the destruction by the German animals before retreating, and about thousands of Russian civilians who were killed. Then we realized that we were not the only ones who suffered during this terrible war.

We were still hungry. Unfortunately the Soviet soldiers could not help us with food as they were hungry themselves. We had to go back to the Polish farmers for food. They were very kind to us and gave us milk and bread.

We could not go back to Rohatyn, because there were rumors that Germans were still in Rohatyn, and there was a possibility that the Soviet army might have to retreat. We decided to play it safe and go back to the village of Brzeżany which was closer to Tarnopol; we were sure that Tarnopol had been under Soviet occupation for some time.

When we approached some more Soviet soldiers, it was the same all over. Their response was the same. The Soviet army was in bad shape. The soldiers were hungry; they looked almost like us. They did not look to us like the victorious liberators we had imagined.

[27] [Other Rohatyn Jewish memoirs and historical accounts date the Soviet Army push westward to Rohatyn in July 1944. -Ed.]

Return to Rohatyn - End of June 1944

We were in Brzeżany for about two weeks. When we heard that Lwów was liberated, we knew that Rohatyn was also under Soviet occupation.[28] We decided to go back to Rohatyn. We still had to be very careful since the Banderowce were active in their killings.

Luckily the Soviet soldiers permitted us to follow them. Once in a while they even gave us a ride along their way in their trucks. They dropped us off in the outskirts of Rohatyn which was called Babińce. We walked to Rohatyn and the first thing I noticed was a man walking with a cane and holding on to the fences. When I took a closer look, I recognized him. He was a very good friend of mine; his name was Bernard Kessler. I was shocked to see him in this condition. He looked at us; he was surprised how well we looked compared to him. His first words were "What kind of resort are you coming from?" At that time we looked much better than we had looked at the time when we first came out of the woods. We were fed by the Polish people, and also the Soviet soldiers in Brzeżany had more food than the soldiers in Łopuszna. Our complexion was very good because we were mostly outdoors.

My first question to Bernard was whether he knew anything about my brother Samuel. He knew. First he hesitated to tell me. From his expression and the tears in his eyes, I knew what he would tell me. Finally he took my hands in his hands and told me that my brother was killed two weeks prior to the liberation. All my hopes were gone. I then realized that I was the only surviving sibling. First, I was sorry that I survived, but then a thought came to my mind that I still had a father in the USA. Hopefully someday I would join him. When Bernard looked at my face, he wanted to cheer me up somehow. He told me with joy that he had been hiding together with my cousins Lusia and Rózia and their father Shiye Glotzer. He told me that they were alive and where they were presently living. I hugged him and we both cried. Bernard left but he promised to be in touch with us.

I went to the place where Bernard told me that I would find my cousins and their father. They were in a house previously owned by a man named Amarand. There were more people in that house who also survived in Rohatyn. When I walked in, it took me a long time to recognize my cousins and their father. My cousins were very pretty girls before the war. Now they were skin and bones; their father looked terrible. This reunion was very hard to describe. We did not know whether to laugh or to cry. After we calmed down, they told me that they were with 11 people hiding in a basement of a government building in Rohatyn. German soldiers were upstairs. The janitor of this building supplied them with food. First, I thought how good-hearted this janitor was. Then I found out from other people who were in that hiding place, of his "good" will to save Jews. He sexually abused the women; they were at his disposal like trapped animals. Every day he threatened them that if they would not perform to his liking, he would send them upstairs to the German soldiers. (My cousins Rózia and Lusia Glotzer never recuperated from their ordeal. They were sick all the time. They emigrated to Canada and became very wealthy, but they constantly carried their experiences with them which affected their health, subsequently in their lives. Lusia died in April 1999 and Rózia has all sorts of ailments.)

Shiye Glotzer got very sick when he started to eat food. His stomach shrank from lack of food and when he started to eat he developed severe diarrhea. He almost died. I took him to the Catholic hospital; I was with him day and night trying to help him to get better. It was "touch and go" but he

[28] [Other accounts date the liberation of Rohatyn by the Soviet Army as July 23 or 24, 1944. -Ed.]

survived. I took him back to his daughters and we all lived together. My cousins became like my sisters.

When I think back, we were all in shock and we did not discuss what happened. We still could not believe that we were alive; we did not know whether to be glad or not. I was grieving for my brother. I went to the man who was hiding him prior to his killing. The man told me that my brother went looking for food and was killed. I knew that he was lying. There was plenty of food in that house. People told me that before the Germans were about to leave, he betrayed all the Jews hiding there. I went to Soviet authorities, I told them that he was a traitor. I had to tell them that he killed Russian soldiers. They would not punish him for just betraying Jews. I did succeed; he was deported to Siberia.

My coming back to Rohatyn was a very sad experience. Every corner reminded me of my family. Many times I felt sorry that I survived. Being together with Lusia, Rózia and their father brought back memories of our entire family. I had nightmares at night. I was dreaming that I was in the woods and the Germans and Ukrainians were chasing me. When I woke up I did not know whether I should be happy that I was alive.

When we were in the woods I imagined our liberation quite differently. Perhaps subconsciously I was hoping that when I came "home to Rohatyn" I would find my family. But this was not the case.

Service in the Russian Army, July 1944 - March 1946

I stayed together with my cousins Lusia and Rózia and their father Shiye Glotzer for about one month.

In July 1944 I received a notice to report to the Russian Recruiting Office. I was drafted into the Russian army. I never expected this to happen after what I had gone through. There were about 20 Jewish young men and also a group of Ukrainians who were drafted. In a way we, the Jewish men, could have escaped from being drafted, but our conscience did not allow us to do that. We felt that after what the German animals did to our people, we had a moral obligation to participate in destroying them.

We had to go on foot, as far as to the outskirts of Przemyśl. There the Russian military officials gave us uniforms and shipped us on military trucks to near Rzeszów, Krosno and Jasło. There we were trained how to handle weapons. This area was behind the front lines. We were stationed there until about January 1945.

By then the Russian offensive had started. The Germans were retreating rapidly, but there was still heavy fighting going on. We advanced quite fast through Poland until we came to the German border. We took many German prisoners. We had an order not to kill German civilians. But we ignored this order. We felt that we were doing it for our killed families. Finally we made it to a town near Katowice named Rybnik. In the town of Rybnik very strong fighting was going on - practically from street to street, from building to building. We were in a three story building; I was on the first floor of that building. Suddenly an artillery shell hit the building and exploded on the first floor where I was.

I was wounded in my left hand. I looked around for somebody to help me. I noticed that everybody around me was killed. Many of the killed men were my friends with whom I had come from Rohatyn. I was in terrible pain. Then medics came and I was taken away to the back of the fighting lines to a military hospital. They bandaged my wounded hand. I stayed there for a few days. Then I was shipped to another military hospital in Katowice. From Katowice they transferred me to a hospital in Lwów. I was in the Lwów hospital for about two weeks.

My cousin Lusia Glotzer found out what happened to me. She managed to come to Lwów. It was amazing that she made it to Lwów. When I saw her I could not believe my eyes. The Ukrainians were all over rebelling against the occupation of the land by the Soviets. She really sacrificed her life to come to me. She went with me to the officials of the hospital. She appealed to them to give me a leave for a few days so that she could take me to Rohatyn. The hospital officials granted me a leave. It was a very dangerous journey, but somehow we made it safely.

I stayed with my cousins until the end of the war, May 8, 1945. After May 1945 I was recalled back to my division. I reported to the superiors in Lwów. There were rumors that we would be shipped to Japan. These rumors did not materialize, as Japan surrendered in the meantime. They sent us to the fields to help the peasants to work on the harvest. By then the Soviets had taken over the property of the farmers. Then we were shipped to Bukovina, a region in Romania. From Bukovina we were transferred back to Lwów.

This was already the end of September 1945. From Lwów they shipped us to Sambor. We had no idea what to expect in Sambor. When we arrived there we were assigned to guard German war

prisoners. That was what I was hoping for all the time when I was in the woods running for my life like an animal. Here I was in a Russian uniform with a rifle guarding my enemy who caused so much pain to me and my people. I could not believe my good fortune. My time for revenge had come. First of all I and other Jewish soldiers told the German prisoners that we were Jewish. Just to see the fear in their eyes was a pleasure. To watch them being hungry and cold gave us a lift in surviving to this moment. The Russian superiors watched the Jewish soldiers very closely; they knew what we were capable of doing to these animals. But watching them like this was a revenge nevertheless. We knew that when it became colder, they would be dying like dogs. We did have control over their food rations; they were dying of hunger.

I was in Sambor until the beginning of 1946. We Jewish soldiers found out that by law we were Polish citizens; therefore we could be discharged from the Russian army. We registered ourselves with the Russian officials. One night in the beginning of 1946, we were sent to the outskirts of Sambor; we were told to go to the woods to look for Banderowce. All of a sudden a Russian soldier came riding on a horse and calling out my name. When I approached him he told me that I was ordered to report to my division in Sambor. I went back to Sambor to my division superiors. I reported to them and told them my name. I asked why I had an order to report. Somehow nobody knew. That was very typical of the Russian army; the left hand did not know what the right hand was doing. I was very tired, so I went to sleep.

In the morning I was awakened by my superiors. They asked me whether I wanted to leave the Russian army, and to go to Poland. I was afraid to tell them that this was what I wanted (for fear of being considered as an anti-Soviet). But I told them that I was very tired and my family was very anxious to see me. They gave me a loaf of black bread and two herrings and told me "to leave immediately and that I was officially discharged". I hitchhiked back to Rohatyn; it was around March 1946.

Return to Rohatyn from the Army

I arrived at the railway station in Rohatyn. I did not know whether any of the Jewish people were still in Rohatyn. When I arrived I did not know in what direction to go. First of all I was all alone. I was scared, as I knew that the Banderowce were still active in their murders. The railway station was at the outskirts of the town. I approached a Ukrainian and he told me that there was one Jewish family in Rohatyn. Their name was Stryjer. (I knew them from before the war). The Ukrainian told me that the Stryjers were staying in the electric power house. I was familiar with the electric power house since I used to work there during the German occupation. Mr. Stryjer's first name was Mocie; he had a sister. The Stryjers had two sons; one son and Mr. Stryjer were in Russia during the war. Mrs. Stryjer with another son were hiding with Lusia, Rózia and their father Shiye Glotzer. One day the Stryjers' son went to look for food and he was murdered. When I came to the electric power house (*elektrownia*), the Stryjers were very happy to see me. They told me that a transport was supposed to come and to take all of us to Poland. (The Soviet Union had annexed to its territory eastern Poland including Rohatyn.)

In the meantime I was trying to sell our family's house, as I did not have any money. It was very difficult to sell the house even though I had people who were interested in buying it. Fortunately since I was in the Russian army, I had some "clout" and I managed to sell our house. I was happy as I had some money. I met a man who worked in a flour mill; he gave me flour which I took to Lwów. I sold it and split the profits with him. I made quite a bit of more money.

Before the transport was supposed to come for us, we went to the two mass graves where about 17,500 Jews were buried. The first mass grave was for people who were murdered on the 20th of March 1942. As I wrote previously, I was forced to bury the people. The second mass grave was for the people who were buried there after June 6, 1943 at the liquidation of the ghetto. My mother and my brother Moshe Emanuel were buried there. My brother Samuel who was murdered two weeks prior to the liberation, was probably in that grave as well: all murdered Jews were gathered and thrown into this grave. The Ukrainians pointed out that mass grave to us since we were not present in town at that time. (I had escaped to the woods and the Stryjers were in hiding.) The grave was so huge, we could not believe our eyes. It was a very traumatic experience that I shall never forget. The three of us sat on the ground crying and reciting Kaddish[29] over and over again.

Then we went to the other mass grave where I buried the people on March 21, 22 and 23, 1942. I was sitting there alone as the Stryjers were wandering around the grave. I also kept reciting Kaddish there over and over again. Before my eyes I saw a vision of what I had witnessed on those cold March days of 1942. With heavy hearts we went back to the electric power house. We started to get ready for our departure.

[29] A Jewish prayer recited in the daily ritual of the synagogue and by mourners at public services after the death of a close relative.

Departure from Rohatyn in May 1946 to Poland and Germany

In the beginning of May 1946 we departed for Poland on a freight train. Some more people were gathered on the way. The train was going to Rychbach (Reichenbach). Today this town is named Dzierżoniów. The Stryjers and I got off near Kraków. The Stryjers found out that their son was in the Russian army and he was stationed in Poznań. We boarded a passenger train and went to Poznań. In Poznań nobody could give us any information as to the whereabouts of the Stryjers' son. We decided to go to Rychbach where, we knew, our people had gone. When I arrived at Rychbach I met with my cousins Lusia and Rózia and their father Shiye. I was glad to see them. They looked so much better than in Rohatyn. They owned a grocery store; I helped in the store. We were waiting to leave for Germany, US Zone. Around July 1946 we all left for Szczecin; from Szczecin we were smuggled across the border to Germany, French Zone and then to US Zone, Displaced Persons (DP) camp Schlachtensee in Berlin.

The Stryjers stayed in Poland, still hoping to find their son. I kept in contact with them. Subsequently they emigrated to Israel in 1948. They got together with their son who was in Władysław Sikorski's army.[30]

We never forgot our experience of going to the graves in Rohatyn in 1946. When I went back to Rohatyn with my wife, Bea, in June 1998 with a group of fifty people, the event of my going there to say Kaddish in 1946 brought back all the memories. The Stryjers were not alive anymore to go with us. The Rohatyner people residing in Israel organized the trip. Two monuments were erected on the two sites of the mass graves.

[30] Władysław Sikorski (1881~1943) was a military leader and Prime Minister of the Polish government in exile during WWII, until his death in a plane crash. He re-established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1941, and in 1943 created the Polish II Corps under the command of Władysław Anders.

Summer 1947 - June 1949 in Bayreuth, Bavaria (Germany)

Military trucks came to the DP Camp Schlachtensee and took us to Bavaria (southeastern region of Germany). They left us in a special gathering point (I do not remember its name). They asked us where we wanted to go from there. Since Lusia, Rózia and Shiye Glotzer were in the town of Bayreuth, I decided to go there and join them. Some of the people from our transport went to various DP Camps nearby. Before I left Poland I heard from my father. He had found out that one of his sons was alive. He tried to contact me. Since I was not in any one place very long, he had difficulties. Before I left for Bavaria I received a telegram from my father; I answered that I would send my address when I arrived in Bavaria. When I arrived at Bayreuth, my cousins as usual were very happy to see me.

Promptly I sent a telegram to my father. A few days later I received a message from the Bayreuth post office that my father was trying to reach me by phone. Bayreuth was not equipped to receive overseas telephone calls. They referred me to Nürnberg where I could receive telephone calls from my father. I had to travel seven hours by train to Nürnberg. But I did speak with my father quite a few times. He was very anxious for me to come to the USA and join him. By that time he had an idea what had happened to our family. He and other Rohatyners erected a monument in memory of the victims of Rohatyn. The monument is in the Mt. Hebron cemetery in Queens, N.Y. (the same cemetery where my father is now buried). I was anxiously waiting in the town of Bayreuth for my departure to the USA.

Bayreuth is a very famous town. It is the birth place of the German composer Richard Wagner who was Hitler's favorite composer. Hitler established many festivals (*Festspiele*) there. He had his personal box in the Richard Wagner theater; this became my favorite place in Bayreuth. I and my cousins used to sit in Hitler's private box and listen to the music. Bayreuth is a very picturesque town; it is surrounded by mountains where Hitler had his residence. We lived in a house owned by a German Herr Meister. He used to point out to us all the places of interest. It was a satisfaction to us to visit all these places which Hitler treasured and now we, the Jews, were there.

In the meantime I kept receiving packages and money from my father. He was working hard to bring me over to him. It was complicated as I was not a minor anymore who would be allowed to join a father. I even changed my birthday, but it dragged on and on. Whenever I spoke to my father I always had a feeling that he was not in good health; of course he never admitted it to me. I felt that he was very impatient that it was taking so long to bring me over to him. I kept reassuring him that the day of my coming to him was very near. All the red tape seemed to take forever. Finally during president Truman's administration the Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act (1948) which allowed the DP's to emigrate to the USA provided that they had a sponsor. This of course was not a problem for me.

During my ordeal the only thing that kept me going was the hope that someday I will go to my father, my only parent and close relative. I was planning that I would be able to tell him what I had gone through to survive. Somehow subconsciously I felt that something was wrong. I kept pushing away my thoughts but they kept coming back. The last letter which I received was not written by my father. That kept bothering me. During the High Holidays[31] I went with my cousins and their father to some people where they conducted prayers. They handed me a prayer book. As I opened it,

[31] The most important Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

the first prayer that came before my eyes was the Kaddish. No matter how I turned the pages of the prayer book, I kept coming to the page of the Kaddish. I tried not to think about this episode, but it kept coming to my mind.

My cousin Rózia with her boyfriend Motek Unglick (he changed his name to Osher) emigrated to Palestine (today Israel). My cousin Lusia and her father Shiye emigrated to Canada. I was going through the process of finally emigrating to the USA.

Tragic Discovery - My Early Years in the USA

In June 1949 I arrived at Bremerhaven (a German port). After some more red tape I boarded a military ship, the General Hauser, which was supposed to take me to New York. When I arrived at the pier in New York, many relatives came to meet me. I had never seen any of my aunts or my cousins before. My aunts emigrated to the USA before I was even born and my cousins were young or some born in the USA. I kept looking for my father. Nobody was willing to break the terrible news to me that on April 2, 1949 my father had passed away. I considered this my second Holocaust. Later I found out that his health had deteriorated when he learned what happened to his wife, sons and the entire family.

My aunt Rose Altman (my father's sister) with whom my father lived until his death, decided that Toni Czekay's brother-in-law, Herbert Fleissig should be the one to tell me this tragic news. Herbert Fleissig was married to Toni Czekay's sister Adele (Adele and her son were murdered in the Holocaust). They felt that Herbert, feeling his own grief, could tell me about my father's death. By that time nobody had to tell me. I knew that I had lost my only close relative, my father.

I sat Shivah and then I went to the temple to say Kaddish. I arranged for a monument to be erected on my father's grave. I just could not reconcile with the fact that I could not see my father alive even for a short time. I even regretted that I had come to the USA. My aunts and cousins were trying to snap me out of my depression but everything was in vain. I felt myself drifting from day to day. I lived in the same room where my father had with my aunt Rose and her daughter Etta. I felt that they could not understand me. I even did not try to tell them what I had gone through. In those days none of the survivors were talking about their experiences during the Holocaust; nobody would have believed it anyway.

I believed that if I told somebody about my ordeal, they would think that I was a liar. Hitler was right when he said that he would make the destruction of the Jews on such a big scale that nobody would believe it. The Holocaust survivors kept burying their experiences deep in their souls. Once in a while we, the survivors, would talk between ourselves about our experiences. We were therefore comfortable being among the newcomers, as the Americans were calling us "greeners”.

Therefore when I met my future wife, Bronia Walzer, in 1950, I felt comfortable to share my experiences with her. I felt that she understood me. I kept in touch with Lusia and her father. I visited them in Canada. They also did not discuss their ordeals during the war years. As a matter of fact Lusia died on Passover 1999 without telling her children and grandchildren how the three of them had survived. There was always a bond between us. When Lusia died I suffered a big loss.

My first year in the USA was very turbulent. I just could not find myself. The nightmares of my past continued constantly. Somehow with the help of my wife and her parents I created a successful and a productive life. When I became a father in 1954, our daughter Terry, who we named after my mother Toba, was a precious gift to us. Then in 1958 our son Mitchell was born; we named him after my father Mayer. I then realized that my struggles to survive were not in vain. I consider myself a lucky and a happy man.

I became a grandfather to Jeffrey and Michael.

Somehow Hitler's final solution was not so final. I consider my children and my grandchildren a miracle of my survival.

I believe in the victory of good over evil.

ברוך השם - Baruch Hashem - Thank God
Jack Glotzer
July 2000

EPILOGUE

On June 10, 1998 two monuments were dedicated in Rohatyn; one monument was erected in the outskirts of the town, Babińce; 3500 Jews were killed there on March 20, 1942. The second monument was erected in Rohatyn near a brick kiln (*cegielnia*). Jews were brought there from the surrounding towns and villages together with Jews from the Rohatyn ghetto after its liquidation on June 6, 1943. Jack Glotzer's mother and his youngest brother, Moshe Emanuel are buried there. The exact number of Jews buried there is not known; the estimated number of Jews murdered by the Germans between 1941 and 1944 and buried there is 14,000[32].

Beatrice and Jack Glotzer made a trip to Rohatyn for the dedication of the two monuments. The dedication of the two monuments was attended by people from three continents which included survivors, second and third generations of descendants, local citizens, local officials, a rabbi, priests and the press. Eulogies were delivered in several languages (Yiddish, Hebrew, English, Polish and Ukrainian); Kaddish and "El Malei Rahamim" were recited. Jack Glotzer said Kaddish for his family at the monuments. The pilgrims were addressed by a local mayor (who promised to protect and preserve the two monuments and the mass graves), a Roman Catholic priest, a Greek Orthodox priest and local citizens.

The Jews buried in the mass graves are men, women and children who were not only brutally murdered by the German barbarians and their collaborators, but were never given a proper burial with monuments indicating their identities. They were mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters with names and relatives. Their lives and identities were taken away from them in order to completely obliterate their existence.

But we shall never forgive and shall always remember them.

REST IN PEACE.

Alexander Walzer
July 2000

וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם בְּבֵיתִי וּבְחוֹמֹתַי יָד וָשֵׁם טוֹב מִבָּנִים וּמִבָּנוֹת שֵׁם עוֹלָם אֶתֵּן־לוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּרֵת: ס

I will give them a memorial and eternal renown which will not be terminated.

(Isaiah 56:5)

[32] [The number of dead buried at this location is still unknown, but currently estimated at more than 4,000. -Ed.]

EL MALEI RAHAMIM

אֵל מָלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בַּמְּרוֹמִים הַמְצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה בַּמַּעֲלוֹת קְדוֹשִׁים וּטְהוֹרִים כְּזֹהַר הָרָקִיעַ מַזְהִירִים לְנִשְׁמוֹת יַקִּירֵנוּ וּקְדוֹשֵׁינוּ שֶׁהָלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם. אָנָּא בַּעַל הָרַחֲמִים הַסְתִּירֵם בְּצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים וּצְרֹר בִּצְרוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נִשְׁמָתָם. יהוה הוּא נַחֲלָתָם וְיָנוּחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכָּבָם וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן

O God, exalted and full of compassion, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence, among the holy and the pure, to the souls of our brethren of the House of Israel who have gone to their eternal home. Master of mercy, we beseech You, shelter them in the shadow of Your wings forever. May their souls be bound up in the bond of life. The Lord is their portion. May they rest in peace. And let us say: Amen.

A NOTE ABOUT THE TEXT

This second edition of Jack Glotzer's memoir of Rohatyn, "I Survived the German Holocaust Against All Odds", is a lightly-edited version of his original, which was never published formally but was circulated among his family and friends. A copy of the original typescript memoir, first edited and assembled by Jack's wife Beatrice (Bea) and her brother Alexander Walzer, is also among the Jack and Beatrice Glotzer Papers archived at the United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum (accession number 1997.44).

For this edition, we have retained every sentence of the original text in its original sequence and form. Where we have added, deleted, or changed words, we have attempted to preserve Jack's voice in its original clarity, tone, and emphasis. Jack was a native Polish speaker who learned English after his arrival in America at age 24, and he retained some common Polish accents in his English throughout his life. Most of the small edits we have made to the text correct definite or indefinite articles, or change prepositions and verb tenses, to minimize distraction for native-English readers and others without Slavic language backgrounds.

We have also footnoted a small number of factual errors in historical dates, to indicate what we believe the correct dates to be, from other survivor memoirs and from other references. These and other editorial remarks are indicated in the footnotes by square brackets; all other footnotes are from Jack's original text, or are incorporated into the text from a multi-language glossary Jack had added at the end of his original.

Proper names of people, places, and organizations retain Jack's original (usually Polish) spellings in this edition. We have chosen to return a few place names which Jack anglicized back to their originals in Polish (e.g. Cracow to Kraków, Lupuszna to Łopuszna). Most of the places around Rohatyn have different names today in transliterated Ukrainian, but all of them can be located from their interwar Polish names.

Some of the maps which were included as appendices in the original memoir have been replaced with clearer non-commercial equivalents. The illustrations created by hand by Jack, Bea, and Alexander have been cleaned and revised to fit the current pagination.

Our intent has been to make this remarkable memoir accessible without restrictions to everyone who can appreciate the early life experience of this important witness, and to support Jack's belief in the victory of good over evil.

Mitchell Glotzer, Marla Raucher Osborn, and Jay Osborn
June 2018

APPENDICES

Jack Glotzer's Family Tree

Page of Remembrance of Jack Glotzer's Family, with Addendum

Map of Rohatyn and Surrounding Areas

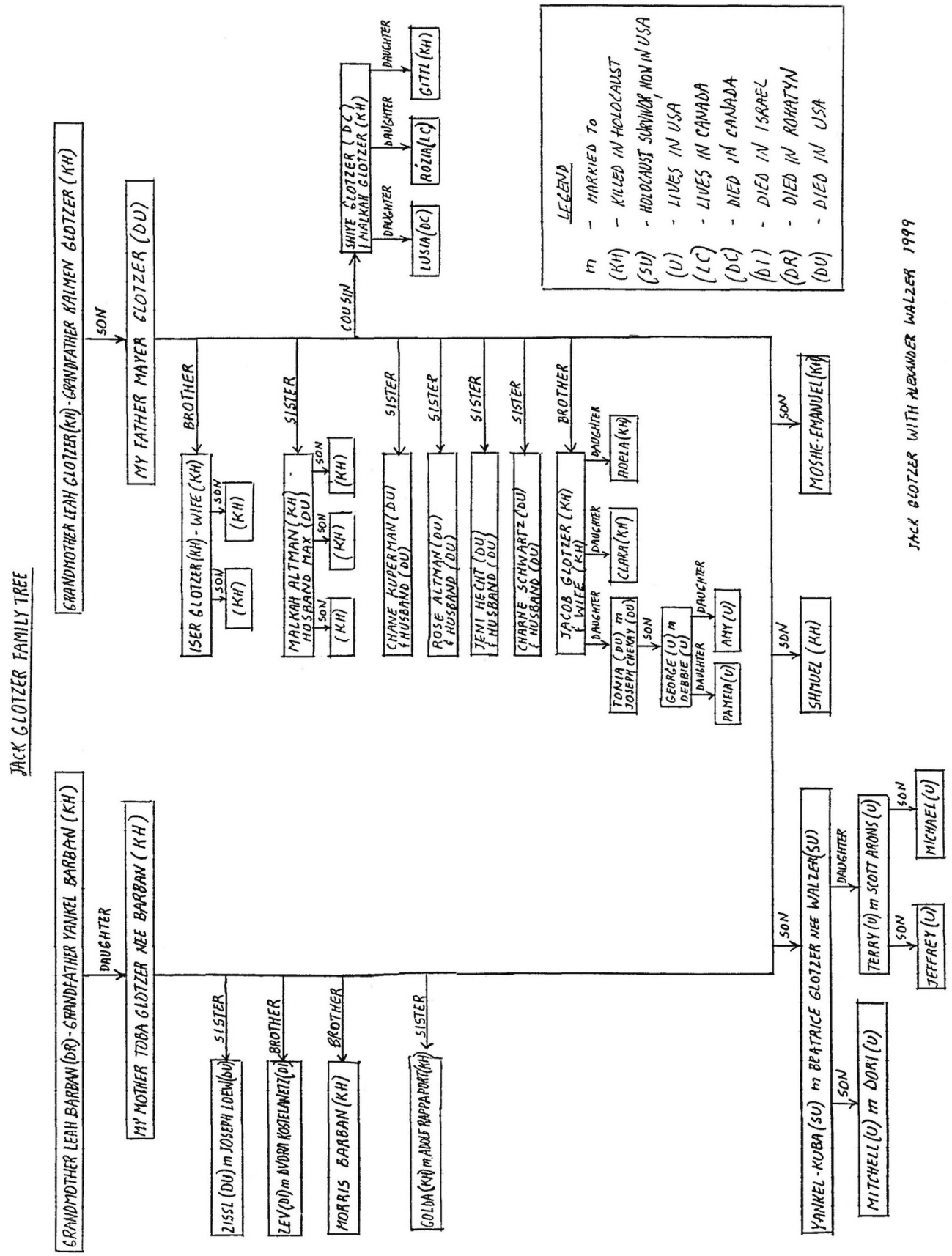
Memory Map of Rohatyn and Surrounding Areas Relevant to the Story

Map of the Partition of Poland - September 1939

Map of Pre-War and Post-War Poland

Map of Post-War Germany

Jack Glotzer's Family Tree

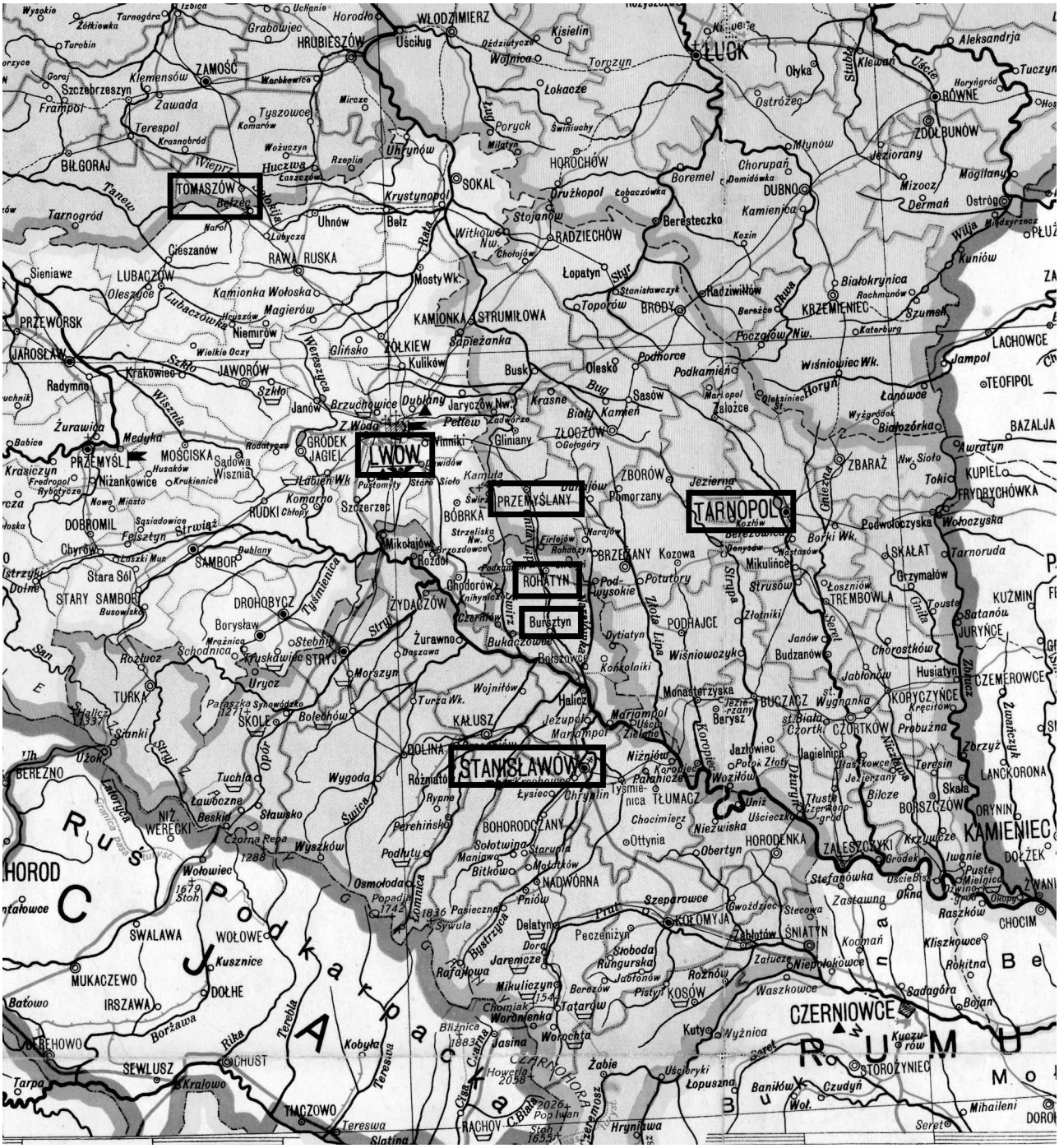


Page of Remembrance of Jack Glotzer's Family

Addendum to Page of Remembrance: Translation of Hebrew Words

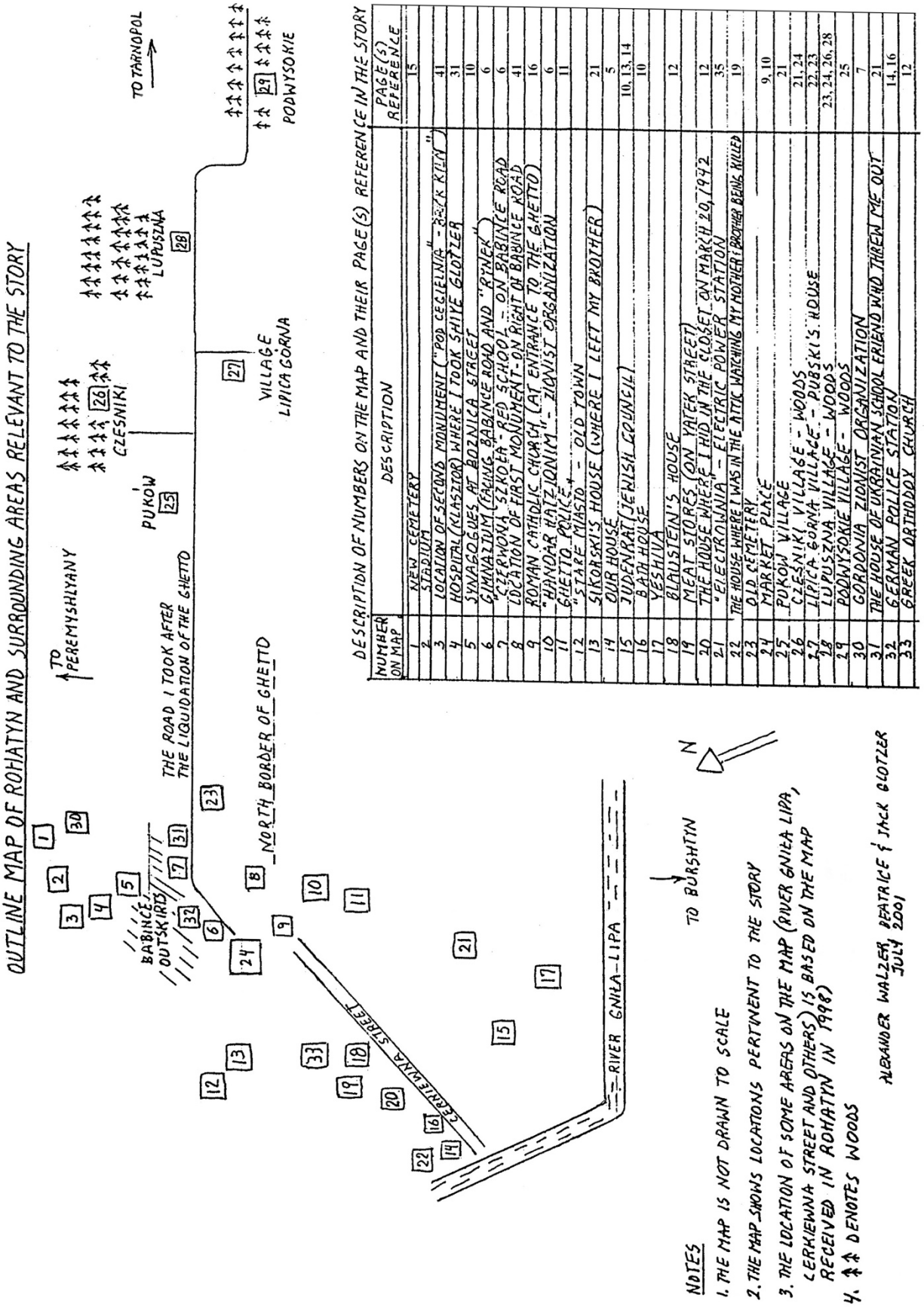
זכר	to remember
עולם	eternity
של	of
יקרים	dear
קדושים	martyrs
משפחה	family
אבי	my father
אמי	my mother
סבתי	my grandmother
סבי	my grandfather
אחי	my brother
דודי	my uncle
דודתי	my aunt
בן-דודי	my cousin (male)
בת-דודי	my cousin (female)
ובעל	and husband
בן	son
אשתו	his wife
שנספתה	who perished (female, singular)
שנספה	who perished (male, singular)
שנספו	who perished (plural)
שנפטרה	who died (female, singular)
שנפטר	who died (male, singular)
שנפטרו	who died (plural)
שואה	Shoah (Holocaust)
ארצות הברית	United States of America
שני בנים	two sons
שלושה בנים	three sons
שתי בנות	two daughters
שלוש בנות	three daughters

Map of Rohatyn and Surrounding Areas



Excerpt from a Romer & Wąsowicz map of the Second Republic of Poland, ca. 1930. Originally created for an atlas series produced by the Eugeniusz Romer Cartographic Institute, printed in Warsaw and Lwów. Digital scan sourced from the web portal of the Digital Library of the University of Wrocław. Annotations added to match a map from Jack Glotzer's original memoir.

Memory Map of Rohatyn and Surrounding Areas Relevant to the Story



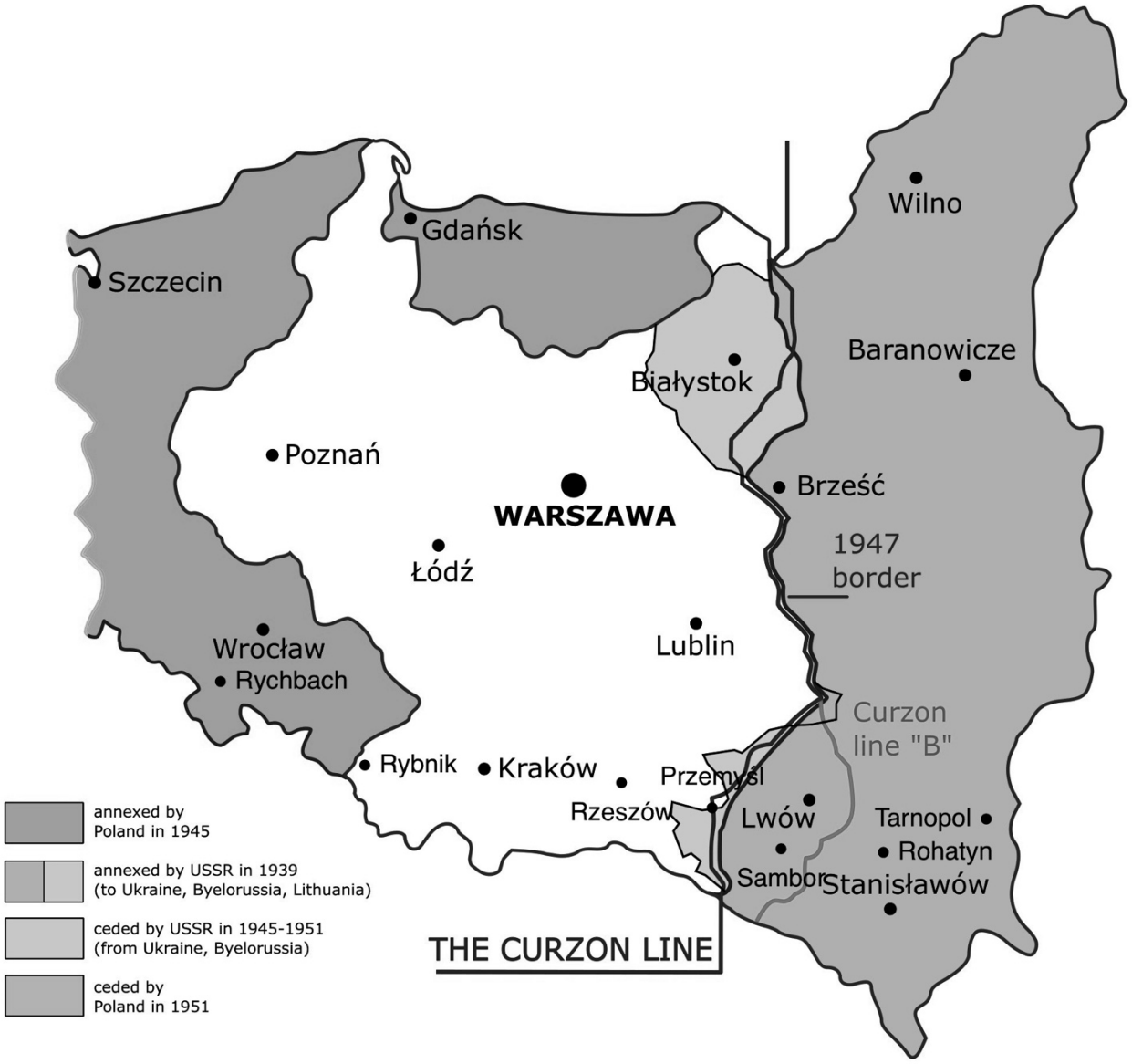
DESCRIPTION OF NUMBERS ON THE MAP AND THEIR PAGE(S) REFERENCE IN THE STORY

NUMBER ON MAP	DESCRIPTION	PAGE(S) REFERENCE
1	NEW CEMETERY	15
2	STADIUM	
3	LOCATION OF SECOND MONUMENT ("POD CEGIELNIA" - BRICK KILN")	41
4	HOSPITAL (KLASZTOR) WHERE I TOOK SHIKE GLOTZER	31
5	SYNAGOGUES AT BOZNICA STREET	10
6	GIMNAZJUM (FALING BABINCE ROAD AND "RYNEK")	6
7	CZERWONA SZKOŁA - RED SCHOOL - ON BABINCE ROAD	6
8	LOCATION OF FIRST MONUMENT - ON RIGHT ON BABINCE ROAD	41
9	ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (AT ENTRANCE TO THE GHETTO)	16
10	"HANDAR HATZIONIM" - ZIONIST ORGANIZATION	6
11	GHETTO POLICE +	11
12	"STARE MIASTO" - OLD TOWN	
13	SIKORSKI'S HOUSE (WHERE I LEFT MY BROTHER)	21
14	OUR HOUSE	5
15	JUDENRAT (JEWISH COUNCIL)	10, 13, 14
16	BATH HOUSE	10
17	YESHIVA	
18	BLAUSTEIN'S HOUSE	12
19	MEAT STORES (ON YATEK STREET)	
20	THE HOUSE WHERE I HID IN THE CLOSET ON MARCH 20, 1942	12
21	"ELECTRONIA" - ELECTRIC POWER STATION	35
22	THE HOUSE WHERE I WAS IN THE ATTIC WATCHING MY MOTHER & BROTHER BEING KILLED	19
23	OLD CEMETERY	
24	MARKET PLACE	9, 10
25	PUKOW VILLAGE	21
26	CZESNIKI VILLAGE - WOODS	21, 24
27	LIPICA GORNA VILLAGE - PUBSKI'S HOUSE	22, 23
28	LUPUSZNA VILLAGE - WOODS	23, 24, 26, 28
29	PODWYSOKIE VILLAGE - WOODS	25
30	GORDONIA ZIONIST ORGANIZATION	7
31	THE HOUSE OF UKRAINIAN SCHOOL FRIEND WHO THREW ME OUT	21
32	GERMAN POLICE STATION	14, 16
33	GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH	12

Map of the Partition of Poland - September 1939

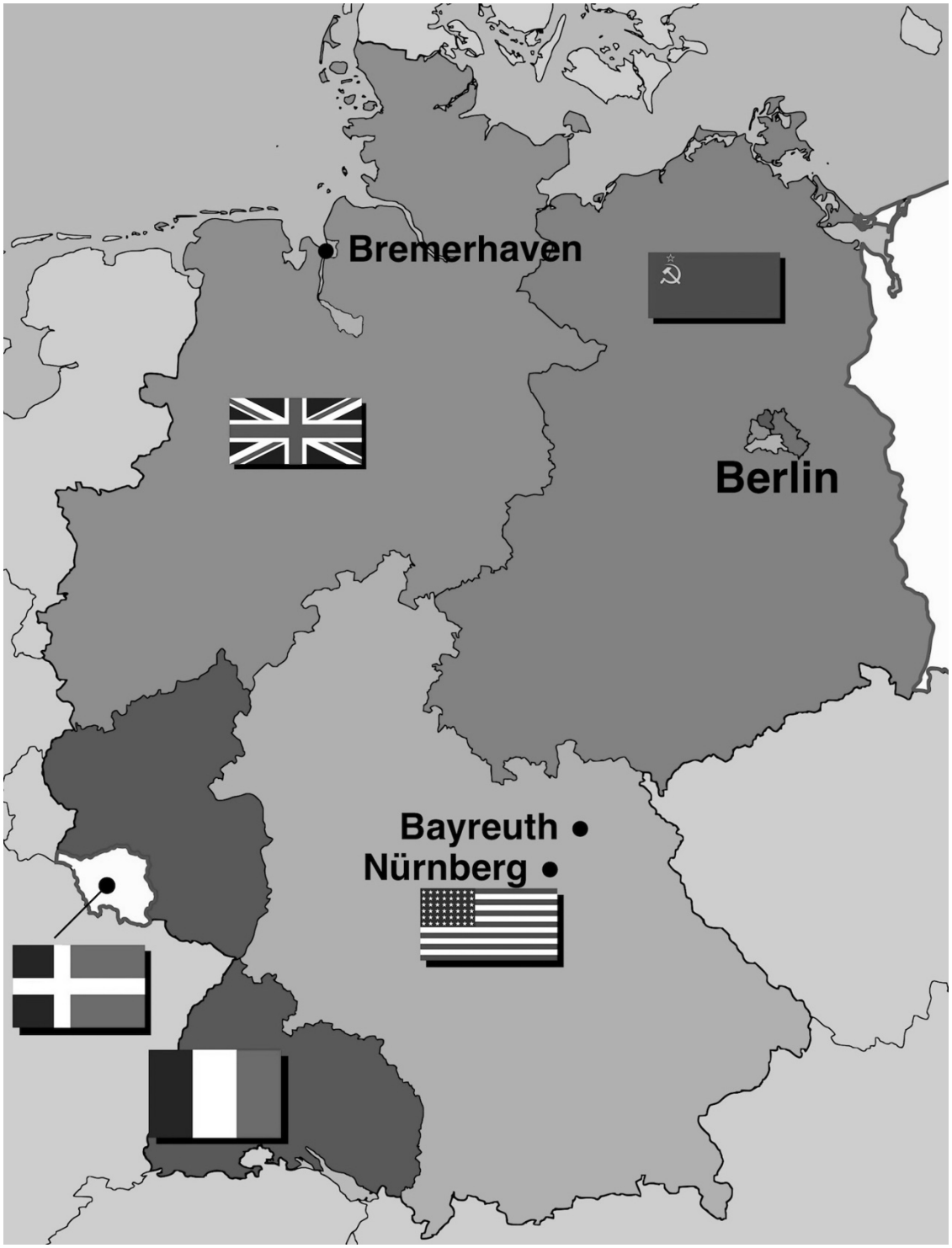
Adapted from a Wikimedia Commons image authored by user Lonio17, in a revision dated 25 January 2018 by Maproom, at:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Occupation_of_Poland_1939.png
Annotations added to match a map from Jack Glotzer's original memoir.

Map of Pre-War and Post-War Poland



Adapted from a Wikimedia Commons image authored by user radek.s, in a revision dated 17 November 2017 by Nicolay Sidorov, at:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Curzon_line_en.svg
Annotations added to match a map from Jack Glotzer's original memoir.

Map of Post-War Germany



Adapted from a Wikimedia Commons image authored by user 52_Pickup, in a revision dated 25 January 2018 by Sammimack, based on map data of the IEG-Maps project (Andreas Kunz, B. Johnen and Joachim Robert Moeschl) of the University of Mainz, at:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map-Germany-1945.svg and
http://www.ieg-maps.uni-mainz.de/
Annotations added to match a map from Jack Glotzer's original memoir.